President's Message
Dr. Susan Lee

Did you know that July is Social Wellness Month? I had no idea, but this really resonated with me. As I reflect on my career as a primary care internal medicine physician, I think the one thing that has helped my wellness is the connections to friends. There is a lot of buzz about physician wellness right now. Unfortunately, your health system’s efforts of organizing a 6 am zoom Yoga or group painting of rocks is just not going to improve physician burnout. The Corporatization of Healthcare has created a lot of toxicity, and the thing that will rise above this is strong communities and friendships. I would argue comradery is the one thing that may sustain us in medicine today. I have several groups of friends, but one that I treasure very deeply is the many connections I have had through ACP and our Chapter. While our Chapter can help you to make connections, friendships are built on a foundation of communication, reliability, and showing up. My mom always used to say if you have loyal friends your life is rich. She made friends very easily, and it is because she practiced these tips, I want to share with you. I believe that everyone can start applying Younge Lee’s tips into your life today as part of your own wellness plan:

1. **Communicate:** Open and honest dialogue can help you understand each other, resolve conflicts, and express your needs and concerns. You can also try active listening, empathy, and expressing your thoughts and feelings.
2. **Be reliable:** Keep your promises and do what you say you will do. You can also be honest about your time constraints and only commit to what is realistically possible.
3. **Show up:** Be available for each other regularly, through a consistent plan like a phone call or lunch. The **8-minute phone call challenge** is something Eileen Barrett, former Chair of the Board of Regents, told me about and I love it!
4. **Be a good listener:** Try to understand a situation from your friend’s point of view.
5. **Be trustworthy:** Be willing to tell your friend the truth, even when it’s hard to hear. Be that friend who will tell me my clothes are inside out or if I did something inappropriate.
6. **Be kind and pay it forward for others:** This is a must. To make good friends you need to be a good friend.
7. **Be there for each other:** Good friends stick together through rough patches and are there to comfort you when you are upset. Good friends brag about you. Good friends do not mind if you call them at 4am.
8. **Forgive:** Forgive yourself and your friend for not being perfect. “Perfection is the thief of joy” and my dear friend and outgoing NYACP President, Dan Pomerantz, always reminds me of this!

So, following the tips from my mom about friendship, I hope you have the motivation to take care of each other and invest in friendships. I am here for you, along with the many NYACP chapter leaders, if you ever need advice, are in trouble, or want to get involved in ACP.
And try out the 8-minute phone call challenge, a couple of minutes on the phone with someone can strengthen your connections.

Lastly, while I am a person who believes in the importance of human-to-human interaction, I also believe in the possibility of AI to help physicians with the administrative burdens of healthcare. As a Deputy CMIO at Stony Brook, one of the joys of my work is to help physicians to work smarter and not harder. Like many institutions, we are testing out the possibilities of AI scribes for note completion. While it is not perfect, it is a tool that has allowed me to be more present in the exam room. Recently, in Annals, the policy paper “Artificial Intelligence in the Provision of Health Care” explains how artificial intelligence (AI) in clinical health care has the potential to transform health care delivery, however, it should not replace physician decision-making. The paper offers recommendations on the ethical, scientific, and clinical components of AI use. I hope you take the time to read this timely policy paper. As physicians we all must be engaged in AI so that we can work more efficiently, reduce administrative burden, and have more time to enhance our relationships with patients.

I hope you are taking some time off to rest and spend time away from medical work and studies this summer. We are lucky to live in New York State, where there are many opportunities to explore the outdoors, culture, and try new foods. I am giving everyone a mandatory order to engage with what our state has to offer this summer. As someone who is interested in American History, one of my favorite things to do is visit Presidential Homes and Libraries. We are lucky to have two in New York, and I highly recommend you check them out this summer: Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay, Long Island is the home of our 26th President, Theodore Roosevelt and, in the Hudson Valley, there is the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt our 32nd President in Hyde Park.

Remember to register for NYACP’s scientific meeting in Tarrytown where I hope to meet you in person. This will be a fantastic opportunity to learn and make a new friend!

With gratitude,

Susan Lee, MD, FACP
NYACP President
Governor, Long Island Region