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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Paul Windham MD, FAAEM  
CAL/AAEM President

Dear Colleagues,

I appreciate the honor you have given me by my election to the CAL/AAEM presidency. I hope to serve you well. I need to know your views to do that. I read a story once about a CEO who took the door to his office off and hung it on chains outside in the hall to show that his door was always open. I will take that approach as your president. We are all indebted to the efforts of our past president, Dr. Antoine Kazzi, and to the many other physicians who have and continue to serve our specialty society. We have come a long way in a few short years under their stewardship, and I am thankful that so many are staying on for the fights ahead.

Emergency physicians (EPs) are in a unique position to contribute to the debate on the crisis our health care system is facing in California. As a state society where full membership is open only to EM board certified EPs, CAL/AAEM can speak with a pure voice to this and other issues. I ask your help to bring this message to public attention. In future issues I will go into more detail about getting you involved in public affairs. If you are like me, you are likely "allergic" to politicians. However, sometimes we all must get involved regardless of personal distaste. Remember that our primary goal is to take care of patients. We cannot do our jobs as emergency physicians and provide the level of care we have been trained to deliver if our on-call panel is blank and there are no staffed beds available in the ICU. We cannot make bricks without straw. We are facing a systems failure, and the situation requires a system-wide solution. We need to be involved in the political discourse that will shape that solution in the coming years. We are the pure voice that the public needs to hear.

We face an equal challenge in maintaining our momentum in the science of emergency medicine, while we continue to focus on the needs of practicing emergency physicians. I do not know about you, but most journals in Emergency Medicine have become rarely helpful to me,

except for Annals' *Change of Shift*. The rest is usually too esoteric or academic to be of any help to me, the clinician in the trench of a rural community hospital. I practice 40 or more hours of floor time a week and see so many patients that I certainly do not remember any name, disposition or diagnosis beyond my shift. CAL/AAEM is all about practicing emergency physicians like you and me. Our AAEM member benefit, the Journal of Emergency Medicine publishes the useful material that keeps those of us in the trenches apprised of what is going on in our field. Our own California Journal will seek under my leadership to grow in size and quality, while remaining of relevance to you, focusing on topics related to practice or legislative issues, or to clinical material that can help you at the bedside. We hope to help you, the practicing emergency physician, provide optimal care for your patients, to support you in the trenches, and to secure your own well-being and career longevity.

Last but not least, I wish to end my first President's message calling you all to join CAL/AAEM, and to participate in our activities. Submit articles, volunteer your time on a committee or taskforce, and provide us with your feedback and suggestions. Join our California legislative key contact network. Join us for the Scientific Assembly and in particular attend the CAL/AAEM-CAL/ACEP Business Forum and the CAL/AAEM Board of Directors meeting in Long Beach on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Your involvement is essential for us to pursue our objectives and to have an impact on the issues we hold dear. Let us hear from you by emailing us at [calaem@aaem.org](mailto:calaem@aaem.org). We simply and strongly need your support.