Message from the President

Springtime

As I prepare to write my last article as President of this organization, I am very happy to see the signs of springtime. The days are longer and I don’t go to work and leave work in the dark. (Although as an OB/GYN, that sometimes happens in the summer as well.) The robins are foraging in my backyard and the early spring flowers are beginning to show their colors. Signs of new and renewed life are all around us.

Much is written about the symbolism of the spring season and how it may mirror the mental or spiritual seasons in the life of mankind. There are those of our fellow human beings who through circumstance, chromosomes, and sometimes just bad luck, fall into a cold, dark winter. Some never get out of that place and lose their lives to depression, despair, and addiction. But as the season progresses and winter changes into spring, the human condition of winter just does not change automatically.

It is only through the help of friends and much hard work by the individual that a person can progress from winter into spring when the problem is addiction. In Tennessee, we are fortunate to have a dedicated staff of professionals whose primary goal is to help the physicians of our state achieve and maintain recovery from their winter of addiction. When the physicians of our state are healthy, then the citizens of our state are healthier as well.

All of our lives are affected by addictions in one way or another. For some of us, it is a friend, colleague, or loved one that struggles against this illness. For others, we see and hear news stories about how drugs and addictions affect our lives and society in many negative ways. I don’t propose that I know how to solve the ills of society. But I do know that you and I can help in one small but very important way. Support the Tennessee Medical Foundation. Your personal gift to the TMF is crucial to help your fellow physicians and, therefore, your fellow human beings.

It has been a great honor to serve as your TMF President these last two years. I have been fortunate to work with a talented and dedicated staff. Their work must go on. You must help.

Leonard A. Brabson, Sr., M.D.
President, Tennessee Medical Foundation
Board of Directors

THE MISSION OF THE PHYSICIAN’S HEALTH PROGRAM (PHP) IS TO PROTECT PATIENTS THROUGH IDENTIFICATION, INTERVENTION, REHABILITATION, AND THE PROVISION OF ADVOCACY/SUPPORT FOR PHYSICIANS IMPAIRED BY ADDICTIVE DISEASE, MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL ILLNESS.
Roland Gray, M.D.
TMF Medical Director

Something TMF Board member Mr. Larry Whisenant said elsewhere in this newsletter (page 5) grabbed my attention. A thoughtful, loyal supporter of many years of the Physician’s Health Program, he noted the TMF’s impact on “an exponential number of people over a long period of time.”

In reflecting on Larry’s observation, I thought about what we accomplished last year - not just the actual numbers but their depth and magnitude.

2012 was busy. We responded to 143 new referrals of physicians and medical students. Added to these requests for assistance, we also met the ongoing needs of 192 additional physicians for whom we provide monitoring contracts or other personalized consultation services. Then there are the 7,000 physicians, medical students and health professionals who attended one or more of my 59 educational sessions given throughout the region. Impressive outreach to the Tennessee medical community to be sure, but these numbers reveal only a piece of the story.

As Larry Whisenant observed, the TMF’s impact also rests in its exponential power to touch and improve the lives and wellbeing of multiple others – be they patient’s family members, loved ones, colleagues and staff members, neighbors or the community at large.

Consider: a physician restored to health from addiction or mental health issues becomes a part of the solution rather than part of a problem; is able to contribute by providing better care; and thrives personally, professionally and as a citizen rather than merely surviving from day to day.

It is difficult to measure precisely the rolling, rippling effect of recovery and wellness multiplied over a lifetime of medical practice. What we know for sure is that a healthy, happy physician is a powerful catalyst in the healing process, not just for patients but for society as well.

It is true that the Tennessee Medical Foundation works with individual physicians. But it is equally true that by Saving Lives. Saving Careers, we directly impact thousands upon thousands of Tennessee residents who depend and rely on the availability of healthy physicians. Helping good but distressed physicians, like the 335 we served last year, become better doctors – that is our goal. I am abundantly grateful to you for your referrals, encouragement and financial support.

Dr. Roland Gray, Medical Director of the TMF, speaking at the Tennessee Medical Association Annual Meeting.

American Medical Association
www.ama-assn.org (For Physician health and wellness tool kit, go to Resource tab and click on Physician Health)
Phone: 1-800-621-8335

Calendar of Events

FSPHP Annual Meeting & Conference
April 19 - 22, 2013 Cambridge, Massachusetts

44th Annual ASAM Conference

Caduceus Retreat
June 7 - 9, 2013 Montgomery Bell State Park

IDAA Annual Meeting
July 31 - Aug 4, 2013 Keystone, Colorado

Dr. Gray has served as Medical Director of the Tennessee Medical Foundation’s Physician’s Health Program since January 2001. Prior to this, he served as a TMF Board member and long-time volunteer for the Physician’s Health Program. Certified in Addiction Medicine in 1987, Dr. Gray has treated more than 10,000 patients for addiction diseases over the course of his career. He serves as a Special Government Employee and Consultant to the FDA Subcommittee on Drug Abuse. A practicing pediatrician from 1976 through 2001, Dr. Gray is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics as well as a Fellow of the American Society of Addiction Medicine. Dr. Gray is also a member of the clinical faculty at Vanderbilt University.
SAVE YOURSELF, SAVE A CHILD

