

## **The Correlation of College Football & Medicine**

Fall is here, and that means college football is beginning! This is a fun time for me, and many of my patients. It always amazes me to see the regional differences in style of football; the SEC dominating most of the time. I wonder about the regional differences in the practice of medicine - do they exist? Does the South practice medicine differently than the East? Is there a dominant style of medicine or approach to caring for patients?

I believe cultural differences can be vast. When I attended Medical School at Ohio State, many of our patients came from the "hollers" of Appalachia. In addition to the expected diseases of diabetes and heart disease, we saw more unusual conditions such as multiple endocrine neoplasia syndromes, radon lung disease, cystic fibrosis, histoplasmosis and Lyme disease. In Arizona, we see different Native American tribes, each with unique health issues. And cocci are an ever-present health concern.

Even considering our many cultural differences, I believe the most important regional influences in the delivery of medical care continue to be economic issues. Wherever there are poor, underserved patients with limited access to care and limited money for medicines, the resultant delivery of care and outcomes are often inadequate. The economically disadvantaged patients in the Midwest have the same delivery of care problems as a poor patient in the South, or the rest of the country.

Unfortunately for all physicians, the patients with serious economic struggles used to be a small percentage of the patients seen in a private office. But now, these patients include the unemployed, geriatric patients, and many pediatric patients, as well as single parent families. Physicians all over the country are grappling with patients who simply cannot afford even the most inexpensive of their medicines or therapies.

I obviously don't have a solution to this national economic crisis. I do know it affects my practice - and my patients - every single day. But I am absolutely sure about this - problems are best resolved when many intelligent voices are heard in discussion. Solutions come about through the ideas and efforts of many.

We have recently experienced a surge in membership of the Maricopa County Medical Society, through the efforts of the MCMS Staff. It is critical that as a group, physicians stay involved in the public arena, and let legislators, and our patients, hear our opinions.

Our annual meeting is coming up Friday, October 15th. In honor of your current President (me), it will be an exciting TAILGATE PARTY!!! We're also hoping to raffle off some prizes, including NATIONAL COLLEGE CHAMPIONSHIP TICKETS! Please RSVP and attend, I'd love to see you. Tell the MCMS which Alma Mater colors you will be wearing, and please spread the word . . . bring a guest!

In thanksgiving for all of you, cooler weather, and college football,

**Susan Whitely, MD**  
**President**

Please send your comments to me at: [swhitely@mcmsonline.com](mailto:swhitely@mcmsonline.com)