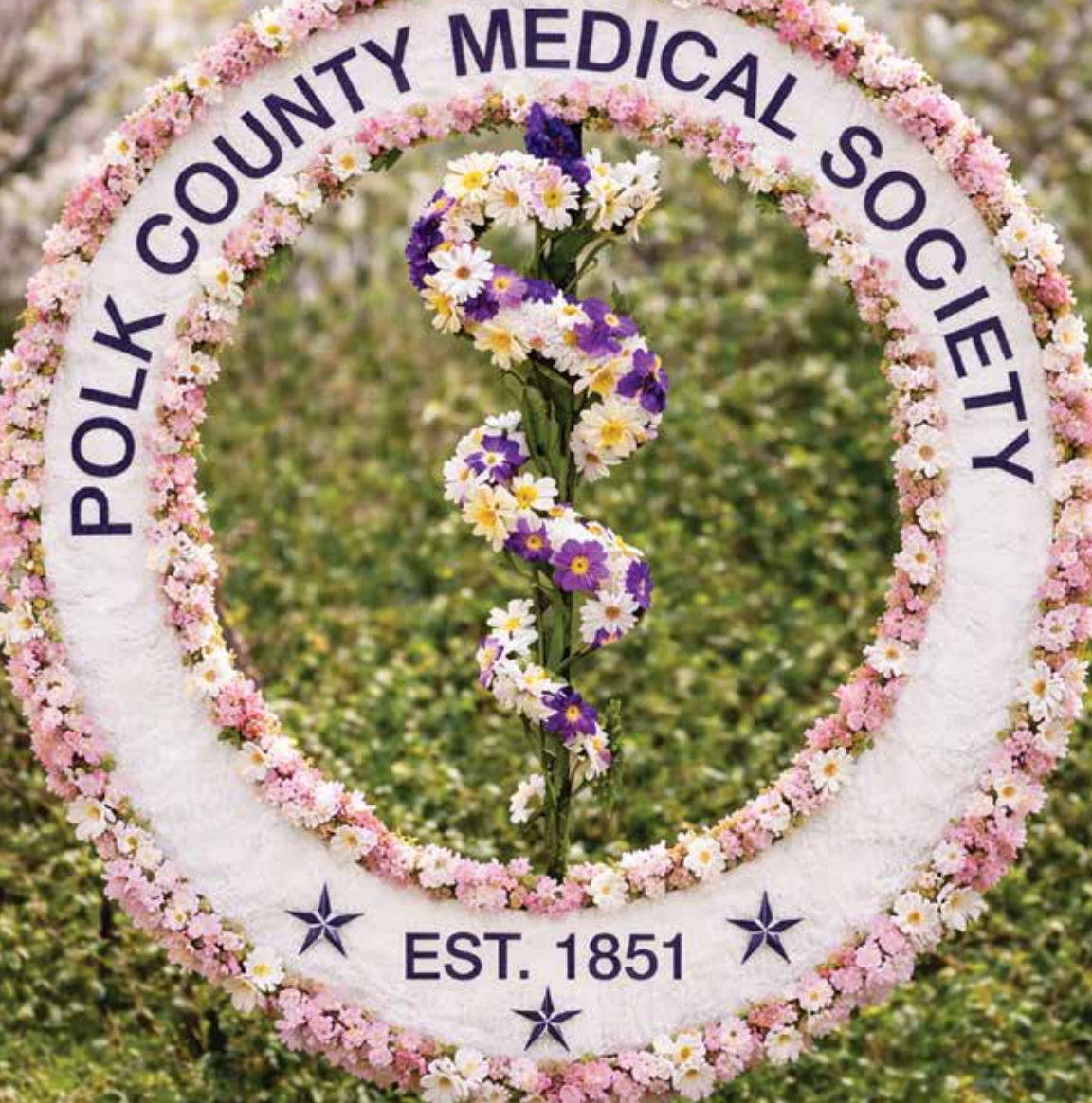


Jan/Mar 2026

Bulletin

MEMBER MAGAZINE FOR THE POLK COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY



