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August 31, 2016

Ms. Kate Early
Scholarships
American College of Surgeons
Chicago, IL

Dear Ms. Early:

It is with great pleasure that I submit this preliminary report regarding my experiences as a 2016 ACS / EAST Health Policy fellow. As I've said previously, there is no way that I can thank you and the ACS for this outstanding opportunity. Admittedly, given the rave reviews from previous fellows, I had very high expectations and now looking back, the program clearly exceeded even those.

Upon arrival to the Babson conference center, the program was the picture of organization and efficiency. What else would you expect from something run by the Brandeis Heller School. The campus is perfect to gather together, minimize distractions and allow us to come together to focus on improving many aspects of our health policy leadership skills. Almost immediately after arriving and meeting the other fellows, I was impressed at the quality and depth of my colleagues. All already accomplished in their own rights, each brought such a unique perspective to the topics we would debate and discuss. After a lively dinner, everyone settled in for the course to begin in earnest the next morning.

Almost immediately on the morning of day 1, I could tell that the volume of material in the health care financing section was going to be so deep that I was forced to put my phone away (unusual) and pay rapt attention. The understanding and insight to the health care financing system in the United States as described by Dr. Altman was nothing short of awesome. The opportunity to learn at the hands of the man who literally brokered the deals designing this system was both exciting AND daunting. In a light moment, I was discussing some aspect of our failing financing system with Dr. Altman. I was particularly tickled to hear him describe it as a real "cluster".

As intense and dense as the financing part of the course was, Dr. Chilingirian's management and leadership lectures were indeed formative. I particularly liked the interaction among the fellows. It was here where we learned common lessons, shared experiences and really started to bond. I've applied so many of those lessons already in my practice and even though I considered myself an accomplished, early career leader when I arrived at this course, I realized that I had a very long way to go. The program pushes you to identify aspects of your personal style you can improve and then do just that.

While the course work was tough but great, the best part of this program was getting to know the other 2016 ACS Health Policy Scholars. A diverse group of men and women with different careers, backgrounds and places we work, the group really came together. We've stayed in touch and have really become not just colleagues or co-fellows, but true friends as well.

Relatively shortly after returning from the formal program, I was involved in one of the most intense experiences of my career: the Dallas police ambush/shooting on July 7, 2016. I was truly touched that the next morning, on our group email list, nearly every member of the fellowship class had left me a heartfelt note, some words of encouragement or another. It was the truest sign I'd seen that we'd very much come together as a group and I think those bonds will serve us well as we lead and serve the College as Health Policy Fellows over the next year.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexander L. Eastman, MD, MPH, FACS