



American Medical Women's Association

The Vision and Voice of Women in Medicine since 1915

Buried on page 11 of the Dallas Medical Journal's September 2018 Edition, a short quote from Dallas physician Gary Tigges, MD sparked swift and widespread outrage among the medical community and the general public that would eventually prompt Dr. Tigges to resign from his leadership positions at Texas Health Plano. His short statement is indicative of a much bigger and far more dangerous problem far beyond the misguided, flawed musings of this one man: it represents a common belief that not only still exists within our discipline, but quietly but pervasively continues to plague the entire institution of healthcare. This baseless and patently false perception is implicitly interwoven into the foundation of our healthcare system and is what AMWA members and colleagues fight to overcome on a daily basis.

Dr. Tigges said: "Yes there is a pay gap. Female physicians do not work as hard and do not see as many patients as male physicians. This is because they choose to, or they simply don't want to be rushed, or they don't want to work the long hours. Most of the time, their priority is something else... family, social, whatever. Nothing needs to be "done" about this unless female physicians actually want to work harder and put in the hours. If not, they should be paid less. That is fair."

The fact that there is a gender pay gap in medicine is undeniable. But while the gender pay gap is supported by extensive evidence, with the most recent study from Doximity finding that female doctors earned 27.7 percent less on average than their male counterparts in 2017, the belief encapsulated in Tigges' quote is not. Studies controlling for full time/part time, academic/private practice, and type of speciality have demonstrated this pay gap in all areas except radiology. The belief that men work harder than women is not rooted in fact or supported by logic; it is instead based on implicit bias. The fact that the belief that female physician do not work as hard is patently false will not close the pay gap; to do so, we must actively work to change the pervasive perception that female physicians deserve less for their work.

Female physicians not wanting to work as hard is not why the gender pay gap among physicians exist; the erroneous belief in the very notion of this falsehood is.