2026-2027 PCMS Executive Council

2026 Kathie J. Lyman Scholarship

DMU-COM: Match & Commitment to Iowa's Workforce

AI and Healthcare: Designing the Future

175th PCMS Annual Meeting

Global Health – From Chiang Mai with Gratitude

Dollars in Action: The Julie Evans Memorial Fund

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Des Moines, Iowa
January/March 2026

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JAN/MAR 2026
Bulletin
MEMBER MAGAZINE FOR THE POLK COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

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COVER PHOTO: PCMS logo in spring flowers.

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Strengthening Our Voice:

Two Years of Service and Progress



Closing Message from Your PCMS President

By: Thomas Klein, D.O.

Dear Members,

It has been a privilege to serve as President of the Polk County Medical Society over the past two years. Representing the physicians of Polk County has been both an honor and a responsibility I have taken seriously. Together, we have worked to strengthen our collective voice and advance policies that support your ability to deliver high-quality care to patients across Iowa.

During this time, we made meaningful progress through advocacy efforts at both the state and national levels. Key initiatives included working to improve Local Coverage Determination (LCD) policies and promoting truth in advertising standards, along with supporting broader efforts aimed at reducing administrative burden and preserving the integrity of physician-

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led care. These efforts are essential to ensuring that physicians can focus on what matters most—caring for patients.

At our annual meeting, we were fortunate to hear an exceptional presentation from our guest speaker, Lynn Hanessian, titled “Trust, AI, and the Misinformation Battle.” It was both thought-provoking and, at times, startling in its implications—underscoring how rapidly evolving information ecosystems and artificial intelligence are shaping patient perceptions, trust, and decision-

making. The discussion reinforced the critical role physicians play as trusted sources of truth and the importance of maintaining credibility in an increasingly complex digital landscape.

Thank you for your engagement, your dedication to your patients, and your commitment to our profession. It has been a pleasure serving you.

Sincerely,

Tom Klein, DO



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Strengthening IOWA'S PHYSICIAN *Workforce*



By: Paula A. Noonan, C.E.O.

Across Iowa—and here in Central Iowa—physicians are seeing firsthand the growing strain on our healthcare workforce. Demand for care continues to rise while the supply of physicians struggles to keep pace. **More than 90% of Iowa counties contain federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas**, highlighting the growing challenge of ensuring access to care across the state. *Source: U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA).*

Iowa also ranks **44th nationally in physicians per capita**, and workforce projections suggest the state could face a shortage of **approximately 1,600 physicians by 2030** if

current trends continue. *Sources: Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) State Physician Workforce Data Report; Iowa Public Radio reporting on physician workforce projections.*

For patients, this can mean longer wait times, delayed diagnoses, and in many communities, fewer options for specialty care. For physicians, it often means heavier workloads, increasing administrative pressure, and the ongoing challenge of maintaining balance in an already demanding profession.

The reasons behind the shortage are complex. A significant portion

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of Iowa's physician workforce is approaching retirement age, while the pipeline of new physicians entering practice remains limited by residency training capacity and other structural barriers. At the same time, healthcare demand continues to grow as our population ages and requires more complex care.

At the **Polk County Medical Society (PCMS)**, we recognize that strengthening the physician workforce pipeline must remain a priority. Ensuring that Iowa can recruit, train, and retain physicians is essential to protecting access to high-quality care for our communities—not only in Polk County but across the entire state.

Through sustained advocacy and collaboration with physicians, healthcare leaders, and policymakers, meaningful steps are being taken to strengthen the physician pipeline. At the **state level**, PCMS has supported legislative efforts expanding **loan repayment and physician incentive programs** that help reduce financial barriers for physicians who choose to practice in Iowa, particularly in underserved communities. These programs are critical tools in helping attract and retain physicians where access to care is most at risk.

At the **federal level**, physician advocacy has helped secure continued support for expanding **Graduate Medical Education (GME)** opportunities. Increasing residency training positions remains one of the most effective strategies to strengthen the physician workforce because physicians are significantly more likely to practice in the state where they complete their residency training.

