Resolution 8 is not the answer
I greatly appreciate the Wisconsin Medical Journal reporting of the recent Wisconsin Medical Society Annual Meeting and the House of Delegates actions. This report was informative for those unable to attend.

I was disappointed by Resolution 8—Positive Alternatives to Socialized Medicine (and its substitute resolution). In this resolution, there is a negative and a positive tone.
- Negative—avoid anything resembling “socialized medicine,” such as a single payer plan.
- Positive—let the free market prevail.

My understanding is that the substitute resolution was adopted without dissent. I’m surprised that no delegate spoke out in wonderment since:

1. Nationally, 59% of physicians are supporting a single payer program, and 2. Advocating a competitive business model perpetuates the private insurance monopoly, which has contributed greatly to the cost problems plaguing us.

A time for change? When I graduated from medical school in 1949, the American Medical Association was denouncing “socialized medicine.” The envelopes were colored pink—signifying “pinko,” communist. Persistence of this anti-government ideology, as in Resolution 8, fails to acknowledge that times change and we must respond to the reality of our time. Perhaps it's time to embrace a “social medicine”—that which is best for all of us.

I feel that good physicians, through the years, have always done the best they could with the knowledge and technology available to them at the time. Present day physicians are marvelously capable with improved technology, but there seems to be a blatant disregard of an impending fiscal train wreck—linked, in large part, to the escalating costs of health care and the failure to address unfunded entitlement programs (Medicare, Medicaid). Reliable warnings of these dangers have been given even prior to the present economic downturn. The warnings have emphasized that continuing the status quo (as in Resolution 8) would be a disaster.

Colleagues have confided in me, “it’s so much about business these days.” Friends, the market principles espoused in Resolution 8 simply don’t apply. Taking care of people, with their feelings and emotions, can’t be likened to buying a loaf of bread or a refrigerator. Alas! Business-savvy private insurers, those who have profited much from the status quo, are driving the discussion again—and would be pleased by Resolution 8. After all, the goal of private insurers isn’t good health care. It’s the amassing of profit.

While there is a mounting cry from our patients and the nation: “It costs too much,” Resolution 8 offers nothing to stem the tide of increasing national debt. Ignore the warnings of debt that will threaten those we say we love (our children and grandchildren)? What a strange kind of love!

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