SPS member profile: Matthew D. Gold, MD

July 2022 member spotlight

Matthew D. Gold, MD

Specialty: Neurology

Medical School: Weill Cornell Medical College

Delegate, AMA Organized Medical Staff Section (OMSS) Governing Council

Chair, Massachusetts OMSS

URL: https://www.ama-assn.org/member-groups-sections/senior-physicians/sps-member-profile-matthew-d-gold-md

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Webmaster and Past President, Massachusetts Neurologic Association

Private Practice in Neurology: 1980-present (42 years), Winchester, MA

Q: As the author of SPS Resolution 113-A–22, "Prevention of hearing loss associated cognitive impairment through earlier recognition and remediation," how has this issue resonated with you as a neurologist?

A: As a neurologist trained in cognitive neurology, I am experienced in managing individuals and families in the context of cognitive decline of later life. While medications in the last two decades have led to the ability to ameliorate the course of such decline, the ultimate outcome has not been altered.

The identification that something so prevalent as hearing loss has a major correlation with later cognitive decline is exciting as there is the distinct possibility that further understanding of the various factors in that correlation may lead to actual prevention of a devastating disorder. This led me to discover that there were deeper implications of hearing loss than simply social isolation and withdrawal at a functional level.

The SPS resolution covers both the need to educate physicians and patients as to the significance of hearing loss in this domain, and to put the AMA on record that accelerated research into this field is important. Success of passage, and my participation in the effort, has been greatly satisfying insofar as it has made a contribution to the betterment of public health and my professional accomplishments.

Q: Many seniors share their time with local organizations as a mentor, and/or help those less fortunate. What opportunities do you see for retired physicians or those working part time to volunteer in their local communities?

A: There are certainly many opportunities to become a mentor or help those less fortunate. Volunteerism is a mainstay of American society. The State Medical Societies often have opportunities to help guide physicians to organized medicine to learn about the opportunities and strategies to be effective within that environment, but also to engage in outreach projects aimed at community service.

The small business administration needs seniors to advise on the workings of the business, including a medical practice. National organizations with local chapters, as well as local communities, frequently have a need for volunteers that serve in conservation efforts, political action, public health, youth activities and food banks. You can even put yourself on a resource list in your community.

I personally participate in choral singing, and we help foster the love of singing and to exposure of established youth groups, an even wider audience.
Q: What is the most important leadership lesson you have learned and how has it impacted your career in organized medicine?

A: The most important lesson is that ongoing, effective engagement of the individual can make a difference. Watching from the sidelines, and even supporting others’ efforts, is laudatory but not enough. Perseverance of individual effort is important, but it goes much further—leveraging group participation, engaging different perspectives (even to the detail of the wording of resolutions) and defining the art of what is possible, all of which can contribute to the likelihood of success.

Leaders also often define or consolidate goals. The combination of actively engaged leadership with delegations of responsibility is a balance. For my part, serving in a leadership role affords me the opportunity to be a mentor to others, and to activate the potential of those on the cusp of engagement. Listening, and constantly learning in turn, has been edifying and satisfying.