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MSSNY APPLAUDS GOVERNOR SPITZER'S BUDGET INITIATIVE TO ENHANCE PHYSICIAN REIMBURSEMENT UNDER MEDICAID

ALBANY (1/23/2008) – “We support Governor Spitzer’s resolve to substantially enhance physician reimbursement for services provided to beneficiaries of the state Medicaid Program,” said Robert B. Goldberg, DO, President of the Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY).

The Medical Society of the State of New York for many, many years has advocated for significant Medicaid reimbursement reform for physicians. As study after study makes clear, access to physician services under New York’s Medicaid program is severely restricted, not because physicians don’t want to treat the poor, but because they simply cannot for financial reasons. This is true for primary care physicians and for specialty care physicians as well. This reality is particularly problematic because many Medicaid beneficiaries who remain in the fee-for-service Medicaid program are individuals with chronic illnesses or significant disabilities and need access to specialty care. Without physician specialists in the program, beneficiaries have no other choice but to defer seeking treatment and/or to receive services on a chronic, episodic basis from the highest-cost institutional and clinic settings. Moreover, this lack of access to specialty care severely limits primary care physicians’ ability to assure access to the most effective clinical care. Coordinated primary and specialty care is far better and less costly than random, episodic care in high-cost care settings.

In its Legislative Program for 2008, the Medical Society of the State of New York has called for legislative efforts to re-examine and redefine Medicaid reimbursement across all care settings to encourage care delivery in the most appropriate setting. “We commend Governor Spitzer for the foresight he has exhibited in this area. We believe that a fair and reasonable physician fee enhancement, such as that which the Governor has proposed, is critical to accomplish the reconfiguration of the Medicaid program so necessary to protect the fiscal integrity of the state,” said Dr. Goldberg.

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