

# *Medical Society of the State of New York*

For Immediate Release

Contact: Moe Auster  
518-465-8085  
[mauster@mssny.org](mailto:mauster@mssny.org)

## **NYS Attorney General's Action Underscores Issue of Managed Care Plans' Cost Cutting at Expense of Patients**

### **NYS Medical Society Supports AG's Concern that Patients Might be Shortchanged**

**Lake Success, NY (10/18/07).**... The Medical Society of the State of New York welcomed the announcement today by New York State Attorney General Andrew W. Cuomo that proposed physician ranking programs are “potentially deceptive” and “may steer patients to the cheapest but not necessarily the best doctors.” The Attorney General's actions reflect the serious concerns expressed by physicians in New York State, according to Robert Goldberg, DO, President of the Medical Society of the State of New York.

“We must assure that the managed care plans are more interested in quality medical care than they are in saving money,” said Dr. Goldberg. “The issue of cost-cutting trumping patient care is a reality in many, many cases. The Attorney General should be applauded for speaking-up on behalf of all patients.”

In a letter to Empire Blue Cross, the Attorney General's office says, “...ill-designed programs risk confusing or even deceiving consumers....(and) require special scrutiny by us because of the insurers' financial motive to steer consumers to the cheapest, and not necessarily the best, doctors.” The letter also warns of the risk of employers using financial incentives to steer patients to certain physicians.

In addressing the same issue with Rochester-based Preferred Care, the Attorney General's office directed that the plan “halt the launch of its planned doctor ranking program and provide details about the system.” In its letter to the company, the Attorney General asked for an explanation on why consumer subscribers are asked a series of patient satisfaction questions if the answers are not included in the rating system. It also asked the company to answer more than a dozen questions pertaining to Preferred Care's methodology for developing the rating system it proposes.

A similar letter to the HIP/GHI plan warned the company “to refrain from launching such a program without the prior consent of the Attorney General.”

MSSNY looks forward to working with AG's office as this vitally important investigation continues in order to make certain that consumers are not misled or deceived.