

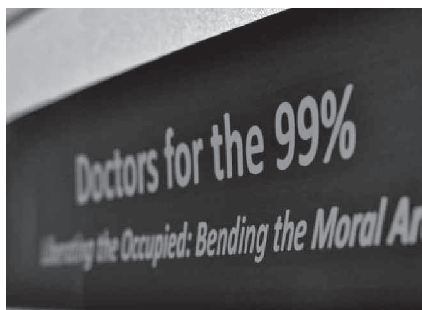
## EDITORIAL

**Bending the Arc: Doctors for the 99%**

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Something incredible is happening all around the world. People are collectively proving that the human spirit cannot be indefinitely repressed—it is in our nature to rise up and be free. For those who believe in reflexivity, this comes as no surprise. History is filled with powerful moments when people unite to overcome the odds, and with each uprising, we emerge more liberated and enlightened. This past year, fueled by chronic political and social destitution, we witnessed the fall of oppressive old-world power structures to the chants of freedom. It swept the world and arrived at our doorstep.



What is happening in our streets is more than a protest. We may be weighed down by the dismal state of affairs in our country—there is no denying that job security, affordable housing, food stability, and access to health care are major concerns for more of us today than ever before. But this struggle is attempting to free us from something much deeper. The oppression that threatens every one of us comes from no dictator or military regime but, as Steve Schroeder, MD, explained in his plenary speech, stems from the very *political and moral fabric* of our society. Somewhere in the genetic code of our democracy, an aberrancy is being exploited to the detri-

ment of us all, and, after decades of insidious growth, we are heading down a path of destruction we can no longer choose to ignore.



Where do we start when our democracy has been undermined and overwhelmed by corporate entities so powerful and pervasive that our policymakers and legislators cannot be relied upon to advocate for change? Where do we turn for truth and transparency when media conglomerations are invested in protecting their own revenues and political reach?

We start by drawing a circle, however small, around ourselves and claim our right to in this circle exist free from oppression. For within that public space, reduced to our mere physicality if necessary, begins the liberating process of what is known as the Occupy Movement. Here we are free to share, perfect, and enact our



dreams of equality. We create and nourish the momentum that strives for harmony—from the small inception of the General Assembly to what is now an expansive array of working groups, affinity groups, councils, and committees. It is a place where the most pertinent philosophies and ideas are being tested, refined, and acted on by concerned individuals and experts. It is a world of example, where dreams are not made into demands but are demonstrated, where art and imagination take their rightful place alongside politics and direct



action, and where the welfare of all is the common currency.

We came to SGIM with one simple idea. What would happen if we similarly occupied an empty poster board? The events that followed were incredible, and we are excited to share this here with you.

Within a few hours, 220 “Doctors for the 99%” buttons were distributed. Over a hundred people reached out to learn about the movement, including several residency program directors and SGIM leaders. A website was launched, to which a prominent health care blogger established a link. Requests were made for editorials, interviews were set up, and social media connections were created. We even re-

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ceived a nod from our keynote speaker who seemed delighted at his reference.

If a simple 4 x 3 foot poster occupying an empty space can create such momentum in just a few hours, imagine what might be achieved when all of us engage on a greater scale. Like the physical occupation of Liberty Square in New York City, we can create and fight for a "space of conscience" across the nation where collective re-learning takes place, where creativity and imagination evolve into solutions, and where every idea is heard and acknowledged. It is a space where

hospital and clinic walls are torn down to hear the chants from the street. It is a place where we no longer agree to passively participate in the trillion dollar medical-industrial complex. We can take back the art and science of our profession from the distortions and the profits and place it in the service of the people with whom we belong.

Theodore Parker, an abolitionist and transcendentalist ahead of his time, believed that the purity of the human spirit would always prevail over the corruption of institutions and politics. In addition to coining the expression "arc of the moral universe,"

later made famous by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., he also once wrote:

*"truth never yet fell dead in the streets; it has such affinity with the soul of man, the seed however broadcast will catch somewhere and produce its hundredfold."*

Something tremendous is happening in our streets today. The undeniable truth is pouring into our clinics and hospitals through the lives of our patients. We can make a difference together, and it starts with unleashing your imagination.

Find us, wherever you are. **SGIM**

### Doctors For the 99%

[www.doctorsforthe99.org](http://www.doctorsforthe99.org)

Doctors for the 99% was started in October 2012 by a group of family and internal medicine residents and attendings from Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, NY. Tired of witnessing suffering for which clinical medicine has little to offer, they were excited to be able to join the Occupy Movement and its fight for social change.

They formed Doctors for the 99% in order to: 1) demonstrate physician support for Occupy, 2) facilitate physician involvement by bringing Occupy into hospitals and clinics, and 3) directly engage with the social determinants of health. Initially a small group of white coats at a march, they are now a coalition of physician-activists leveraging social media to create a broad-based coalition of physicians in solidarity with Occupy.