Reflections on My Advocacy Internship Experience
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In my welcoming essay, I shared my thoughts on why elder adults are vulnerable and deserve better efforts to alleviate the unnecessary suffering caused by the current system. Initially uncertain about where to begin, my concern for aging New Yorkers guided me into the complex territory of policies, interest groups, taskforces, and other advocacy efforts. These entities shared my concerns and delved deeper into analyzing the issues that hinder our ability to deliver or access high-quality care.

Understanding the rationale behind the systems we take for granted is challenging. We rarely pause to ask critical questions, such as: How do we get paid? Who makes the rules? How can we make our voices heard? What role have we, or my organization, played in shaping certain policies and initiatives? I am grateful for the opportunity to explore these questions and to find some answers. Gaining insight into the intricate process of issue resolution is akin to understanding how the body regulates blood pressure for the first time. This knowledge empowers me to explore different perspectives and collaborate towards solutions that will impact the society where I live and practice medicine.

It is essential to understand why things are as they are. In medicine, we often focus too much on the exact and natural scientific realm, forgetting that medicine is also a social science. I will strive to maintain awareness of the political and ethical frameworks that shape our practice and the rules our patients must navigate.

This experience has strengthened my conviction that advocacy begins with compassion and understanding others' hardships. It flourishes through listening, collaboration, and taking an active role in transforming an imperfect but evolving healthcare system.