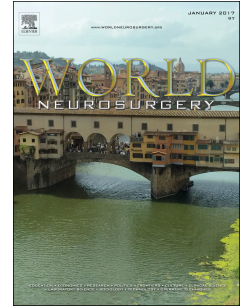


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The Healthcare Landscape: Are Doctors Agents of Change or Impediments to Change?

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## The Healthcare Landscape: Are Doctors Agents of Change or Impediments to Change?

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“Lead, follow, or get out of the way!”

Lee Iacocca (former head of Chrysler Motors)

“Sometimes give your services for nothing, calling to mind a previous benefaction or present satisfaction. And if there be an opportunity of serving one who is a stranger in financial straits, give full assistance to all such. For where there is love of man, there is also love of the art.”

Hippocrates, *Precepts*, Chapter 6

### The “Golden” State: California Neurosurgery Acquires the Midas Touch

California – nicknamed the “Golden State” both for its precious metal resources in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and for the color of much of its landscape (especially in drought years) – is on the cutting edge of issues such as technology, environmental change, and social policy. Apple is synonymous with cutting-edge technology; Tesla presents Elon Musk’s vision for environmentally friendly transportation; the State of California has defied the US federal regulation banning research using human embryonic stem cells.

If California were a country it would be ranked approximately 6<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of GDP. California has roughly the same number of practicing neurosurgeons as Germany (about 800) with a population roughly half that of Germany (40 million versus 80 million) – for a ratio of one neurosurgeon per 50,000 population.

CANS (California Association of Neurological Surgeons) is the professional society for neurosurgeons in California. CANS has held an annual meeting since 1973; the most recent CANS annual meeting was in January, 2017. It is informative to examine how the content of the CANS annual meeting has evolved over the past couple of decades:<sup>1</sup>

1996: Of the 15 presentations, all but one were by physicians (the lone non-physician was a California State Congressman). The majority of the presentations considered the clinical care of neurosurgical patients; legislative and legal views were presented primarily in relation to patient care.

2011: Of the 9 presentations, only one was by a physician practicing full-time (and that presentation was entitled “The challenge of the new healthcare legislation to academic neurosurgery”). Other

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