

Editor:

Emergency physicians deserve a thoughtful and collaborative examination of the issues that affect our lives and livelihood, which is why we would like to address recent articles about the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP). (“ACEP Must Approve Resolutions to Break CMGs’ Stranglehold on EM,” *EMN*. 2021;43[10]:3; <https://bit.ly/3l2RbGB>; “Give Me Due Process, Not Water Bottles,” *EMN*. 2021;43[10]:5; <https://bit.ly/3mfTV2A>.)

ACEP, *Emergency Medicine News*, and its readers share the common goal of ensuring that individual emergency physicians have access to quality resources and content. ACEP serves as the voice of individual emergency physicians, regardless of where they practice. Our leadership is as diverse as our members, and they’re democratically elected by their peers, not outside interests. The ACEP Council process is democratic, transparent, and open to all members. (<https://bit.ly/3CDh8Tj>.)

ACEP hosted a large-scale international hybrid annual meeting in late October. Hundreds of councilors in Boston and at home participated in lively debates and voted on the interests of their constituencies to direct our college, including who will represent them on the Council and Board of Directors. A number of resolutions were close votes, indicating that the true democratic nature of this process works, and the diverse voices of emergency physicians have been heard.

Any member of ACEP was welcome to introduce a resolution for discussion at the Council meeting during ACEP21, and participation is not limited to the annual conference. ACEP members can submit asynchronous testimony so that everyone can share information and debate with the flexibility that an emergency physician’s schedule demands. Council deliberations were expanded so that all ACEP members can engage with the Council year-round through an online platform. ACEP also launched a searchable database that allows any interested member to find resolutions and background information and track actions taken by the Council.

The ACEP Council is an inspired and diverse group of emergency physicians who are eager to tackle the tough issues. Physician jobs depend on thoughtful solutions to workforce challenges, and ACEP welcomes these difficult conversations. (<https://bit.ly/3BEbl9b>.) Emergency medicine is strong because of diverse perspectives and strongest when we approach our challenges together. We need to start talking about difficult topics, hearing both sides, and understanding the realities of market forces and the reimbursement challenges affecting us all or we’re never going to find common ground or solutions. But we need to use facts, not misinformation. Bad contracting behaviors are bad contracting behaviors—they are not unique to one employment model. We need to make our health care system more transparent, improve and expand our data, and get clearer definitions for when we have these tough conversations.

ACEP has always advocated for those principles and the rights of emergency physicians. We have always had policy statements on these issues and educational

resources to help advocate for our members. We are working with congressional leaders to reintroduce legislation on due process. We created a new conference that teaches emergency physicians how to start their own group and compete for a contract. We offer legal counseling to our members to review their job offers and contracts through our wellness assistance program. We created a checklist that shines a light of transparency on contracting terms on groups who want to advertise or exhibit with ACEP. We're exploring legislative and regulatory pathways to help enforce them that hold all groups accountable for fair practices.

And we're not done yet—that's the point. ACEP exists and evolves to meet our members where they need us most. Every emergency physician deserves the information and support to make the best decisions for their lives, family, and career. As we move forward, ACEP is committed to working collaboratively as the unified and unbiased voice of the specialty. Positive approaches to our workforce issues require a holistic view of emergency medicine, and ACEP is open to contributions from everyone who wants to focus on solutions.

Progress for the greater good starts with a shared understanding of facts and common purpose. Any emergency physician who wants to contribute meaningfully to the conversation is welcome.

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Dr. Schmitz stated that her views do not reflect the position of the Uniformed Services University, United States Army, or Department of Defense.