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Cover Photo

"Trinidad Head from Luffenholtz"

Jennifer Heidmann, M.D.

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Practicing Medicine in a Post-Dobbs United States - Where do we go From Here?

Pippa E. Coutler, M.D., PhD, FAAP



Greetings to my fellow Humboldt county physicians, from a newcomer pediatrician. I thought it might interest some of you to hear the story of how I wound up here, moving cross country at 59 years old, and to hear a little about what it was like to practice in Alabama.

Although I was born in Palo Alto, while my parents were in graduate school at Stanford and then lived in Irvine for several years, my family moved to Alabama when I was in elementary school. I have spent most of my life there. My children were born in Mobile, where I attended medical school, and from 1998 to 2023, I lived in north Alabama—Huntsville, the “Rocket City”, home both to the highest density of PhD rocket scientists in the country and to a significant population living in severe poverty.

I spent my career serving primarily children with Medicaid, first in private practice and then on the faculty of our local medical school. I witnessed the barriers my patients and their parents faced, not only from poverty but from oppressive social conditions. Racism was overt and severe. The “New Jim Crow” in which Black people were targeted for arrest and thus disenfranchised caused many children in my practice to be in the care of their grandparents. Alabama has the highest percentage of grandparents as primary caregivers in the US. Many of them were too young for Medicare and did not qualify for any health insurance. We had the second highest death rate from Covid 19.

Arrests for marijuana possession were frequent and could cause loss of parental rights—but drug recovery programs were scarce. One young woman told me her boyfriend was court ordered to an addiction recovery program which refused to give him his medication for bipolar disorder and held an exorcism for him instead.

I had grandmothers show up with newborns because the nursing mothers were in the county jail for unpaid parking tickets.

My LGBTQIA+ patients experienced severe bullying and some were abandoned by their parents, ejected from their own homes. Religious abuse was common. When I saw teens for the confidential portion of their checkups, I had more than one ask me if I thought they might go to Hell because, as one boy put it, “I love my girlfriend more than I love Jesus.” Corporal punishment was typical, both at home and by schools, which still paddled children.

Parents tried to stop teens from accessing contraception and from getting abortions. I served on a medical foundation advisory board, and a businessman from the community told me he didn’t think I should be allowed to prescribe birth control pills for teens, because “we wouldn’t have our adopted son if a teen in Atlanta had gotten the pill.” I was so stunned I was speechless.

At our local abortion clinic, there were always protesters outside with gory and misleading photos on posters, harassing those entering for care. I spoke at local reproductive rights rallies, and afterwards sometimes I got death threats.

In that challenging environment, however, there were so many people working for change. Brave volunteers at the abortion clinic, escorting patients. Nonprofits to help LGBTQIA+ teens, including with housing. I did my best to provide a warm, welcoming atmosphere in my exam room. I spent a lot of time talking to legislators, especially advocating for Alabama to accept the Medicaid Expansion. I did public speaking on this and on Medicare for All. I helped set up a homeless clinic day weekly at our local Free Clinic, because none of the adults could get Medicaid even at that level of poverty. Once, I hosted a group of state legislators and reproductive rights ad-

vocates in my living room, trying to break down the communication barriers around abortion and contraception.

I was committed to staying in Alabama and working for health-care justice. I never imagined I would leave. But then Dobbs happened, and overnight, part of my job became a felony with a 99-year prison sentence.

In pediatrics, I was not the one doing the abortions, but teens in my practice asked me for information and to be connected to resources. Suddenly, simply giving this information, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, was a crime. I consulted a law firm to get clarity on the new boundaries, and I was told that even my giving the Plan C website at a rally could trigger arrest. I was advised that if I answered any questions related to abortion, it would be dangerous to put it in the medical record.

Friends, I was unable to be silent when patients asked me for help. I simply could not shrug my shoulders and refuse to do my job. And I didn’t want to go to prison.

I admire those who have been arrested in the act of civil disobedience. I would not have the right to vote if women had not gone through that before I was born. I wish I could say I was ready to do the same. But I did not think my spending the rest of my life in prison was likely to change anything. So I made the difficult decision to leave my home.

California was my first thought, because of being born here. I looked for a non-profit in the northern part of the state, and I found the right job. I left beloved friends. I also felt a sort of survivor’s guilt because I had the privilege to leave. Then I found out how severely underserved Humboldt County is, and I no longer felt guilty. But

“Post-Dobbs”, Continued on Pg 7.

