Montgomery County Medical Society Honors Longtime Practicing Physicians and Installs Its 167th President

King of Prussia, PA – Nearly 100 physicians and their guests enjoyed fellowship with colleagues, family and friends during the Montgomery County Medical Society (MCMS) of Pennsylvania annual membership dinner on June 7.

MCMS installed Jay E. Rothkopf, MD as its president and recognized nine physicians who have practiced medicine for 50 years -- Randall W. Bell, MD, FACS; Richard J. Carella, MD; Albert T. Derivan, MD; Anthony J. Fugaro, DO; Jack Lebeau, MD; Ronald Liebman, MD; Arthur B. Lintgen, MD; Stephen Pripstein, MD; Eli W. Zucker, MD.

“I cannot understate the role he (his father) played in cementing my decision to become a doctor,” said Dr. Rothkopf at the dinner as he recalled witnessing and being inspired by the medical careers of his father and grandfather as a youth. “Henry (his grandfather) laid the foundation of my interest, but it was Dad who brought me into this field. It was from him I learned the depth of commitment, the meaning of the relationship between physician and patient, a bond that sometimes had to take precedence over family.”

Today, the Temple University School of Medicine graduate carries forward his family’s legacy of being a compassionate physician and servant leader. The avid writer shared vivid details of childhood memories that illustrated how his grandfather and father would navigate the challenges and rewards of taking care of their patients.

As MCMS president, Dr. Rothkopf plans to help physicians navigate the changing landscape of medicine by focusing on strengthening patient – physician relationships. Patient engagement is key to changing the health care paradigm by restoring its primacy and freedom from unwelcome influence and unreasonable demands.

"I envision a future where our patients are our partners, not only in maintaining their health, but in advocacy, shaping policy, and helping to remake the practice landscape,” said Dr. Rothkopf, a hospitalist with OnCall Hospitalist Staffing. “Our patients are a resource, one which we can not only teach, but from whom we can learn. We must help them to understand the issues, and show them where their power lies: the vote.”
The Ft. Washington resident understands firsthand the frustrations of his patients and his colleagues as a physician, husband to Debbie, father to Michael and Matthew and patient who lives daily with managing an incurable medical condition -- Crohn’s Disease.

“If the foundation of any lasting relationship is trust, then it's time to entrust (patients) with helping us reclaim the bond that is at the center of our profession. Our patients trust us with the most precious thing they have--their health. They trust us with their secrets, their hopes, their fears. Isn't it time we trust them too?” he asked.

The dinner’s keynote speakers shared similar sentiments. For years, New Jersey physicians, Dr. John Eck and Dr. Alieta Eck, have been at the forefront of physician and patient advocacy and believe better care is not wrapped in more government regulations. They shared how they handled their frustration with the inadequacy of New Jersey's health insurance system.

In 2003, the Ecks founded Zarephath Health Center, a free clinic for the poor and uninsured that is described as faith in action. The clinic cares for more than 300 patients per month by utilizing the donated services of volunteer physicians and nurses. The center gives physicians an opportunity to revert back to the old model of donating time each month to care for the poor and uninsured. The physicians and staff believe that being uninsured does not have to be a cause for despair but can be an opportunity for others to reach out and help people who have fallen into hard times.

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Established in 1847, Montgomery County Medical Society (MCMS) is an efficient, member-driven, responsive organization, capable of anticipating and responding swiftly to the changing health care environment. The MCMS represents physicians, practices and most importantly, the patients they care for daily. For more information on MCMS, please visit our website at www.montmedsoc.com.