

Medical Recession

We have a flourishing economy, the stock market is approaching a six year high and unemployment is the lowest it has been in the past forty years. So what could possibly be wrong? Although our economy is well, the economics of medicine is not. We are in a medical recession. Low reimbursements, high liability coverage premiums, physician shortages and now a piece of legislation that was to provide a minimal amount of relief has been vetoed.

Some of our politicians do not get it nor understand the need for protection of doctors – especially in the emergency rooms. While this Bill would not have solved the problems we are experiencing in Arizona, it was a start – the start of something good for doctors and good for patients. The negative impact of this veto will be felt far more by the patients as we are in danger of losing our trauma level emergency rooms. Tucson is down to one trauma level emergency room for that population.

The governor vetoed H.B. 2315 recently. This was the Bill that would have been good for physicians, emergency rooms and ultimately the patient. The governor voted with the trial lawyers believing there to be no real problem in the emergency room setting. I do not want to chance my career on a frivolous lawsuit nor do my specialist colleagues.

To understand the impact of this veto, I ask that you review the letter from Dr. Todd Taylor, Vice President of Public Affairs for the Arizona College of Emergency Physicians, who pointed out excellently the impact and options us doctors in Arizona have because of this veto. Dr. Taylor's letter can be found in this issue in the "Letters" section.

The good news is 1,100 of you dear people sent e-mails to the governor. Please consider joining us to make it 2,400 e-mails to every member of the legislature and the governor. Advise them of the risks they are taking with human life as specialists and trauma doctors are being continually threatened by career ending lawsuits.

Please encourage your hospitals to become involved with the potential disaster. If a few votes in the House and Senate were changed, we could override the veto.

I encourage your comments and suggestions. Send them to:
MCMS@medical-society.com

Barbara A. Berry, M.D.
President