

Leadership in Healthcare

By Phillip Filbrandt, MD

Leadership in Healthcare comes in many forms. “Leadership in Healthcare” is the motto of Butte-Glenn Medical Society as has been written in our by-laws for decades. Last June, I received the very first Leadership in Healthcare Award from BGMS and am proud to share this year’s winner – Dr. Richard Thorp.

For Dr. Thorp, leadership is defined as making a difference in our patients’ lives – whether caring for one patient at a time or advocating for public health on a statewide scale. His definition of leadership is inclusive, meaning that it takes many others working together to make positive change happen. Leadership is hardly ever about one person struggling alone in the wilderness. Leadership in organized medicine is about being a champion for physicians and working with others around a common goal.

Butte-Glenn Medical Society’s Board of Directors was proud to present the 2020 Leadership in Healthcare Award at our Annual Physicians Community Dinner on February 19. Dr. Thorp also received resolutions from Congressman LaMalfa, who was there in person, from Assemblyman Gallagher and from the California Medical Association.

Dr. Thorp’s role as President of Butte-Glenn Medical Society in 1993 was a time of great changes in healthcare that impacted us locally. At the time, healthcare was evolving from being a majority of small, solo practices to what is now an industry dominated by large group practices. HIV still had no consistently successful treatment.

As President of the California Medical Association in 2014, Dr. Thorp was the champion for protecting MICRA, traveling up and down the State of California for at least 3 months straight. It was hard work and time-consuming, but very rewarding as Prop. 46 was ultimately defeated. Now, in 2020, we are being called again to protect MICRA and Dr. Thorp has volunteered to be a local champion. Dr. Lee Snook, CMA’s Incoming President this year, and his wife, Cindy, joined Butte-Glenn Medical Society’s dinner as he was part of the CMA Executive Board when Dr. Thorp was President.

Last year, Governor Newsom appointed Dr. Thorp to the Medical Board of California. It’s a 6-year term and requires a lot of reading. This role represents a pinnacle of leadership in healthcare as the peer-to-peer understanding of medicine helps all physicians.

Starting on November 8, 2018, Dr. Thorp’s leadership as CEO of Paradise Medical Group was tested in an extraordinary way. The Camp Fire destroyed Dr. Thorp’s home as well as part of his practice, forcing him to relocate to Chico. In May 2019, PMG re-opened its Paradise clinic in order to provide the healthcare needed for the community to be restored.

2020 is a new start for Paradise Medical Group and a new local effort that is near to Dr. Thorp’s heart. PMG is working with several partners to improve our patients’ social determinants of health. They are working with Blue Shield, Partners in Care and Unite Us. PMG has hired



ABOVE: Lee Snook, MD, Incoming President of the California Medical Association at left, joins David Alonso, MD, President of Butte-Glenn Medical Society, and Richard Thorp, MD at the BGMS Annual Physicians Community Dinner in February.
 LEFT: Congressman LaMalfa presents Richard Thorp, MD with resolutions honoring his leadership efforts, February 19, 2020.

a Community Health Advocate (CHA) through Partners in Care who will be focused on managing their patient's social determinants of health. Their documentation and referral platform is a company called Unite Us.

Unite Us is interested in connecting with our local agencies including Butte Glenn Medical Society, Butte County Department of Public Health, Department of Behavioral Health just to mention a few, to provide a robust local network of resources to improve the patient's access to local resources and to identify and resolve as many of their needs as possible.

I encourage any physician to get involved and step up to leadership through Butte-Glenn Medical Society. You can start by becoming a member. Membership dues are needed revenue to sustain BGMS and to show support for our initiatives, such as protecting MICRA and supporting the medical community through disasters such as the Camp Fire and now the COVID-29 pandemic. Join us at one of our Board Meetings or at our events. Butte-Glenn Medical Society is taking a leadership role in our region. It's a great time to join, and lead efforts that will have great impact in the future.

The future is in our hands. As Congressman LaMalfa said at the dinner in February – if we are not at the table, we will be eaten. This is true for politics at all levels, from what we do locally to what is happening in Sacramento and in DC. It is also true for our rural communities.

If you have any questions about how you can be involved, feel free to reach out to any of us through BGMS's main email at bgmsed@gmail.com.