Polk County plays a unique role in Iowa's healthcare landscape. As the state's largest metro area and a regional hub for specialty care, physicians in our community care for patients not only from Polk County but from across Iowa. Strengthening the physician workforce here benefits patients throughout the region.

But workforce challenges are only one part of the broader work needed to protect the practice of medicine. The Polk County Medical Society exists for a fundamental reason: **to ensure physicians have a strong, independent voice advocating for their profession and the patients they serve.**

PCMS is **physician-led and physician-driven**. Our leadership and advocacy

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Continued from page 10

priorities are guided by physicians practicing in Central Iowa who understand the realities of clinical practice and the responsibilities physicians carry every day.

We take seriously our role as the **watchdogs for the profession**. PCMS actively advocates for policies that protect the integrity of physician-led care and the physician-patient relationship. This includes supporting **truth-in-advertising legislation**, which ensures that patients clearly understand the qualifications of the professionals providing their care and protects the appropriate use of the terms **“physician” and “doctor” in clinical settings**.

Patients deserve transparency in who is delivering their care, and physicians deserve recognition for the extensive education, training, and responsibility required to lead the healthcare team.

Protecting that clarity is essential not only for the profession but for patient trust and safety.

Advocacy like this does not happen by accident—it happens when physicians stand together.

Membership in the **Polk County Medical Society** strengthens the collective voice of physicians across Central Iowa. The more united we are, the more effective we can be in defending the profession, protecting the physician-patient relationship, and ensuring that medicine continues to be practiced with the highest standards of training, transparency, and patient-centered care.

When physicians support PCMS, they are supporting the future of physician-led medicine in Central Iowa.



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A President's Reflection in Our 175th Year:

Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future of Medicine



By: Jeffrey Farber, M.D.

Greetings Polk County Medical Society Membership,

I attended the Polk County Medical Society 175th annual meeting the other evening, where our speaker explored the evolving relationship between artificial intelligence and the practice of medicine. The presentation was both timely and thought-provoking—though I admit my mind wandered briefly.

I found myself reflecting on the 1850s, when our Society was first established. In those days, physicians traveled from town to town, and house to house, on horseback. Today, we can be downtown in 15 minutes.

Physicians of that era had remarkably few tools at their disposal. The thermometer was not introduced until 1867 by Thomas Clifford Allbutt. The blood pressure cuff followed in 1896, thanks to Riva-Rocci. Many of us remember from medical school the famous 1895 X-ray of Dr. Röntgen's wife's hand. It is hard to imagine managing something like a displaced distal radius fracture without the benefit of imaging.

The Polk County Medical Society was founded in 1851, around the same time formal medical education was taking root in Iowa. The original College of Physicians and Surgeons began in Keokuk in 1850 before

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moving to Iowa City in 1870. (Iowa itself became a state just a few years earlier, in 1846.)

When I entered medical school in 1979, the CT scan—developed in 1971—was just beginning to find its place in everyday clinical practice. By the time I started residency, a new technology called NMR had emerged, which we now know as MRI.

Even more recently, the introduction of Epic in 1992 ushered in a new era of electronic medical records—though not without some understandable grumbling. Then again, every innovation has had its skeptics. When I was a resident, plaster was still king, and fiberglass casts required ultraviolet light to cure.

The practice of medicine has been evolving since its earliest days, and it continues to do so at an ever-accelerating pace.

While the Polk County Medical Society's mission statement has evolved over time, its core values remain unchanged:

- Promote the science and art of medicine

- Communicate a shared mission for healthcare
- Maintain the highest professional and ethical standards
- Strengthen the voice of the medical profession through enhanced collegiality

During my training, my chief resident often reminded us: treat the patient, not the lab value or the image. Despite the exponential growth of technology in medicine, that fundamental principle still holds true. *Primum non nocere*—first, do no harm.

