



## **New York Physicians Urge Congress to Restore Medicare Cuts and Increase Future Physician Pipeline**

MSSNY physician leaders and staff conducted numerous meetings with members of the New York Congressional Delegation in Washington DC this week to discuss a range of federal legislative issues to help protect and expand patient access to community-based physician care. Among the issues discussed:

- Restoring the 3.37% Medicare cut that went into effect on January 1, as well as additional legislative proposals to reform the process by which physicians are paid by Medicare. Medicare payments to physicians have been cut by nearly 10% in the last 4 years.
- Bipartisan Graduate Medical Education and physician workforce legislation to increase residency training slots and reform immigration policies to eliminate physician shortages and serve the growing aging population.
- Legislation introduced by Reps. Greg Murphy, MD (R-N.C.), Morgan Griffith (R-Va.), Mariannette Miller-Meeks, MD (R-Iowa), Ami Bera, MD (D-Calif.), Kim Schrier, MD (D-Wash.) and Derek Kilmer (D-Wash.) would bar health plans and vendors from charging physicians unnecessary fees for electronic fund transfer (EFT) payment transactions.

MSSNY physician leaders that participated in the Hill visits and the American Medical Association's (AMA) annual National Advocacy Conference (NAC) included Dr. Tom Madejski, past president of MSSNY, MSSNY Councilor Dr. Anna Heffron, Dr. Erick Eiting, and Dr. Sophia Spadafore.

Here is the [full action kit](#) for the AMA's NAC conference.

MSSNY will continue to monitor and advocate on members' behalf on these issues and provide updates as available.

**(CARY)**

## **MSSNY Urges Legislature to Reject Budget Proposals That Will Jeopardize Patient Access to Community-Based Physician Care**

MSSNY physician leaders and lobbying staff are continuing to communicate with Senators and Assemblymembers highlighting the somewhat positive but also adverse items contained in the FY

2024-25 Executive Budget that will make it even more difficult for patients to maintain access to community-based physician care. While the public messaging surrounding the Executive Budget has focused on efforts to expand access to care, various Budget proposals would do exactly the opposite.

MSSNY has noted the positive items in the Executive Budget that would expand access to care, including investments in the Patient-centered Medical Home program, further medical student loan repayment programs, telehealth payment parity; and expanded health insurance subsidies for those purchasing coverage through New York's Health Insurance Exchange.

However, there are numerous problematic initiatives that we are urging be removed from the State Budget, as they would drive many physicians out of practice altogether, harming patient access to care. Unfortunately, the Governor's 30-day Budget amendments released Thursday 2/15 did not reverse these concerning provisions. Our efforts include:

- **Opposing CPH Elimination.** Opposing a proposal in Part L of the HMH Art. 7 Budget bill to repeal authorization for the MSSNY's Committee for Physicians Health (CPH) program. CPH has for over 40 years provided needed treatment services for thousands of physicians facing behavioral health or addiction issues. Last year, the State Legislature and the Governor agreed to continue this essential program for an additional 5 years. CPH is not funded out of the General Fund but through a \$30 set-aside through the physicians' biennial registration fee that results in an annual appropriation to CPH of \$990,000.

Please send a letter to your legislators here to preserve the essential services provided by the CPH program: [URGENT: Help Restore Funding for CPH Program \(p2a.co\)](#)

- **Opposing Huge Cost Imposition for Excess Medical Malpractice Insurance Coverage.** Opposing a proposal in Part K of the Art. 7 HMH Budget bill that would impose thousands to tens of thousands of dollars in new costs on the nearly 16,000 physicians enrolled in the Excess Medical Malpractice Insurance program, by requiring physicians to pay 50% of the coverage cost. This is a nearly \$40 million hit to community-based physicians across the state who already pay among the highest medical liability insurance costs in the nation. For many downstate surgeons, this cost will be in tens of thousands of dollars!! Many physicians will face no choice but to decline the coverage because of lack of affordability.

Please send a letter to your legislators here to oppose this unfair cost imposition: [Reject Physician Cost-Share for Excess Medical Malpractice Insurance Program \(p2a.co\)](#)

- **Opposing Repeal of Physicians' Right to Appeal Claim Underpayments.** Opposing a proposal in Part H of the Art. 7 HMH Budget bill that would repeal the ability of physicians to bring claim disputes with Medicaid Managed Care plans to the Independent Dispute resolution (IDR) process. This change, which would overturn a recent action by DFS to permit the right to appeal these claims through IDR, will lead to steep health insurer payment cuts and network reductions, and discourage many physician specialists from providing essential on-call emergency department care.

Please send a letter to your legislators opposing these changes [Retain Right to Use Independent Dispute Resolution Process \(p2a.co\)](#)

- **Protect Physician-Led Team Care.** Opposing a series of scope expansion proposals in Part Q of the Art. 7 HMH Budget bill to permit Physicians Assistants (PAs) to practice without any physician supervision or collaboration after 8,000 clinical hours if they practice in primary care or are employed by a hospital; Permitting dentists to perform screening tests

for HIV, Hepatitis and Diabetes; and authorizing pharmacists dispensing PrEP on a non-patient specific prescription basis.

