



## MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

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### **NY Medical Society Applauds Attorney General Cuomo for Lowering Patients' Healthcare Costs**

#### **Statement of David T. Hannan, MD, President-Elect Medical Society of the State of New York**

WESTBURY, NY (2/17/2009) – On behalf of the Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY), I would like to commend Attorney General Andrew Cuomo for negotiating an agreement with CIGNA Corporation to abandon the use of the flawed Ingenix database for calculating out-of-network physician fees. He has taken another giant step to reduce healthcare costs for New Yorkers and patients nationwide, while at the same time ensuring equitable physician payments.

I regret and am very disappointed, however, that one of the largest insurers in this region, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, has decided not to sign on to the terms of this agreement at this time. I strongly urge the company to reconsider its position. As a family physician who treats patients nearby, I know that my patients would benefit greatly if Excellus agreed to similar terms.

MSSNY also thanks CIGNA for agreeing to replace the Ingenix database and for agreeing to contribute \$10 million to establish a replacement system for determining usual and customary costs of healthcare services.

After a little over a year of intense investigation, Attorney General Cuomo has succeeded in achieving the justice that our state medical society, the AMA and other organizations have been seeking since we initiated lawsuits against CIGNA and other insurers over eight years ago. This is the sixth agreement Attorney General Cuomo has brought to fruition in a period of just a few weeks, and we hope he will announce additional agreements in the near future. Although we still have a few unresolved issues to work out with CIGNA, we hope this is an indication that the insurance industry will continue to modify its ways of doing business and work with physicians to provide better and more affordable healthcare for patients.

The significance of this agreement to physicians is that now when our patients seek healthcare services from out-of-network physicians and have paid for the right to do so – they will be able to go to those physicians without having to worry about being hit with a bill they were not expecting and often can not afford to pay.

When the Ingenix replacement is up and running, patients will be able to find out how much their out-of-network care will cost BEFORE choosing a physician. Patients and their employers will finally get what they paid for. Furthermore, the patient/physician bond will now be preserved.

We thank Mr. Cuomo for again coming to the rescue of our patients and our physicians. The Medical Society of the State of New York is proud to have played a role in the Attorney General's investigation.

We appreciate the opportunity to share in the announcement of this, yet another, achievement for patients and physicians that Attorney General Cuomo has negotiated on behalf of all New Yorkers.

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