Our speaker's message echoed a similar theme. Artificial intelligence has the potential to enhance our daily practice in meaningful ways, but it does not replace the human element at the heart of medicine. At the same time, we cannot afford to ignore it. To do so would be to fall behind.

As I close these reflections, **I am deeply honored—and profoundly humbled—to serve as your president in the 175th year of the Polk County Medical Society.**

DMU-COM: Match and Continued Commitment to Iowa's Physician Workforce



By: David A. Connett, D.O.

Des Moines University College of Osteopathic Medicine (DMU-COM) proudly celebrates the Match of 198 medical students this year, a milestone that reflects both the dedication of our students and the strength of our training programs. Notably, 31 of these graduates secured residency positions within the state of Iowa. While this is encouraging, it also highlights an ongoing challenge—many more of our graduates expressed a strong desire to remain in Iowa but were unable to do so due to the limited number of available in-state residency positions.

This issue is occurring against a broader national backdrop. At its most recent annual meeting, the Association of American Medical

Colleges (AAMC) projected that the physician workforce shortage could reach as high as 400,000 by 2050, with an even distribution between primary care and specialty care. Compounding this concern is the continued aging of the physician workforce, alongside the retirement of approximately 10,000 individuals per day in the United States. Additionally, projections suggest a potential decline in medical school enrollment through 2036, further stressing the future pipeline of physicians.

At DMU-COM, we are actively addressing these challenges. We are moving forward as a sponsoring institution for Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) residency programs,

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Continued from page 15

partnering with hospitals and health systems across Iowa to develop new (de novo) residency programs and expand existing ones. These efforts are critical, as physicians are significantly more likely to practice in the communities where they complete their residency training.

We are also working closely with state leaders and stakeholders to advocate for sustained and expanded funding to support graduate medical education.

Encouragingly, we are making meaningful progress in these efforts, with a shared commitment to strengthening Iowa's healthcare workforce.

The Match is a day of celebration, but it is also a call to action. By continuing to invest in residency training opportunities within our state, we can better retain our talented graduates and ensure access to high-quality care for Iowans now and into the future.



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PCMS ANNUAL MEETING:

Celebrating 175 Years

of Care, Connection, Legacy & Innovation



The Polk County Medical Society (PCMS) marked a remarkable milestone with its 175th Annual Meeting of the Membership—an evening that celebrated not only the Society’s long-standing legacy, but also the innovation, leadership, and community that continue to shape its future. Held at the historic Wakonda Club in Des Moines, the event brought together physicians, healthcare leaders, and guests for a memorable night of connection and inspiration.

PCMS President Thomas Klein, D.O., welcomed attendees and officially opened the evening’s program, setting the tone for a celebration that honored both tradition and forward-thinking progress in medicine.

A highlight of this year’s milestone event was keynote speaker Lynn Hanessian, a nationally recognized expert in artificial intelligence and trusted advisor to organizations navigating technological transformation. In a thought-provoking

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and timely address, Hanessian explored the rapidly evolving role of artificial intelligence in healthcare—offering both insight and perspective on how these powerful tools are reshaping the medical landscape.

While acknowledging the extraordinary capabilities of AI—from accelerating diagnostics to enhancing predictive analytics—Hanessian emphasized a message that resonated deeply with those in attendance: medicine is, and always will be, a profoundly human

endeavor. She spoke to the irreplaceable role of physicians in delivering compassionate care, exercising clinical judgment, and building trust with patients during life’s most critical moments.

Drawing on her extensive experience in corporate strategy, communications, and healthcare consulting, Hanessian encouraged attendees to view AI not as a replacement, but as a partner—one that can enhance the expertise, empathy, and decision-making that define



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the profession. Her remarks offered a compelling vision for integrating innovation while remaining grounded in purpose and human connection.

The evening also continued long-standing PCMS traditions, including the installation of the newly elected 2026-2027 Executive Council officers and the presentation of the Kathie J.

Lyman Scholarship awards, recognizing outstanding individuals who represent the future of medicine.

