

Medical Unity: Now or Never

Never since Law 100 of 1993 was issued has there been a better time than now for seriously reviewing the sector's situation and for putting forward possible solutions to its many unsustainable problems. The current juncture offers the entire medical community a unique opportunity for playing a leading role in defending the health of Colombians, as their fundamental right, and the integrity of its profession.

Some of the results achieved to date allow us to be optimistic regarding our capacity for taking on this task. Although forced to by circumstances, our collective actions with regard to the Social Emergency—which ended with that decree being declared unenforceable by the Constitutional Court—prove this.

The confidence that citizens and patients placed in physicians, in an extremely complicated situation for everyone, proves that, in spite of the difficult circumstances the medical community is undergoing, the population continues to look to us for leadership, and we must rise to the occasion. Obviously, this requires that we be both conceptually and practically coherent.

The reforms to the sector, expected by the entire country, are a trial of fire, a long-awaited opportunity called for by those of us that understand the problem and know about health. So much is at stake for the country, that missteps simply cannot be allowed. These reforms must be led, accompanied and overseen by physicians.

Let us be clear: we won't be able to fulfill this responsibility properly without one indispensable premise: unity within the community. Like never before, this requires that we set aside all our individual interests in order to prioritize our collective well-being. Fortunately, we've already reached agreements on certain fundamental points.

And Colombian psychiatrists can't simply watch from the sidelines. Our Association is sufficiently mature that it can initiate an internal debate required for contributing to this process; our experience proves that we are more than capable of doing so. This is, precisely, the foundation for a long sought for medical unity. Although this has always been just out of reach, today it is closer and more needed than ever. It's up to us.

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