HUM PET, continued from Pg 8

hire support staff and she is in the building. Audrey Gomes, please stand up. Audrey is a student at CPH who has been an invaluable addition to HUMPET, helping us with the labyrinthine of emails, grids, and software that we tackled this last few years. Thank you, Audrey!

5)Continuing up the chain of medical education, lets discuss medical schools. There we have 3 collaborators:
a. I know many of you have Stanford medical students for a month. We thank you for that.

b. We will soon have medical students originally from California who now attend The Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine (ICON) rotating here at some point in their med school curriculum. Providence and Open Door have signed proposal letters of agreement with ICOM and if you are interested they can shadow you and get to know our community of doctors.

c. We also have strong ties to UC Davis. For years, students have rotated working at UIHS with Dr Martinez in the Prime Program. A new Tribal Health Post Baccalaureate Program with UC Davis is proposed to start January 2024 targeting Native American students, helping them with the process of getting into med school in hopes that they return to their local communities to practice after residency.

d. Just this week we had a meeting with the Avenue M collaborators through UC Da-

vis. This is a community college to medical school pathway program that aims to reduce entry barriers to medical and other healthcare careers. The UC Davis School of Medicine team has partnered with our Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods on this program. Dr. Charlene Green is looking for help in mentoring, teaching, and shadowing positions. If you are interested in participating in any way either let us know or go on their website at UC Davis Ave M project. I believe they also have a \$500 remuneration for people helping.

6)Lastly at the top of the chain of medical education is our FP Residency Program. You are all aware of the Providence and Open-Door Residency Program that started a few years ago and last year we had 4 doctors who decided to stay in the area. They have started their interviews for the incoming 2024 class.

We also know that one of the reasons that we don't retain certain physicians is that they lack support staff. I would be remiss not to mention a few other projects in our area to address this issue. The state of California has passed significant legislation for grants working on local programs to educate allied health professionals.

1)K-16 Redwood Coast Collaborative provides opportunities for high school students to get college credit through College of the Redwoods. Right now they offer a medical terminology class, but additional courses down the line will

include addiction studies, pharmacology, phlebotomy, and CNA certification.

2)The K-12 Strong Workforce grant collaborates with charter schools and community schools to start a medical pathway partnering with College of the Redwoods. There is hope of offering dual enrollment with College of the Redwoods. The goal is to have capstone courses available to all students by mid 2024.

3)The new Health Care Hub is currently close to signing a memorandum of understanding with College of the Redwoods, CPH and Mike McGuire for a health training facility in Samoa. Goal is to train nurses, respiratory therapists, as well as radiology techs, psychiatric techs, scrub techs and more. The hope is for a late 2025/early 2026 opening.

Please be part of HUMPET or agree to give a lecture, talk about your career, have students observe or shadow you or even become a mentor. I still remember my elementary school teachers. Teachers are instrumental in shaping lives.

§

Del Norte HumPet Update

Barbara Browning

The Health Career Pathways project in Del Norte has experienced accelerated growth and success this past year. Students at Del Norte High School (DNHS) came up with the idea of forming a Medical Science Club in spring of 2023, and our champion teacher, Gale West, agreed to sponsor the club. The club started with 15 students last spring and has grown to 50 students this fall! The club has generated unprecedented interest in health careers at DNHS, and has been foundational to our growth and success.

Club members meet monthly, and also

have monthly enrichment activities, like field trips to College of the Redwoods Nursing Lab, Sutter Coast Hospital, and the Del Norte Community Health Center. Additionally, students are supported in planning their college and career goals, and have the opportunity for one-on-one mentoring with healthcare professionals.

The club has generated so much interest in health careers at Del Norte High School that a second section of Medical Biology was added this fall, along with 2 CTE classes - Patient Care and Behavioral Health. They are also offering 2 sections of Psychology classes - both new this fall.

In addition to the Medical Biology class, DNHS offers Medical Chemistry and Anatomy & Physiology, rounding out a full science based pathway.

Our partners from the healthcare sector remain closely involved in this work, and are supporting students with work based learning opportunities. This past summer we had 10 students in healthcare placements through the E3 (Experience, Education, Employment) program in partnership with Del Norte Unified School District and the SMART Workforce Center. We have plans to expand that number in the summer of 2024. §

HDN Tattler

THANK YOU to Candy Stockton, M.D. for agreeing to step in to complete Margaret Gordon, MD's term on the Northern California Community Blood Bank Board - 5th member of the board representing the Medical Society through 2026.

