

Ephemeris Project©

It has been postulated that an individualized, humanistic and mindful approach to patient care can not only serve a healthcare provider's patients with compassionate and holistic healthcare, but equally, a *safer* approach to the care of the patient.^{i ii iii} Much attention has been given to the introduction of a humanistic curriculum into undergraduate medical education, yet it has been demonstrated that such humanistic and idealistic influences fade as medical students transition into their house staff roles and beyond.^{iv v}

In an age of advanced medical technologies, the *Ephemeris Project* promotes and provides a venue of introspection and self-expression among healthcare professional students helping them participate in effective and compassionate care of their patients. Today's healthcare students must learn to balance the science of biomedical research and advanced medical technologies with the ethical implications and effects of such science on the patient and in particular on the physician-patient relationship. The implementation of tomorrow's technologies will require healthcare professionals to have an ethic-centered view of these technologies, cognizant of their science yet imbued with an appreciation of the enormous humanistic value inherent at their core. This is a most promising time to become a health care professional for we have in our immediate future enormous promise in human genomics, cancer therapies and other capabilities of advanced medical technologies. What I believe is needed is to *assure* that the benefits of these technologies are fully realized and that their expanding sphere of influence does not disenfranchise the patient nor depersonalize the physician-patient relationship. The inclusion and assimilation of art, literature, poetry, bioethics, law, thanatology, theology and at its core, humanism, into the education of graduate medical professionals should help them appreciate that their life's work is truly one of privileged human relationships. Frequent re-enforcement and renewal of these feelings is necessary.

The Ephemeris Project (<http://ephemerisproject.com>) named after the Latin word for journal or diary, is a program to promote and provide a venue of introspection and self-expression among medical students, physicians-in-training, and other healthcare professionals to better serve them to participate in effective and compassionate care of their patients. *The Ephemeris Project* is an Internet-facilitated personal journal and message board program, supported by twenty-four hour, seven day a week mentoring by physician(s), and is intended to preserve humanism, *values and ethics* fundamental to the Healthcare Professional Student.

The Ephemeris Project provides a substantive Web-based portal, database and 24/7 email support / advocacy for Healthcare Professionals.

Its platform provides:

- **Public online journal** which is entered on the website hosted at <http://ephemerisproject.com> where House Staff / Students and other Healthcare

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Professionals can publicly journal and share their stories, feelings and experiences. All public journal entries will be monitored and moderated / mentored by a healthcare professional available 24/7 for advice, opinion and discussion. (Inappropriate or contentious entries can be immediately deleted.)

- **Personal and private online journal**, with access to it at any computer terminal or PDA. It is hoped in this era of ever-present information technology, such access will further promote reflective writing; i.e. prose, poetry, essays, thoughts and *mindfulness*. This journal is continuous and each entry can be printed separately or together, bound and kept as a hard-copied journal.
- **Mentorship** –This is essential, for this program cannot be effective without someone with the initiative, experience and skills for the user to contact, confide in and seek advice. Mentoring will be provided by the Medical Board of *The Ephemeris Project* and advisors and directors in participating institutions.
- **Links** to publicly accessible commentaries and writings from leaders in the field of the History of Medicine, Biomedical Ethics, End-of-Life care, Philosophy and Literature complement the program.

The Ephemeris Project is supplemented by my personal website, MRBMD.COM which focuses on my own philosophies and personal writings / poetry / essays pertaining to what has been called the “soul of medicine”^{vi}.

I am very passionate about teaching my students the virtue and privilege of being a physician and the importance of constant introspection in order to maintain the course of idealism and expectations my students were passionate about when they entered Medical School. It is incumbent upon us as senior faculty to do everything we can to foster and preserve these ideals as our students graduate and traverse the arduous years as House staff and young attending physicians. ***This is an integral component to any patient safety initiative.***

Programs like the Ephemeris Project are not meant to be stand –alone-programs to accomplish the goals I have set forth. Rather, I intend the Ephemeris Project to be but a tool, albeit a “linchpin” in the pocket of the *White Coats* our Students and House staff wear, with pride.

ⁱ <http://www.academicmedicine.org/pt/re/acmed/abstract.00001888-200803000-00013.htm>

ⁱⁱ <http://jdc.jefferson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1493&context=hpn>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.humanmedicine.org/vancouver/wong.htm>

^{iv} <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1112992>

^v <http://www.annals.org/cgi/content/full/120/7/609?ck=nck>

^{vi} <http://www.rachelremen.com/recapturing.html>

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