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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

California AAEM and its Alternative Strategy

Letter to the Editor: Dr. Kazzi, Your message regarding CAL/ACEP in recent CaJEM was offensive to EP's. Particularly, your statement: "We also wish to thank its members and its past and current leadership for the outstanding services... provided to all EP's on nearly every front..." has no basis in facts. In reality, the actions of ACEP have hurt EP's on almost every front. I understand your desire for working within ACEP to try to move the organization towards policies beneficial to working EPs. However, I certainly see no reason to make heroes of them. If ACEP has provided such outstanding service, why have many of the most prominent academic ED physicians, including Bob Simon and George Schwartz, chosen to resign.

Has ACEP served EP's on the following fronts?

1. Exorbitant membership dues that pay for very high executive salaries
2. High continuing education tuition
3. Position on contract companies
4. Position on due process
5. Position on non-compete clauses
6. Advertising that, prior to board certification policy change, non-board certified EPs should join to obtain de facto surrogate credential for legitimate board certification
7. Roster of past presidents and board members: ACEP has been the maidservant of the contract groups.

THESE ARE THE BOYS THAT REFUSED TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST CATHOLIC HEALTHCARE WEST!!!! That certainly is a front that has "served" EP's!!!! Get real.

Indeed, it is only on economic and political fronts that help the bottom line of EP employers in which ACEP has excelled; has ACEP taken a stand that all fee gains obtained through their work be passed through to the EP's?

I realize that CAL/ACEP has taken some recent positive actions like its EP Bill of Rights. However, no enforcement was attached, so they are only so many words.

I will not be in an organization where the president's views are so diametrically opposed to mine. As I said, I have no disagreement with your philosophy of working within ACEP, but these bozos are no heroes to the EP's. I think you must separate a strategy of involvement from one of glorification of the enemy.

Stuart Goldfarb, MD, FAAEM

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Reply to "Letter to the Editor"

A. Antoine Kazzi, MD, FAAEM, FACEP
President CAL/AAEM
American Academy of Emergency Medicine

I wish to thank Dr. Goldfarb for his wholehearted letter because it serves to bluntly remind CAL/ACEP and CAL/AAEM members alike, of the depth and intensity of distrust reigning in our specialty. ACEP has given emergency physicians (EPs) over the last three decades ample reasons to question the ethics of its policies towards its rank and file and the best interest of the specialty.

I ask Dr. Goldfarb and our readers to "read between the lines" in my letters before jumping to the conclusions which he made. Yes, I commended CAL/ACEP for its longstanding service to EPs. However, I clearly qualified it stating this happened on "nearly every front" in reference to the lack of credible action to end unfair practice conditions that we deplore.

I commended CAL/ACEP and not ACEP, because the two organizations are quite different. A close look at the activity profile and leadership of the state chapter will reveal incredible talent and dedication and considerable triumphs that we should not deny. Such unfair criticism or denial has deeply compromised AAEM in its ability to recruit the members and momentum we need to achieve the changes we seek. Nearly a third of the CAL/ACEP and EMPAC boards and three of the CAL/ACEP past-presidents are AAEM members. Calling them/us "bozos" is certainly not the way to succeed or to break out of the splinter radical self-righteous image we earned when AAEM was founded.

One must not deny credit, where credit is due. One otherwise loses his/her own credibility and would likely fail to find anyone caring to listen to his/her grief. To enact the AAEM principles of fairness into our daily practice, we must not omit the bread and butter activity of highly dedicated individuals within the house of ACEP. As indicated by Dr. Goldfarb, we must mobilize them to our side. Many ACEP leaders suffered a great deal to promote EM on front lines and in circles that the rank-and-file EPs do not see. Dr. Goldfarb says, "It is only on economic and political fronts that help the bottom line of EP employers in which ACEP has excelled." I urge us to remember that a large number of California groups are democratic partnerships and benefit directly from those triumphs. Universal fairness in the passage of profit to the clinicians toiling at the bedside is an issue we must address separately.

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