THANK YOU to Margaret Gordon, MD for serving on the Blood Bank Board for the past five years as Medical Society representative (appointed as fifth member of the Board per ByLaws).

CONGRATULATIONS to Ellen Mahoney, M.D. for the recent dedication of the Garden of Hope at Providence St. Joseph Health in recognition of her extraordinary work in Breast Cancer.

CORRECTIONS: Update phone number for Ikigai Physician Group (Fortuna AND Arcata locations): (707) 726-2255.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO: DRS. Alston, Baker, Biteman, Bloch, Borrello, R. Brinckhaus, Cataldo, Chen, Choi, Dalsaso, Douglass, Ellis, Green, Grossman, Guccione, Hovorka, Humphry, Jackson, Kummerling, McGoldrick, Messegee, Ratcliffe, T. Ryz, Simon, Stockton, Thenkondar, Trieu, J. VanSpeybroeck, and Yost.

If you have any news you'd like to share with your colleagues..... births, marriages, get well wishes, something you'd like to "brag" about to your colleagues, etc., Please let us know so we can include it in the "HDN Tattler".

Coming, Going & Moving Around

COMING/HERE:

Jessica Babare, M.D.	Cardiology	PMG Cardiology
Carlos Castro Rodriguez, M.D.	Critical Care	PMG
Colin Parker, M.D.	Hospitalist, Pediatrics	PMG
Giovanni Salerno, M.D.	Trauma	PMG

GOING:

Benjamin Bernstein, M.D.

MOVING AROUND:

Urgent Doc Pro	Eileen V. Moy, M.D. 129 E. Wildwood Ave. Rio Dell, CA 95562
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Health Awareness Calendar December:

*December 1: World AIDS Day
December 3: International Day of Persons with Disability
*December 4-8: National Handwashing Awareness Week
December 4-8: National Influenza Vaccination Week

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS & BULLETIN BOARD

APARTMENT FOR RENT

Fully Furnished Apartment for Rent in Henderson Center Area 1bdrm. Utilities included. \$1250/month. Contact: Penny (707) 499-0402

PHYSICIANS NEEDED

*Members wishing to place a classified ad
(Business- free to members for first 6 mos. /
Personal 1/2 price)
contact Medical Society office.*

HOUSE FOR SALE

FOR SALE: 3 Bdrm, 2 bath home with double car garage. 2 bdrm apartment in back. Close to Providence St. Joseph Hospital. Contact: Dee (707) 499-1681

PRACTICE OPPORTUNITIES

Refer to Practice Opportunities on our website for a list of Practice Opportunities for Physicians. Separate listing for Advanced Practice Clinicians is also posted.
Recruitment
Brochure; Links to Local Recreation; Links to Loan Repayment Programs; and more....
www.hdncms.org

DID YOU KNOW.....

The Medical Society receives many calls from your offices and the public looking to find copies of medical records from physicians who have retired, moved out of the area, etc. The Medical Society tries to keep a list of where to refer for those records. Physicians relocating out of the area or retiring, please let us know.



"We at NCP are always happy to receive photos of local scenery by our member physicians who would like to have their art displayed on the cover of the North Coast Physician. However, we have certain requirements before we print. At a minimum, please send you photos as a JPEG with minimal compression (level 8 or higher). Also please size the photo to 6 inches on the "short" side at a screen resolution of 125 dpi. If you're looking for total file size for email submission we would like something of at least 0.25 MB (250 KB) up to 2.5 MB. This gives the best screen resolution plus it provides adequate resolution for anyone who wishes to print out the cover. We will also accept TIFF or PSD files, although we prefer JPEG. If you need assistance, please let us know and the editor will be more than happy to work with you in obtaining the appropriate resolution."

KNOW OF HOUSING OPTION?

The Medical Society frequently receives calls for help in finding housing for our new physicians, Residents and other healthcare professionals. We also are trying to keep a list of "rooms" available for medical students that are rotating through. If you or know of someone who has rental or temp housing options, please let us know. Send email to: hdncms@gmail.com

Display Advertising Rate Schedule

<u>SIZE</u>	<u>MONTHLY</u>	<u>SIZE</u>
1/4 Page	\$140.00	8.00 (w) x 2.50 (h)
1/2 Page	\$160.00	8.00 (w) x 5.25 (h)
1/3 Page Vertical	\$150.00	3.00 (w) x 10.50 (h)
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Business Card Ad	\$65.00	Copy Ready 3.50 (w) X 2.00 (h)
Classified Ads	\$5.25 per line	

DEADLINE: 15th day of the preceding month to be published