

# Time for Action!

by David L. Pohl, MD

**A**t this writing, the elections are over, issues have been decided, and plans are being formulated for how we proceed forward. We are now faced with taking action to accomplish those goals on which we agree, how to mitigate the effects of those decisions on which we disagree, and how to do it in a manner that is respectful to our fellow citizens who see things differently than we do. Now begins the art of compromise. We need to remember that few things are forever, especially in the world of politics where “winners and losers” come and go. What should be a constant is our striving to make the world a better place than it was yesterday.

Many would say that, unfortunately, political activity is now a necessary part of the practice of medicine. However, we are fortunate to live in a society where we can become involved in determining the direction we wish our society to progress. Not every person elsewhere in the world has that privilege. It is a gift that should not be treated lightly. Not only do we have the opportunity to work for the improvement of our personal lives and those of our families, friends and associates, but we also have the responsibility to work for the betterment of the lives and situations of our patients and to alleviate the difficulties they may encounter while traversing the bureaucracy into which the modern medical system has evolved.

At the state level, which is where the MSMA predominantly works, the pre-filing of new bills for the upcoming legislative session began on December 1, 2024, in anticipation of the opening of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session of the State of Missouri on January

8, 2025. We will face the usual and predictable challenges to Medicine that perennially seem to rise up from the dead, and will likely face a few new unanticipated developments that will seemingly come out of nowhere to occupy our time and energy—whether to support a good idea that we never thought would see the light of day, or to address the multitude of bad ideas which seemingly spring up and grow like weeds.

With the advent of the new year, I would like to ask you, as a physician, to make plans to assemble with your colleagues in Jefferson City on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, for our annual Physician Advocacy Day. Also, please consider signing up for the Doctor of the Day on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during the legislative session. These are the days during which most committees meet, and we would like to have you in attendance to help advance our positions. Lawmakers see our lobbyists frequently but tend to sit up a little straighter and become more attentive when a physician takes time from their practice to address the issues at hand. The great thing about the Doctor of the Day is that you no longer will need to triage medical issues for the assembly (something which may have impeded others in the past who were uncomfortable doling out medical advice in areas with which they were no longer familiar). Please go to the MSMA website at [www.msma.org](http://www.msma.org) or email [advocacy@msma.org](mailto:advocacy@msma.org) for more information.

Finally, remember to reach out to your local legislators to offer your support and act as an information repository for them. Many legislators may be unfamiliar with the details and nuances of a particular bill and readily welcome the input of a physician on the issue. Getting involved does take some time and effort, but it pays off when we end up with reasonable and effective legislation to address our concerns.

Thank you to everyone in advance. And in the meantime, let's safely celebrate the upcoming holiday season with family and friends grateful for our freedoms, gifts and blessings.



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