

November More Voices: Choosing

Category: Choosing, Uncategorized
written by Paul Gross | November 1, 2020

Dear *Pulse* readers,

Our November *More Voices* theme is Choosing.

As I write this, two days before Election Day, our nation is about to do some choosing of its own. And like many choices we turn over in our minds, the final outcome will not be 100 percent on either side of the scale.

In health care, decisions need to be made all the time. As a physician, I choose whether or not to recommend a test or treatment. I choose which medication to propose to a patient.

As a patient, I choose my healthcare provider. (It took me awhile to find someone I felt comfortable with.) I choose how often to go see him and what bump or symptom I'm going to bring to his attention. I choose whether or not to follow his recommendations. (He's not an alarmist nor aggressive in his approach, so I generally choose to follow along.)

As a family doctor, I'll get an occasional call from friends asking whether or not they should go to the emergency room with a particular problem. Their decision to call me was a choice. I imagine that sometimes they choose to go to an urgent-care center rather than bothering me. (It's really not a bother—I don't mind at all.)

As a physician, one of the most delicate choices I have to make is the choice of words. Not long ago I saw a young man in the office who'd suffered a bout of worrisome symptoms—chest tightness, dizziness, palpitations, headaches. I concluded that anxiety was to blame and wanted to reassure him. At the same time, I needed to make sure he felt understood. *What words can best convey that?* I wondered. And after he left, I asked myself, *Did I succeed?*

What choices have you had to make as a patient, a health professional or a caregiver?

Send a story of your lived experience to *More Voices*. Have a look at last month's theme, *Waiting*, to see what others have shared.

For more details, visit [More Voices FAQs](#)—or go directly to the [More Voices Submission Form](#). Remember, your healthcare-related story should be 40-400 words. And no poetry, please.

Sincerely,

Paul Gross
Editor