As PCMS celebrated 175 years as the largest and oldest county medical society in Iowa, the evening served as both a reflection on its rich history and a celebration of its ongoing impact in the community and beyond.



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The Society also extends its sincere gratitude to the sponsors and partners who helped make the evening possible. **Special recognition was given to Platinum Sponsor The Volunteer Physician Network; Gold Sponsor Charter Bank; and Silver Sponsor Des Moines University and Bronze sponsor Tarbell & Company LLP.** PCMS also proudly acknowledges the continued support of its **Healthcare Partnership Affiliate Program members—Broadlawns Medical Center and UnityPoint Health – Des Moines—as well as its Circle of Friends partners: Foster Group, Copic, and Des Moines Area Community College.**

Building on the success of previous years—including the 174th Annual Meeting, which featured Hall of Fame astronaut and physician David C. Hilmers, M.D.—this year's 175th celebration further underscored PCMS's commitment to bringing meaningful dialogue and distinguished voices to its members.

As the evening concluded, attendees left not only inspired by the insights shared, but also energized for the future of medicine—one that embraces innovation while remaining deeply rooted in the human connections at its core.



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PCMS ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP

FEATURING GUEST SPEAKER: **Lynn Hanessian**

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Congratulations to the 2026
Kathie J. Lyman
Scholarship Award Recipients!



The Polk County Medical Society (PCMS) proudly celebrated the recipients of the 2026 Kathie J. Lyman Scholarships during its 175th Annual Meeting, held on Monday, March 30, 2026, at the historic Wakonda Club in Des Moines. The milestone gathering brought together members in a spirit of recognition, community, and continued commitment to advancing healthcare.

This year's scholarship recipients represent the future of medicine and the Society's dedication to supporting emerging leaders in the field. Zarak Jahangir Gandapur of Des Moines University's Osteopathic College of Medicine was awarded a \$1,000

scholarship. Fellow Des Moines University student Luke Wagner of the College of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery, along with Irimi Petros of the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, were also each honored with \$1,000 scholarships in recognition of their academic achievements and promise.

In addition, the Society highlighted its commitment to global health initiatives through the Kathie J. Lyman Scholarship Fund. Global Health Mission Program awards were presented to Miranda Pressgrove, D.O., of Broadlawns Medical Center, and Gretchen Blain (DO-26), a Global Health student at Des Moines University. Each recipient

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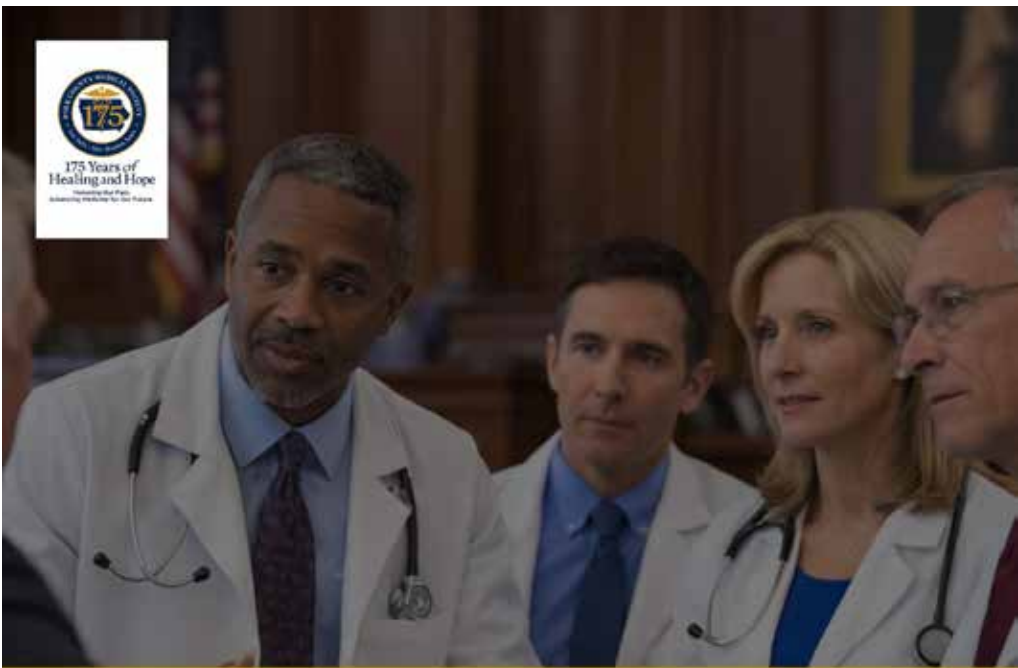
2023 KATHIE J. LYMAN SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