The next time you travel by air, listen closely to the instructions given by the flight crew prior to take off. When they begin the part about the deployment of the oxygen masks, pay careful attention. They tell you “...in case of deployment of the oxygen system, place the mask over your face...if you are traveling with a child, secure the mask over your face, so that you may assist your child with placing the oxygen mask over their face.”

In other words, if there is an emergency, you have to save yourself first if you are going to be able to save your child. This same principle applies to parents who have children suffering from the disease of addiction.

How to parent these children isn’t something taught in parenting classes. In reality, parenting an addicted child goes against what we know and are taught. For instance, parental instinct compels us to protect our children from harm. Therefore, parents of addicted children try to save their child from the consequences of the addiction. In reality, this does nothing to address the addiction itself and the family finds themselves living from one crisis to the next. Each time there is a new crisis, the parents attempt to “fix” the addiction by trying to minimize or neutralize the consequences. The crisis passes until the next one arrives. This cycle continues on a downward spiral for both the addict and the family. Think of this problem in terms of banking. Each crisis pulls more energy, money, and emotion from the parents “accounts”. As the problems escalate, the “withdrawals” soon exceed the “deposits” and they are in “overdraft”.

As the parent of a chemically dependent child, my late wife and I engaged in this destructive behavior. For ten years we tried to save our child from the clutches of this scourge only to realize, later, that in our quest to save, we had sacrificed everything and we were now lost. We were left mentally, physically, emotionally and financially exhausted from our ordeal. One day, we both realized that if our family was to survive, we had to “save ourselves”.

By now you may be asking, “Are you suggesting it’s wrong to help a child who has a problem with drugs or alcohol?” No, I am not suggesting that; I am suggesting, however, that parents need to equip themselves with the tools needed “to save themselves” in order to effectively help the addicted child.

Here are some practical suggestions: 1) Learn everything you can about the disease of addiction. Knowledge is a powerful weapon. 2) Remember, a child’s addiction is an illness parents can’t “fix or cure”; 3) Realize this isn’t your fault. Addiction in a child does not mean you are a failure as a parent nor is it an issue of embarrassment, 4) Allowing the child to avoid consequences related to drugs and alcohol only delays the process of recovery and continues the insanity of addiction, 5) Allow yourself to grieve. Parents of addicted children go through the stages of the grief process before accepting their own powerlessness over the addiction. 6) Begin a program of recovery for yourself. Recovery for parents is just as important as it is for the addicted child. Involvement with a group and/or therapist will provide parents with a path toward restoring sanity in their lives, 7) Don’t compare your pace of recovery with others. Remember you are working through feelings of grief and everyone works through them at their own speed.

I am grateful that today my child has been clean and sober for ten (10) years. “It works if you work it”

~ Mike Todd

NATIONAL DOCTOR’S DAY

A wise, unknown author once wrote, “I alone can do it, but I can’t do it alone.” As physicians, we heal as individuals but also as members of a tribe that includes elders, beloved teachers and mentors, cherished colleagues, and business associates.

From medical school on, our practice is supported and shaped by fellow physicians. To some of them we owe an enormous debt of gratitude. In March of 1958, a resolution commemorating Doctor’s Day was adopted by the United States House of Representatives. Later in 1990, legislation was introduced to establish a National Doctor’s Day. Following overwhelming approval by the United States Senate and House of Representatives, on October 30, 1990, President George Bush signed S.J. RES. #366 (which later became Public Law 101-473) designating March 30th as “National Doctor’s Day.”

We warmly invite you to celebrate National Doctor’s Day this year by honoring or memorializing an influential physician in your life with a contribution to the Tennessee Medical Foundation’s Physician’s Health Program. When you do, you support the cause of physician health while publicly saying thank you to a special individual who has sustained and encouraged your professional development. The physician you acknowledge will be notified of your gift and also noted in the Fall 2013 issue of Physician’s Health.

Phianthropist Andrew Carnegie spoke of giving as a form of “wise distribution.” By financially supporting the Tennessee Medical Foundation on 2013 National Doctor’s Day, your money is immediately put to work assisting doctors and colleagues who care for Tennessee’s patients and their families. A wise distribution, indeed!

Thank you for all that you do to promote the health of our fellow citizens.

