



MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

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Physicians Tell Albany: NY Can't Afford to Lose Its Doctors

ALBANY, NY (3/9/2010) – Busloads of doctors traveled to Albany today to tell their legislators, regulators and the governor that “New York can not afford to lose its doctors – for health or economic reasons.” This was the theme of the Medical Society of the State of New York’s (MSSNY) Physician Advocacy Day.

MSSNY’s focus is based on its just-released study, titled “Economic Impacts of Private Practice Physicians in the State of New York,” which MSSNY President-Elect Leah S. McCormack, MD, outlined to physicians across the state gathered for MSSNY’s Physician Advocacy Day.

Physicians told their legislators that key changes needed in New York’s health care system include:

- **Medical Liability Reform** – Comprehensive legislation is needed to change the current, failed medical liability adjudication system, which neither accurately identifies malpractice nor fairly compensates victims. At a time when the state faces an extraordinary budget deficit, we can no longer afford a system that is grossly inefficient and causes physicians to practice defensive medicine, adding significantly to health system costs for both the private and public sectors.
- **Collective Negotiation** – Because six health insurance companies control 77% of the NYS managed care market and because most regions are dominated by only one or two health insurers, most health plans currently offer physicians “take it or leave it” patient care and contract terms. Physicians, therefore, need to have the right to collectively negotiate with health insurers.
- **Medicaid Reform** – Payment reform and the elimination of administrative hassles is necessary to maintain and increase physician participation in the Medicaid program and thereby increase patient access to affordable quality healthcare.
- **Expansion of Doctors Across New York Program** – A continuation of this partial loan repayment and practice support program is necessary to attract more physicians to serve patients in rural and inner-city underserved areas.
- **Surcharge on Payors** – The proposal to require health insurers to pay a surcharge on certain services billed, if enacted, must assure that the surcharge is not passed on to physicians, patients or employers.
- **Insurance Department Oversight of Premium Increases** – The authority of the New York State Superintendent of Insurance to oversee health insurance premium rate increases should be reinstated.

- **Excise Taxes on Cigarettes and Sugary Drinks** –The proposed excise taxes on cigarettes and sugary drinks should be approved to lower long-term healthcare costs by discouraging unhealthy consumption habits and to increase revenues for healthcare.

Copies of MSSNY's 2010 Legislative Program and economic impact study can be downloaded from MSSNY's website at www.mssny.org.

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Founded in 1807, the Medical Society of the State of New York is the state's principal non-profit professional organization for physicians, residents and medical students of all specialties. Its mission is to represent the interests of patients and physicians to assure quality healthcare services for all.