Thursday Memo – March 12, 2015

This week I want to do something a little different once again. Last week the 2nd year students at UMMS recited the Oath that they had written. I remember in medical school tracking down the Hippocratic Oath (this was before Google and even the Internet). I read through the long version and was intrigued by the ideas of a commitment to avoiding harm, doing good for the poorest of the poor, and teaching our craft to others. In honor of that tradition, the students each year write their own Oath. I was moved hearing them reciting the commitments below. Of course there is no guarantee that they will follow through with these principles - but perhaps if each of us renews our own commitment, we might act as role models. I think it is beautifully written and it reminded me of ideas that I want to abide by but sometimes let lapse. See what you think.

The 2nd Year UMM Students Oath

May I walk into each patient's room with fresh eyes and worn soles.

May I bear in mind that my patients' health includes their social, psychological and spiritual well-being.

May I provide treatment through education as well as intervention.

May I give care to complement the work my patients already do to sustain themselves.

May I acknowledge that my privilege as a physician could cause me to overlook others' hardships.

May I utilize my position in society to make health sustainable for my community.

May I be cautious of convention and hone my craft with the spark of innovation.

May I appreciate that my knowledge is the endowment of my predecessors, and may I add my own discoveries.

May I respect my patients' decisions even if they would not be my own.

May I find inspiration in the woven threads that make up my patients' lives.

May I have the courage to voice my mistakes and be supportive of others in the same endeavor.

May I recognize that collaboration with my colleagues may be in my patients' best interest.

May I have the humility to ask for help.

May I seek an arrangement of work and life that enriches both.