

To the Editor: Let's Make "Provider" a Dirty Word

Kudos to Drs Deborah Erlich and Joseph Gravel for their erudite and heartfelt Perspectives article on the word "provider" in the April issue of the *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*.¹ I would like to offer additional thoughts. When I was a boy growing up in a blue-collar family, "good providers" were parents known to consistently go out of their way to ensure the well-being of their families no matter their economic circumstances. In the modern era, providers need not even be human. Many companies promote themselves as "preferred providers" of goods and services. Thus, a "provider" is now any generic giver of anything.

Too many colleagues, residents, and administrators have a hard time understanding why I say that I have

been called many things in my life, but none more insidiously derogatory than "provider." Drs Erlich and Gravel capture that sentiment well. If someone wants to know what kind of a provider I am, they may ask my family, an admitted throwback to a bygone era. If they want to know what kind of a physician I am, they may ask my patients.

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References

1. Erlich DR, Gravel JW. Professional identity misformation and burnout: a call for graduate medical education to reject "provider." *J Grad Med Educ*. 2021;13(2):167-169. doi:10.4300/JGME-D-20-01100.1