

# Medical Society of the State of New York

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## **NYS Medical Society Says Rate Increase Bodes Ill for New York Patients**

LAKE SUCCESS, NY (July 2, 2007) – The President of the Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY), Robert Goldberg, DO, responded to today’s announcement that the premium rate increase for physicians’ medical malpractice insurance will be 14%. Dr. Goldberg said:

“The 14% increase in physician medical liability insurance premiums announced today will severely worsen the health care access crisis that has already resulted in shortages in several specialties all across New York State.

The newest rate increase means that a Long Island neurosurgeon will now have to pay an outrageous \$309,311 for just a single year of coverage; a Brooklyn or Queens OB-GYN will now pay \$173,061 and a Westchester orthopedic surgeon will now pay \$108,679.

New York physicians and hospitals are caught in a cruel vise between exorbitant and skyrocketing liability insurance costs and the drive by private health insurers and government Medicare and Medicaid programs to chop payments for needed patient care.

Even prior to this most recent rate increase announcement, physician liability insurance costs for many surgical specialists across New York State had almost doubled over the last five years.

The University of Albany’s Center for Health Workforce Studies has extensively documented the growing physician shortages across New York. Senator Charles Schumer has also done much to highlight the problem. The latest increase announced today will throw gasoline on this already-raging fire.

Physicians cannot continue to face year after year of significant increases in liability costs without having the ability to recoup these increased costs. It is simply not sustainable for physicians, and most importantly, not sustainable for our patients who depend upon the health care system.

We applaud Governor Spitzer’s, Superintendent Dinallo’s and Commissioner Daines’ decision to create a task force with broad representation to finally and comprehensively address the tort and medical malpractice insurance problems by the end of the year. As the governor accurately noted, we have an environment in New York where physicians can no longer afford to practice and where our insurers’ financial situation is rapidly eroding. This state of affairs has profound consequences not only for each and every New Yorker, but for every individual across America and, indeed, the world, who comes to New York to obtain care.

MSSNY has embarked upon a major public education campaign to educate our patients and the public regarding the severe threat they face in access to care as a result of New York State’s failure to rein in its out-of-control medical liability adjudication system. These efforts will grow in intensity with today’s announcement.”