

# Oration from 2009

## Oration Title:

*Monitoring Competence and Enhancing Performance: Effective Ways to Support the Practicing Physician*

## Orator:

Richard Aghababian, M.D.

## Abstract of Oration:

Dr. Aghababian begins with a short reference to historical forces that influenced competency such as an ancient practice to pay physicians only for a good outcome and ethical standards that emerged from the teaching of Hippocrates. In recent times, however, increasing complexity of therapeutic options and increasing workloads have made it difficult for the physician to stay on the cutting edge of medical knowledge and skills. Increasing scrutiny by hospitals also adds to time pressures on busy practitioners.

Dr. Aghababian continues that addressing a physician's own competence, while preserving the integrity of relationships with patients, are principles that are being tested in the current medical environment. A physician must adopt a commitment to, and set aside time for, continuous professional development. This development includes such steps as: Performance of self assessment with a review of feedback from patients, payers, and other providers; identification and acceptance of gaps in one's medical knowledge and skills; participation in educational activities that identify those gaps and a willingness to adjust one's practice style; participating in reassessment activities and observing whether patient outcomes and satisfaction have improved.

A promising learning technique is the Medical Education Theater which employs professional actors, computerized mannequins, and theatrical style sets to demonstrate such matters as the proper and improper ways to assess and treat patients. Dr. Aghababian then introduced two skits that were performed for the appreciative audience and which portrayed such patients encounters. After discussion of the lessons learned, Dr. Aghababian pointed out that interacting in such skits can also teach contemporary treatments, skills, and how to function efficiently under a variety of circumstances.

The development of such novel teaching techniques must be encouraged along with research in educational methods to assist the practitioner in improving the care provided to his/her patients.