

2011 President John Graykoski's Address on SEMPA's History
SEMPA 7th Annual Emergency Medicine Conference
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

In 1990, young, enthusiastic Emergency Medicine Physician Assistants at LA County –USC Emergency Medicine Residency program began discussing the future.

They met with Dr. Greg Henry to see if Pas could become members of the American College of Emergency Physicians. His counsel was, *"Don't! You will have challenges and opportunities unique to your profession. Build your own organization!"*

In 1992 SEMPA was incorporated – and the journey to today began.

Our logo was created: a central block surrounded by four blocks. The patient was at the center, cared for by the EMPA, who brought in the other surgical and medical specialties to help the patient.

Our Founding members may not see themselves as visionaries. Those in this room may even blush at the thought. But they knew that EMPAs would grow in numbers and in importance.

They recognized that there would need to be an organization to support them.

They saw the need for the clinical, professional and personal development of EMPAs.

And they saw us as having a pivotal role in the advancement of emergency medicine.

That vision remains the mission of SEMPA today.

=

In this society we celebrate the date we were born. The Spanish celebrate "compleanos" or the completion of a year of life.

In 2012 we will celebrate the completion of SEMPAs 20th year as a corporation.

There has been a commitment by the founders and leaders to build an organization and to recruit and nurture new leadership.

Today we look at a Board of Directors where the majority has served for 2 years or less.

And even now we are looking for the next generation of leaders through the expansion of our committee structures.

Much has been accomplished – Much remains to be done.

We estimate 7,500 to 10,000 practicing EMPAs. But SEMPA's membership is only about 1200.

We need to reach out and tell our colleagues, classmates and employers that we have a professional HOME in SEMPA.

Your membership and your volunteer service for the work of SEMPA will BUILD OUR FUTURE.

- It will strengthen the role of Physician Assistants in Emergency Medicine.
- It will benefit the practice of Emergency Medicine.
- Ultimately it will benefit the patients we serve.

=

Police work has been described as the thin blue line that holds lawlessness at bay and protects civilized society; that protects the law abiding from those who would victimize.

I believe that EMPAs are the thin white line that holds back the ravages of illness, injury, pain and suffering. 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, we are that thin white line where compassion and care are brought to the suffering, the broken and the vulnerable.

We may not thread the catheter to the blocked coronary artery. But we recognize the symptoms and intervene to keep the patient alive until they can receive that care.

We may not coil the aneurysm that prevents the catastrophic bleed. But we recognize the symptoms and keep the patient alive until they can receive that care.

We serve in the most rural and isolated places in our country as well as the busiest urban emergency centers.

We serve on disaster teams responding to emergencies worldwide.

We serve as volunteers in parts of the world with little or no access to modern healthcare.

We go into battle, offering life saving care in the strange new wars of the 21st century.

We serve valiantly at the dramatic moment when Life meets Death, offering human compassion and comfort when our medicine fails.

We serve a noble purpose as Emergency Medicine Physician Assistants.

And **SEMPA** is our Home.

And we are all *family*.

I call on each of us to continue to build and care for our home, by active involvement, first as members, then as volunteers and leaders.

Thank you for your support and for all you do, every day, for our patients and our profession.