Good evening my fellow colleagues, family, friends, and distinguished guests Thank you all for coming to this lovely event.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Board of Trustees, Board of Directors, and the members of the Broward County Medical Association for electing me as your 85th president of the BCMA. It is an honor and privilege to serve you. Thank you.

 I would like to thank my family ( Amie and my children Maya, Jenica, and Kelsey) for supporting me to perform the duties of my profession and the professional association. Most of all s special thanks to Cynthia Peterson our executive and vice president for her dedicated service to BCMA and making this event a special one, Thank you Cynthia.

A year ago, a patient of mine for 20 years was hospitalized while I was away for the weekend. She was very ill. She was assigned to a hospitalist. The following Monday, when I visited the patient, she and her family had a statement for me. “Doctor, I was your patient for the last 20 years and when I really needed you, you were not here.” *Pause* This is the result of a system change.

*Ask the question to audience* ***“Knowing the current system of medical care, and for that matter, the future of medicine the way it is prescribed by the government. Imagine yourself as a patient. Is that really what you want?”***

Let me take a brief moment to describe the history of organized medicine. When the medical societies were formed in the in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the function of the society was to educate and produce quality physicians, regulate the profession with ethics and professionalism. The societies were not involved in the financial aspect of medical practice. It was left to the free market phenomenon. The medical societies even had the power to grant licenses. Thus, the medicine man of those days did not have a choice, but to belong to the society. The first medical school was created by the effort of the medical society in 1765 in Philadelphia . As the medical societies were creating the best medical education, finding new medical cures, and building model institutions such as Mayo Clinic the Government stepped in and started to chip away the power of organized medicine inciting the public interest. One of the tools that the government created and used was the Antitrust Laws of 1975.

The result was the fragmentation of the organized medicine. Multiple specialty groups and sub specialty societies; educational institutions and its organizations; employed physician groups; different certifying boards, several ethnic medical societies and so on and on!!

There was a time most of the members of the medical profession if not all were members of the organized medicine. Now about one third of the members belong to the national association. In contrast, most if not all attorneys belong to their bar association.

Understanding the apathy of the medical man of our time Dr. Nathan Laufer of the Maricopa Medical Society in Arizona published an article titled Organized Medicine: why it Matters. In part one of the article I quote “ if we have several wishes of our medical practices these are probably what they look like: we would like to continue to practice independently as small businesses, be fairly compensated for our work and years in school, have influence with legislators regarding healthcare issues, be in charge of quality care issues, maintain patient choice regarding doctors and hospitals, get rid of the roadblocks that preventing collections from payers and most importantly to be allowed to organize and do collective bargaining (if needed Federal Trade antitrust exemption). I agree !!

 From the Brief History of Organized Medicine an article published in the bulletin of the The New York Academy of Medicine in 1936, it is established that the medical association were the essence of the modern medicine. The preeminent medical education,

Novel medical innovations and the finest medical institutions are the products of organized medicine.

Do you remember that in the 1800s medical men were lay persons who did not enjoy the prestige and status that we enjoy today. It is the organized medicine’s effort that it is considered a noble profession in the world.

You do not have the luxury of not being belong to the organized medicine and the grass root organization.

In these changing times of medicine If not for your advantage but for the future generation of physicians you need to be part of the organized medicine.

History repeats. It will change as it has done in the past. Let’s not be apathetic. Be part of it. Change only comes if we choose to proceed to change. If one man like Mahatma Gandhi was instrumental in obtaining independence from the great British Empire, If one man like Dr. Martin Luther King could bring on social change and if one man like George Washington could lead and win a war then collectively we all can bring a change to the medicine for the common good.

Thank you and God Bless America.