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received a \$500 award to support their participation in international medical missions and educational programs, further extending the reach of compassionate care beyond local communities.

The evening served not only as a celebration of these outstanding individuals, but also as a testament to PCMS's enduring legacy of fostering excellence, service, and innovation in medicine.





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From Chiang Mai with Gratitude:

A Transformative Medical Experience



By: Gretchen Blain

In February 2026, I had the opportunity to complete a month-long medical rotation in Chiang Mai, Thailand. During this time, I rotated through several areas of pediatric medicine, including the pediatric intensive care unit, and spent one week in community medicine.

This diverse and immersive experience provided me with meaningful insight into the practice of medicine in a global setting and strengthened the clinical skills, cultural awareness, and adaptability that will guide my future career in pediatrics. Throughout my rotation, I was



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continually struck by the kindness and generosity of the physicians and learners I worked alongside. Despite language barriers, they made a concerted effort to translate patient cases into English so that I could fully engage in clinical discussions and better understand patient care. Their dedication to both their patients and my learning was truly inspiring. This experience reinforced that, while medicine is grounded in universal scientific principles, its delivery is deeply shaped by local contexts and available resources.

One of the most impactful aspects of my experience was observing how providers navigated barriers to care. I witnessed the difficulties faced by marginalized populations, including Myanmar immigrants seeking affordable healthcare, as well as the challenges many patients encountered in accessing vaccines due to lack of insurance coverage. Seeing firsthand how

physicians adapted to these limitations with creativity and compassion gave me a deeper appreciation for resourcefulness in medicine and the importance of advocating for equitable care.

One particularly meaningful patient moment occurred when I met a family who had traveled for an entire week from Myanmar to seek care for their child. Despite the long journey, they were incredibly kind, and their child was curious and engaged with the visiting students.

As we prepared to leave, the child bowed and said “khop khun ka,” meaning “thank you” in Thai. This simple yet powerful gesture of gratitude is something I will carry with me throughout my career!

Outside of the hospital setting, I made a conscious effort to fully engage with all that Thailand had to offer. I traveled to southern Thailand, where I explored the



Dollars in Action:

The Julie Evans Memorial Children's Healthcare Fund

3rd Quarter FY 2025-2026

The Julie Evans Memorial Children's Healthcare Fund continues to make a profound difference in the lives of Iowa's most vulnerable residents. Through the first three quarters of fiscal year 2025/26, the fund helped 2,836 at-risk children and families access essential specialty care through the Volunteer Physician Network (VPN) program—care that would otherwise remain out of reach.

This impact is especially meaningful in today's climate. As families navigate rising costs driven by inflation, economic uncertainty, and the ripple effects of global conflict, access to healthcare has become even more fragile for those already living on the margins. For many of the families served by the VPN, difficult choices between basic needs and medical care are a daily reality. In this environment, the Julie Evans Memorial Children's Healthcare Fund is not just helpful—it is vital.

As we move into the summer months, we remain committed to carrying forward

Julie Evans' vision and compassion. Her legacy lives on through every child who receives care, every family that finds relief, and every life that is given a better chance to thrive. The fund stands as a lasting tribute to her belief that all children deserve access to quality healthcare and the opportunity for a healthy, fulfilling life.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Evans Family Charitable Foundation for their continued generosity and unwavering support. Their commitment ensures that the VPN program can provide a critical lifeline—often the only pathway to specialty care—for children and families in Iowa living below 200% of the federal poverty level and ineligible for other forms of assistance.

