



## EDITOR'S LETTER

# Common Sense

by Howard Blumstein, MD FAAEM

*Common Sense* is the title of the famous pamphlet written in 1775, by Thomas Paine, explaining the rationale for American independence from England. Forty-six pages long, it was perhaps the most influential of all the early revolutionary literature. It has been reported that 50 percent of the population had either read portions of it or had portions read to them. It was also reported that George Washington read it and was inspired by its contents, ordering that portions be read to his troops.

If you look at it, make sure you read the very first paragraph of the introduction. Here it is (there are several versions on the web, the text is the same but the typeface and punctuation differ):

*PERHAPS the sentiments contained in the following pages, are not yet sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favor; a long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defense [sic] of custom. But the tumult soon subsides. Time makes more converts than reason.*

This is an exciting time to be part of AAEM. Our membership grows while other organizations within the house of medicine struggle to maintain membership levels. The reason is simple: More and more emergency docs are rejecting those wrongs that inspired our formation.

When AAEM was first formed, there was a sense within the EM community that we were somehow rebels doing far more damage than good. Long discussions of our issues pulled in new members slowly. That early negative reputation hurt us.

But Paine was right. Time is our friend. Increasingly, AAEM is not seen as a disruptive and unnecessary force, but rather a professional organization with specific goals and an aggressive attitude. Increasingly, our colleagues are coming to see that the status quo is unfair and unacceptable. More emergency docs are learning about

the threats they face in their professional lives, some first hand. They are coming to realize just how important it is to have a professional society that can advocate for them.

If AAEM were to disappear today, we would have left behind this legacy: Emergency docs now understand that they need to protect their rights, and that they are entitled to work in fair conditions. It is no longer acceptable to allow contract holders, big and small alike, to put us in a position in which they can push us around and take big cuts of our income for very little service.

AAEM has entered a new phase. With a legal fund available, we have been able to pursue specific legal actions when appropriate. We can now get involved and offer our knowledge and experience to embattled docs.

Members have been inspired to take control of their professional lives, forming democratic groups or insisting that they be treated fairly at work. They have championed the cause of legitimate board certification.

I like to think that this newsletter has played a role in advancing these ideas and empowering our members to stand up for their rights, just as Thomas Paine's original pamphlet did so many years ago.

\*\*\*\*

Having become Secretary-Treasurer (thank you, everyone, for your support) and thus joining the executive committee, I have found myself overwhelmed. Accordingly, I have resigned as editor of this newsletter. David Kramer, MD FAAEM, at York Hospital in Pennsylvania, is taking over. I am sure that his leadership and ideas will overshadow my tenure in this position.

Keep those letters and articles coming, folks. It is through the exchange of ideas that we all become enriched. 🇺🇸



when minutes count

### Officers

Tom Scaletta, MD, *President*  
 Larry Weiss, MD JD, *Vice-President*  
 Howard Blumstein, MD, *Secretary-Treasurer*  
 Joseph Wood, MD JD, *Immediate Past President*  
 Robert McNamara, MD, *Past Presidents Council Representative*

### Board Members

Tracy Boykin, MD  
 Anthony DeMond, MD  
 Stephen Hayden, MD  
 David Kramer, MD  
 James Li, MD

Kevin Rodgers, MD  
 Richard Shih, MD  
 Andy Walker, MD

### Associate Board Member

Mark Reiter, MD MBA  
**AAEM/RSA President 2006-2007**  
 Brian Potts, MD MBA  
**Common Sense Staff**  
 Howard Blumstein, MD Editor  
 Helen Kopec, Managing Editor  
 Miko Walker, Job Bank Coordinator  
 Kat Peterson, Art Director

Articles appearing in *Common Sense* are intended for the individual use of AAEM members. They may not be duplicated or distributed without the explicit permission of AAEM. Permission is granted in some instances in the interest of public education. Requests for reprints should be directed to Helen Kopec, Managing Editor, at: AAEM, 555 East Wells Street, Suite 1100, Milwaukee, WI 53202, Tel: (800) 884-2236, Fax: (414) 276-3349, Email: hkopec@aaem.org.

### AAEM Mission Statement

The American Academy of Emergency Medicine (AAEM) is the specialty society of emergency medicine. AAEM is a democratic organization committed to the following principles:

1. Every individual should have unencumbered access to quality emergency care provided by a specialist in emergency medicine.
2. The practice of emergency medicine is best conducted by a specialist in emergency medicine.
3. A specialist in emergency medicine is a physician who has achieved, through personal dedication and sacrifice, certification by either the American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) or the American Osteopathic Board of Emergency Medicine (AOBEM).
4. The personal and professional welfare of the individual specialist in emergency medicine is a primary concern to the AAEM.
5. The Academy supports fair and equitable practice environments necessary to allow the specialist in emergency medicine to deliver the highest quality of patient care. Such an environment includes provisions for due process and the absence of restrictive covenants.
6. The Academy supports residency programs and graduate medical education, which are essential to the continued enrichment of emergency medicine, and to ensure a high quality of care for the patient.
7. The Academy is committed to providing affordable high quality continuing medical education in emergency medicine for its members.

### Membership Information

Fellow and Full Voting Member: \$345 (Must be ABEM or AOBEM certified in EM or Pediatric EM)  
 Emeritus Member: \$250 (Must be 65 years old and a full voting member in good standing for 3 years)  
 International Member: \$125

\* Associate Member: \$250 (Non-voting status)  
 AAEM/RSA Member: \$50 (Non-voting status)  
 Student Member: \$50 (Non-voting status)

\* Associate membership is limited to graduates of an ACGME or AOA approved Emergency Medicine program.

Send check or money order to: AAEM, 555 East Wells Street, Suite 1100, Milwaukee, WI 53202, Tel: (800) 884-2236, Fax: (414) 276-3349, Email: info@aaem.org  
 AAEM is a non-profit, professional organization. Our mailing list is private.