

WHAT HAVE YOUR MEDICAL SOCIETIES DONE FOR YOU IN THE LAST NINE MONTHS?

The following hard-fought victories would have been impossible without member support.

- The **Medicare 10.6% reduction in fees was defeated**, overriding a Presidential veto. Instead, physicians participating in the Medicare program are receiving a small increase through December 31, 2009. Just think what a 10+% Medicare reimbursement cut would have meant to your practice, especially since many private payers also key their rates to Medicare.
- In July, **medical malpractice rates in New York were frozen** for the first time in anyone's memory. But for the action of your medical societies, every physician insured by MLMIC, PRI or other private market insurers would have suffered an 11%-30% rate increase. As important, the Governor, Senate Majority Leader, and Assembly Speaker declared their determination to see the system reformed.
- With Attorney General Cuomo as our partner, the **Ingenix out-of-network scheme** was bared for all to see and then toppled, with agreements by insurers to pay over \$400 million for restitution and to fund creation of a new independent database for calculating UCR, overseen by the New York Attorney General.
- Despite an unprecedented financial environment, there was continued focus on enhancing Medicaid fees. In the past two years \$188 million has been added to Medicaid fees **for primary and preventive care, including physician fees**. The increase demonstrates the commitment in Albany to Medicaid patients' primary care needs, long advocated for by MSSNY.
- Changes to the **professional discipline process** that would have eroded physicians' due process rights were defeated, and many of those rights were actually expanded.
- Unwarranted **practice expansions for non-physician providers were defeated**.

Additional significant victories in the current state budget (4/1/09-3/31/10) include:

- **Defeat of the proposed \$400 increase** in physicians' biennial registration fee. This victory, alone, pays for more than 50% of your state and county medical society dues.
- **Rejection of a proposal to extend a 9.63% physician procedure surcharge** to surgical and radiological procedures performed in private ambulatory surgery centers, physician offices and urgent care settings.
- **Rejection of a plan to eliminate the "prescriber prevails" exception** to the Medicaid Clinical Drug Review Program and of legislation that would have expanded the Preferred Drug List to include anti-depressants.

Physicians benefited from appropriations in this budget despite difficult sacrifices required of so many others. Appropriations include:

- **\$110M for health information technology** including:
 - \$25.7M for HIT construction and equipment funded by the American recovery and reinvestment act of 2009
 - \$34M for federal grants for the office of National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
 - \$50M for federal grants for state electronic records revolving loan program
- The budget also maintains funding for **MSSNY-focused budget items**, including:
 - Committee for Physician's Health (\$990,000)
 - HIV Education (\$98,000); and
 - Health Information Technology (HIT) re-appropriations totaling over \$12 million

Under the Medicaid program, monies are included to provide **incentives for prescribers to utilize e-prescribing technology**. Under this program, a physician will receive \$0.80 for every filled prescription e-prescribed, including refills.

By all accounts, this is an impressive list of accomplishments in just nine months. And, we accomplished all of this with only a statewide membership penetration of 25%. Just think what we could do for the profession and for our patients if we represented 30%, 40%, even 50% of the profession!

MANY ISSUES REMAIN UNRESOLVED...MSSNY CONTINUES THE FIGHT TO ACHIEVE FAIR & EQUITABLE RESOLUTION OF:

- Medicare reform. New York physicians face an across the board cut of 21% on January 1, 2010, and this is scheduled to grow to about 40% in cumulative cuts by 2016. Also needed are reductions in administrative burdens and unfunded mandates on physicians.
- Overall health system reform, including
 - Real reform of the medical liability system
 - Managed care reforms
 - Collective negotiation rights for physicians
 - Challenges in transitioning to electronic health records
 - Care for the uninsured, and access issues
 - Health care disparities
 - Emergency preparedness

If you are already a member, thank you very much for your participation and support!

If you are not a member, don't stand on the sidelines any longer. Your colleagues need your support. Without it, all of the victories set forth above will quickly turn into defeats.

Join the fight. It is your right. It is your obligation. It is your profession.

Thank you for your consideration.