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AAFP Board of Directors Candidate Update

Glen R. Stream, MD, WAFP Past President, AAFP Delegate, Spokane

At this year's AAFP Congress of Delegates in Chicago this October, I will be a candidate for the AAFP Board of Directors. I wish to thank all of you who have encouraged and supported me in seeking this position. Much of what I would bring to this position I have learned from many of you. We have an incredible Washington Academy. Serving on the Board entails great responsibility in representing all Academy members, but I bring enthusiasm, passion, knowledge, vision, and leadership skills inoculated and incubated in the WAFP.

Our AAFP defines and defends what it is to be a family physician. As a specialty, we have chosen to actively redefine ourselves to meet the challenges of improving the care and customer service we provide while working to cement our position as the foundation of the American health care system. Implementing the New Model of care represents a significant challenge, especially for small practices. The AAFP is actively testing this process through the TransforMed program. Lessons learned from this project must be applied to assisting practices in making this transformation. I am committed to providing the support and resources needed by our members.

Electronic health records are a foundational component of the New Model. I believe family physicians are uniquely qualified to be the experts in clinical information technology. We provide the full spectrum of patient care, from prenatal to geriatrics. Family physicians provide care across all sites where care is given: in the home, in the office, in skilled nursing facilities, and in the hospital. Family physicians also have the skill to leverage the value of high tech, while preserving our commitment to personal and compassionate care. Expertise in clinical IT will be essential on our Board and is why I have recently completed a Masters in Biomedical Informatics with a focus on applied ambulatory clinical IT.

Our specialty faces daunting challenges which I am excited to tackle as a Board member. Declining student interest threatens the future of our specialty. A multifaceted approach will be necessary to turn the tide. We must have a medical education system that nurtures student interest in family medicine. Expanded programs must be implemented to address medical student debt as it discourages the specialty choice of family medicine. Fundamental reform is needed in physician payment for primary care services that ensures financial viability of our practices. Provision of payment for providing a patient-centered personal medical home is a key component of payment reform. Care provided by family physicians is of higher quality and more cost effective than sub-specialty dominated care. Providing this service involves expense and resources for which we deserve to be compensated fairly.

As a member of the Board I will dedicate my energy and efforts to furthering the advocacy work of the AAFP regarding these issues. I remain enthusiastic regarding the future of our specialty. I believe we are nearing a tipping point where the value and contributions of family physicians are recognized and rewarded. We must not let temporary adversity dampen our outlook. I pledge my full commitment to achieving our shared vision. Thank you again for your support.