



PHYSICIANS DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF CALIFORNIANS

## WE ARE NOT PROVIDERS.

Over the past 2 decades there has been an insidious malignant growth of the term "provider" within our healthcare system. While the term provider is all encompassing and easily rolls off the tongue, we are Physicians not providers. We treat patients not clients. We must reclaim our well-earned title of physician.

The term "provider" started a few decades ago when the Federal Government introduced the National Health Planning and Resource Development Act of 1974. In that document patients were referred to as *consumers* and physicians as *providers*. Insurance companies, managed care organizations and others have adopted this term because this implies a uniformity of expertise and knowledge, assuming that a patient can get the same level of care from any of these "providers." We know this is not true. The term Provider was originally documented in the 1930's when Jewish Pediatric Physicians were relabeled as "handlers" or "providers" removing their respected title of physician. In 1933 all German Jewish Pediatricians were expelled or forced to resign from the German Society of Pediatrics and were no longer allowed to be called doctors.

I write about this especially as we see scope of practice erosion and physician assistants relabeling themselves "*Physician Associates*." With the unfortunate passing of AB890, allowing some nurse practitioners to practice unsupervised, we need to ensure that patient safety is not compromised. Health Equity is essential, and we must not let this bill create a lower tier of care that will affect our most vulnerable and low-income patients. NPs, PAs and other clinicians are a vital part of the health care team, but we need to ensure that physicians are at the helm. This leads to the topic of Corporatization of Health Care: which we will hear more about at the HOD 2021. The growth of venture capital backed corporations must be carefully monitored. Clinical guidelines that are made after an acquisition, must not be selected to increase payer profits but rather follow evidence-based medicine. We need to ensure that physicians from all groups, regardless of size or practice model have physician leadership. We must have autonomy in what happens in our offices and at the bedside. Improvements in health care only happen when we physicians are involved.

Some say, *provider* is just a word, why fight against this? I say words matter. We have earned our titles with dedication and hard work. I will fight for our honor, our autonomy, and for our sacred profession. I will Show up, Stand up and Speak up for all California Physicians, for our patients and for the betterment of the practice of medicine.

I respectfully ask for your vote for CMA President-Elect.

Dr. Catherine Gutfreund

**CATHERINE GUTFREUND, MD**  
FOR CMA PRESIDENT-ELECT 2021