Leonard A. Brabson, Sr., M.D.
President, Tennessee Medical Foundation Board of Directors

Roland Gray, M.D.
Medical Director, Tennessee Medical Foundation
Dr. Cardwell C. Nuckols, MA, Ph.D., a nationally acclaimed authority on helping individuals find healing and a personal road to recovery, will be the featured speaker at the 2013 Caduceus Retreat.

As one of North America’s “most influential clinical and spiritual trainers”, Dr. Nuckols’ passion and mission is to assist and promote the integration of emerging scientific research with traditional spiritual and self-help knowledge. From this integration flows knowledge, inspiration and techniques useable by practitioners, alcoholics, addicts and individuals with mental health conditions.

Dr. Nuckols has over 35 years of experience as a clinician, supervisor, consultant and program director. In addition to authoring more than 60 journal articles, 30 books and workbooks, and numerous multimedia presentations, he has consulted with Fortune 500 companies, employee assistance programs and governmental agencies.

Among his many national honors, Dr. Nuckols has been honored by the American Society of Addiction Medicine and the prestigious University of Utah School on Alcohol and other drug studies.

The Tennessee Medical Foundation’s Physician’s Health Program is delighted and honored to welcome Dr. Nuckols as he shares over three decades of wisdom and experience around the topic of spiritual healing.

Montgomery Bell State Park is located seven miles east of Dickson in Dickson County. A place of quiet natural beauty, the park abounds in fox, squirrel, raccoon, opossum, deer and a wide variety of birds and wildflowers. There are three lakes for fishing, boating or swimming, trails for hiking, and an 18 hole golf course.
We Pause to Remember Katherine Sue Anderson

Often thought of as “a pair” by their admirers at the Tennessee Medical Foundation, there was never any doubt that Sue and Bill Anderson contributed significantly as individuals in their support of the Physician’s Health Program.

Sadly, we lost Sue to cancer on January 19, 2013. She leaves behind a host of wonderful memories for us to celebrate her nearly 35 year TMF involvement.

Remembered by Mike Todd, Administrator of the Tennessee Medical Foundation, as the quintessential “genteel lady”, Sue and Dr. Bill Anderson met in the 1950’s during their undergraduate days at Vanderbilt University. Marriage brought them 54 years of togetherness and 4 sons and 8 grandchildren Sue doted on.

Ever by Bill’s side, Sue is remembered as never missing a TMF Board of Directors Meeting or Caduceus Retreat in three decades. She shared her gentle, Southern warmth and kindness with every participant, spouse and staff person she encountered. In essence, she and Bill served as founding co-partners in the establishment and growth of the Physician’s Health Program.

The entire TMF staff and membership of the TMF Board of Directors extend their deepest heartfelt condolences to the Anderson family. She will be sorely missed and long remembered.
In January 2011, the TMF launched 500 Doctors... $500, a major fundraising campaign to raise $250,000 by having 500 physicians and individuals give $500 or more to support the PH. We are deeply grateful to the 217 donors who generously donated $250,658.10 to further our work of Saving Lives, Saving Careers.

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            Robert Paul Hill, M.D.
            Elizabeth J. Hull, FAEM
            Michael S. Kinnard, M.D.
            W. Dwayne Lett, M.D.
            John B. Lynch, M.D.
            Michael P. Miller, M.D.
            Pamela D. Murray, M.D.
            David Reynolds Richardson, M.D.
            Michael J. Rohrer, M.D.
Change of Address

Please let us know your new address when you move. Thank you for helping us keep in touch!

216 Centerview Drive, Suite 304
Brentwood, TN 37027

Phone: 615-467-6411
Fax: 615-467-6419
Website: www.e-tmf.org

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PHYSICIAN’S HEALTH

LEAVE A LEGACY

By Michael Todd, Administrator

Chances are, you already support the Tennessee Medical Foundation. Thank you for doing so!

But have you considered including us in your will or estate planning? If you believe in the Physician’s Health Program’s work of Saving Lives. Saving Careers and you want to ensure that it will continue to serve Tennessee physicians, you may want to consider planned giving.

Supporting the Physician’s Health Program with a gift through your will or living trust costs you nothing in your lifetime but ensures continual support for physicians who will need us in the future. There are various ways to provide a contribution to the Tennessee Medical Foundation. To leave a gift through your will or living trust, you have these options:

- Set aside a certain dollar amount
- Leave a percentage of your estate or assets left after providing for family and paying taxes and creditors
- Leave a paid-up life insurance policy, retirement account or securities

If you decide to include the TMF in your will or estate plan, please name us as: Tennessee Medical Foundation, a non-profit corporation, organized and existing under the Tennessee laws with the business address of: 216 Centerview Drive, Suite 304, Brentwood, Tennessee 37027. Our Tax Identification number is: 62-0541813

For more information, call Mike Todd, TMF Administrator, at (615)467-6411. We deeply appreciate your thoughtful consideration.