

**TRANSCRIPT OF MESSAGE FROM  
U.S. SURGEON GENERAL VADM JEROME A. ADAMS, MD, MPH,  
ON THE OCCASSION OF THE 200<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

*Delivered by video October 21, 2017 at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel, Washington, DC*

Greetings, Medical Society of D.C., and congratulations on two hundred years of contributions to the health of the district and the nation as a whole!

This is a monumental celebration for which your organization should be very proud.

While I regret that I cannot celebrate with you in person, I am with you in spirit.

Two hundred years ago, at a tavern a few blocks away from where you sit now, a group of sixteen physicians met out of concern for the public health of the District.

That small gathering led to an organization with big impact.

The Medical Society of DC was the first to be chartered in an Act of Congress, and this solidified your position as the leading advocate for physicians in our nation's capital.

From playing a critical role in the improvement of the District's potable water supply, to assisting with efforts to eradicate polio and small pox, the Medical Society has left a lasting legacy for the residents and patients of the District of Columbia.

These impressive achievements, in addition to many, many others, highlight the substantial influence that a community of physicians can have.

As members of the Medical Society of D.C., you understand that we can more effectively care for the health of our patients by working together as a community.

It is this truth that will be my guiding principal while I serve as the U.S. Surgeon General: that Americans can have better health, through better partnerships.

When physicians are involved in communities and are on the front lines to educate people about the importance of prevention, productivity increases. The economy improves. And of course, fewer people are sick—everyone benefits.

As physicians, we must think beyond healthcare.

We can help hundreds of people avoid illness, get well when they are sick, and stay well after they have recovered.

Through influencing policy and business, we have the opportunity to improve the health of thousands—even millions.

Today, the society that was formed out of that initial meeting has grown to a group advocating for more than ten thousand physicians throughout the district.

Your membership inspired the creation of the American Medical Association, and has included giants in the history of public health, such as: the 8th U.S. Surgeon General Leroy Burney and the Army Surgeon General Joseph Lovell.

Your membership is as diverse as it is accomplished, but you all share a common belief: that we, as physicians, must take an active role in protecting our patients and shaping the future of medicine.

We can no longer remain isolated in our private offices and clinics.

In today's world, with new technology and constant innovation, we must engage with non-traditional partners to reach our patients and take care of their health most effectively.

I would like to leave you with a challenge:  
I challenge you all to work together.

As I said earlier, my motto as Surgeon General is "Better Health through Better Partnerships."

This means I want to hear your stories and use your experiences and needs to guide my work.

But more than that, I challenge you all to partner with each other.

Think about all of the worship centers, schools, government agencies, and nonprofits in the DC community.

How many of these neighbors have YOU worked with?

How can we work with law enforcement to address addiction before a patient ends up in the hospital due to an overdose?

How can we encourage employers to support the health of their employees in order to increase productivity?

How can we partner with community and faith centers to keep children supported and active?

I encourage you to form diverse coalitions within your community to address barriers to prevention.

Invite partners you would not normally work to sit your table and come up with solutions that take the unique needs of your communities into account.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you on this night of great celebration.

I look forward to seeing the future accomplishments of MSDC membership, and the partnerships you form to achieve your goals.

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See the video at <https://msdc.org/page/USSGBicentennial>