

Oration from 2003

Oration Title:

We Have Met The Aged And They Are Us

Orator:

Jerry H. Gurwitz, M.D.

Abstract of Oration:

As the Baby Boomers hit 65 over the next ten years, they present a problem in healthcare that the medical world has never before encountered. Dr. Gurwitz says that although they are a small part of the population, Americans over 65 comprise a large portion of healthcare spending. The projections for chronic illness in the next 35 years are staggering and represent a real financial dilemma for the country. Prescription drug coverage is another part of this larger problem. Medical training in geriatrics is far below what it should be to deal with this problem. Dr. Gurwitz describes one of the "new geriatric practice models" that have been developed in anticipation of the "Senior Boom."

Dr. Gurwitz has suggestions for dealing with the rapid geriatric influx into the medical world: a "national strategy" must be devised for caring for this population on a large scale, a "comprehensive drug benefit plan" must be available to all senior citizens, professionals specifically skilled in geriatric medicine must be cultivated, and models which allow the elderly to stay out of nursing homes as long as possible must be implemented in more areas across the country.