Because of this enduring support, Julie Evans' legacy is not only remembered—it is actively changing lives, strengthening families, and helping entire communities move forward with hope and resilience.

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beaches and national parks, and I also maximized my time in Chiang Mai by visiting local coffee shops and enjoying the region's diverse cuisine. One of my favorite dishes I tried was khao soi, a flavorful noodle dish served in a rich, spicy broth, typically with slow-cooked meat and topped with crispy fried noodles.

Another highlight of my experience, which deepened my appreciation for Thai culture, was visiting the many temples throughout the region. A particularly memorable day was hiking to Wat Pha Lat and Wat Phra That Doi Suthep. Both temples offered stunning views of the surrounding landscape and breathtaking overlooks of Chiang Mai, making the experience unforgettable!

Overall, my time in Thailand and my rotation with Chiang Mai University were incredibly meaningful and transformative.

This experience broadened my understanding of how medicine is practiced across different cultural and resource settings, while also highlighting the personal growth that comes from stepping outside of one's comfort zone.

Immersing myself in a new culture encouraged reflection, adaptability, and a deeper appreciation for patient care beyond clinical knowledge alone. It allowed me to slow down from the pace of everyday life in the United States and develop more intentional, meaningful ways to connect with patients. This is an experience I will carry with me throughout my career in pediatrics.



AI and Healthcare:

Designing the Future



By: Lynn Hanessian,
Founder & CEO, The Engager Company
 (Guest Speaker for the Polk County Medical Society 175th
 Annual Meeting of the Membership on March 30th, 2026)

Physicians and health systems are using AI to reclaim time and reduce administrative burden. Patients are using it to speed up their health knowledge and address concerns, along the way replacing access to care they can't get. That perspective divide may be the most consequential story as AI takes on healthcare.

On the clinical side, the tools are delivering. AI scribes reduce documentation burden and diagnostic tools compete with human eyes in radiology. Physician adoption has moved from 47% to 63% active use in under a year.

On the patient side, 1 in 4 of ChatGPT's 800 million users submits a health prompt every week. Fifty-five percent of adults under 30 are more comfortable discussing mental health with AI than with a clinician. AI is filling a vacuum

the system created and adapting to a consumer expectation of convenience — sometimes accurately, often incompletely.

Two groups.

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Entirely different problems.

The asymmetry plays out in every exam room. Patients arrive with AI-assisted certainty — symptoms researched, diagnoses suggested. The physician training, practice and expertise, previously the gatekeeper of fact, is sharing space with an imitating large language model, i.e. AI.

This is a care design problem, not a technology problem. The real opportunity is not to optimize physician

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workflow and patient search separately, but to integrate them. Physicians are now a navigator in a world of uneven information: bringing clinical judgment to what patients already have, closing the gap between what they found and what is true.

Three things the evidence supports:

Lead the appointment, don't follow the AI. Ask what the patient searched before sharing your assessment. It surfaces misinformation and patient perspective without triggering defensiveness and positions you as the integrator of their research.

Become a credible source, not just an authority. Your digital presence is now a clinical safety issue. If you're not cited

inside AI summaries, someone else is. AI serves up content before your website is reached, so design your content for AI discovery.

Advocate for validation, not just adoption. Ask what data any new AI tool was validated on. That is the standard of care applied to technology. As physician health tech leaders advise, ensure doctor/patient centricity in any AI solution.

Eric Topol wrote in the *New England Journal of Medicine*: "If we don't shape our own future, powerful technology companies will happily shape it for us." Whether physicians and patients remain at the center depends on who drives the design.

News...News...News...News!

Polk County Medical Society wants to know what's new with you. Have you been appointed to a board or received an award? Please take a moment to send your information and photo for the next issue of *The BULLETIN*! Just email information to:

Email the Editor: pcms@pcms.org
 or Mail: Polk County Medical Society
 1520 High Street
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