



AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF COSMETIC SURGERY

SURGE

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THE HAIR ISSUE

STATE-OF-THE-ART
ADVANCEMENTS IN
HAIR RESTORATION

+ ABCS: The Value of Board Certification

+ PRACTICE MANAGEMENT:
Preparing for the Unexpected



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Preparing for the Unexpected in Your Medical Practice

Part 1 of 4

As a practicing physician, you see many patients with a variety of symptoms every day. You try and think of all of the things that you have learned over the years and look in your cookie jar for a resolution to your patients' complaints. But what would happen if for some odd reason, your patient isn't getting better? Say, for instance, that you've looked at all of the tests that have been ordered by you and other specialists, and what's so strange is that you think that you've identified the problem because every test seems to indicate a specific prognosis.

Up to this point, your patient has tried all kinds of temporary relief modalities to control the pain, including exercise, diet, oral medications (NSAIDs and other analgesics) and dermal patches to minimize their discomfort – even resorting to opiates.

Onward you march to find the solution to this problem. After conferring with your colleagues and your patient, you decide to move ahead with a treatment to help alleviate your patient's condition. After the procedure is finished, you wait to see some remarkable improvement only to see that your patient is actually getting worse. "What do you do now?" is the next question.

Now your patient tells you that they are constipated, and you figure that it is from all of the medications. So, you tell them to see one last specialist – your friend, the gastroenterologist. After a complete office exam, the GI recommends a CT scan with contrast and a chest x-ray just to ease their mind that it is nothing major. Hours later, the results of the test arrive, but the results are not as expected. The preliminary findings indicate spots on the left kidney and the left lung. "Is this for real?" you ask.

Before you have a chance to ponder this further, you receive a call from another colleague that your patient is now in the ER and being admitted for the terrible pain in her back and abdomen. After yet another battery of tests and yet another team of specialists, your patient sits down with one of the doctors later that afternoon to hear the latest findings. Your patient listens in complete shock and disbelief as she is told that she has renal cell carcinoma (stage IV) with metastasis into her left lung.

What is the reason for this article? Well, quite frankly, this patient could be you – a physician with so many resources, so much education and knowledge, the financial ability to have anything done, and yet the cynicism "that it couldn't happen to me." But it can and in my wife's case, it has. Now so many decisions have to be made inclusive of ongoing medical treatment, family and friends, and a successful medical practice that we have built over the last 30 years.

Over the next few issues of *Surge*, I'm inviting you to come along with me and my wife on our journey, one we've only just begun ourselves. You'll be learning and experiencing the whole process with us practically in real time – all of the personal, professional and practice management challenges that lie ahead. We hope you share in

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our hope and discovery and revelations, and that perhaps you can learn something along the way that will help you in your life and your practice.

So where do you go from here, you ask? First and foremost the answer is simple common sense. You need to take care of your condition or everything else will fall apart anyway. Regrettably, we hadn't even thought about succession planning for the practice. Our vision was that our child, who is now in her residency, would join the practice, thus realizing a long-standing dream of a mother-daughter team practicing together. This is just the tip of the iceberg of difficult practice management situations yet to navigate.

As you can imagine, the initial shock has now set in, and in those moments, you really don't even comprehend everything that you are hearing. So many things are going through my mind, and I don't know where to go or to think or to even say first. I usually sit back and process through situations thoroughly so that I don't make hasty decisions. However, time is not on my side, so my next move has to be made quickly and decisively.

What follows is a textbook progression of emotion – shock, denial, anger and a disquieting sense of being in limbo – before finally pulling my head out of the sand to attempt to gain control of what is happening and what I am about to encounter. The obvious problem is that you simply have no idea what the next day has in store for you or your practice.

For us, it included several immediate calls and subsequent appointments to top-notch cancer centers. Flying out to meet these medical marvels, we are hoping that to hear that the preliminary diagnosis was not as originally stated, and that our minds will be put at ease. To be continued in the next issue of *Surge*...

UPDATE: Dr. Janee Steinberg passed away on June 11 surrounded by her husband and family. S

The Value of ABCS Certification for Cosmetic Surgeons (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23)

recognition of the ABCS by the public and state medical boards, the ABCS launched an awareness campaign contracting the services of a prominent Chicago marketing firm. The campaign is designed to brand the ABCS as the only board dedicated exclusively to certifying surgeons in cosmetic surgery. The intent is to help assist the public in identifying and choosing qualified cosmetic surgeons. The ABCS certifying process continues to be the standard in cosmetic surgery board certification throughout the world. As such, the ABCS provides administrative and content assistance to the World Board of Cosmetic Surgery and the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery.

The ABCS continues to advance its position within the realm of certifying agencies so that we meet or exceed ABMS/BOS standards. I encourage all cosmetic surgeons to visit the ABCS website at www.americanboardcosmeticsurgery.org to further investigate the necessary qualifications and certification processes to become a Diplomate of the ABCS. S