Please send a letter to your legislators urging them to protect physician-led team care [Preserve Physician-led, Team-based Healthcare \(p2a.co\)](#)

- **Protecting Patient Access to Needed Medications and Treatments.** Opposing proposals in Part I of the Art. 7 HMM Budget bill that would increase prior authorization hassles for Medicaid prescriptions by repealing “prescriber prevails” protections and give power to Medicaid to reimburse physicians for injectable medications at amounts even less than what the physician office paid to acquire the injectable medication.

MSSNY has been working with specialty societies to send joint communications to the entire State Legislature raising our collective concerns with these proposals, and the adverse impact on patient access to community-based physician care.

**(DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS)**

### **Physicians Must Come to Albany on March 12th, 2024, to Meet with Their Senators and Assembly Members!**

Physicians and Medical Students must plan to come to Albany on Tuesday, March 12th, 2024, for MSSNY’s annual Physician Advocacy Day. Being physically present in Albany will send a direct and impactful message that Zoom cannot achieve. Physician Advocacy Day will occur Tuesday, March 12th, 2024, at the Empire State Plaza (The Egg) in Albany from 7:45-11:00 am. Physicians will hear from the NYS Health Commissioner, the Assembly and Senate Minority Leaders, and the Chairs of the Senate and Assembly Health and Insurance Committees, followed by an informal lunch attended by legislators from your area, followed by the opportunity for legislative visits in the afternoon.

There are numerous adverse measures that physicians must let their Senators and Assembly Members know they oppose in the Governor’s Budget (see above article). Do not miss out on this significant opportunity for physicians to talk directly to Senators and Assembly Members about how these provisions in the Governor’s Budget will exacerbate existing physician shortages adversely impacting patient access to community-based physician care.

To view the flyer, click here: [Physician Advocacy Day Flyer](#). To register, click here: [Physician Advocacy Registration](#).

Now is the time to fight for your profession and your patients! Please plan to join hundreds of colleagues from around the state in Albany on March 12<sup>th</sup>!

**(HOSPODAR)**

### **MSSNY’s Long Term Care Committee Discusses Future of NYMDA COVID Resource Project**

MSSNY’s Long Term Care (LTC) Committee this week discussed the current resources available to health care providers and patients through the New York Medical Directors Association (NYMDA) COVID Resource Project. Many NYMDA members also serve on MSSNY’s LTC Committee. The program provides coaching services and resources for nursing homes and assisted living facilities during outbreaks and is a valuable collaboration with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and NYMDA.

While the DOH grant to NYMDA is specific to COVID-19, some Committee members suggested expanding the project beyond just COVID-19 to include other potential outbreaks given the quality of the current program. Click here for the [NYMDA COVID Resource Project](#)’s current list of resources and program information.

MSSNY's Long-Term Care Committee will continue to track this important project and share new information with MSSNY members as it is available.

(CARY)

### **Registration Now Open Medical Matters CME Webinar**

#### **The Many Faces of COVID**

**Wednesday February 21, 2024 @ 7:30am**

As we enter the fifth year of living (and dying and suffering) with COVID, the only certainty is its unpredictable nature. Learn more about **The Many Faces of COVID** by registering for the next Medical Matters webinar on **February 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:30am**. William Valenti, MD, Chair of MSSNY's Infectious Diseases Committee and member of MSSNY's Committee on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster/Terrorism Response will serve as faculty for this webinar. [Register now](#)

Educational objectives are:

- Describe typical COVID symptoms and variant effects on progression and presentation.
- Define vaccine fatigue and the impact it has had on upticks in COVID spread.
- Identify methods to employ when diagnosing, treating, and preventing the spread of COVID.

Additional information or assistance with registration may be obtained by contacting Melissa Hoffman at [mhoffman@mssny.org](mailto:mhoffman@mssny.org)

The Medical Society of the State of New York is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

*The Medical Society of the State of New York designates this live activity for a maximum of 1.0 AMA PRA Category 1 credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.*

(HOFFMAN)

### **Women Physicians Leadership Academy March Registration Now Open!**

Join MSSNY and MESF for the March 2024 Women Physicians Leadership Academy, a series of virtual leadership webinars for physicians, residents, and med students. This academy will be held over a series of Saturdays in March (March 2, 9, 16) from 7:45-11:15 am. The Fall sessions (October 21, 28, November 4) are now available on the [MSSNY CME website](#). Topics for the March series will include the importance of networking, enhancing physician wellness and belonging, and designing your medical career. Participants can earn a maximum of 18 continuing medical education credits for the completion of the entire series. March registration links are below:

[March 2, 2024: The Importance of Networking](#)

[March 9, 2024: Enhancing Physician Wellness and Belonging](#)

[March 16, 2024: Designing Your Medical Career](#)

(RENTO)

### **MSSNY Announces New Podcast on Respiratory Viruses**



The 2022-2023 respiratory virus season inspired the term "Tripledemic". Has the 2023-2024 respiratory virus season been comparable? Ways to prevent and treat Flu, RSV and COVID will be examined as well as what to expect in future respiratory virus seasons. Dr. Bill Valenti, chair of MSSNY's Infectious Diseases Committee speaks about this timely and important topic in the latest MSSNY Podcast: [Respiratory Viruses 2023-2024: A Discussion with Dr. Bill Valenti on RSV, Flu & COVID](#).

(HOFFMAN)