



MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

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Report of MSSNY Executive Vice President Troy Oechsner to the 2023 House of Delegates



MSSNY is working for you. In my second full year as your Executive Vice President, we have delivered on several key performance indicators, making needed changes to position us for growth in membership recruitment, engagement, and retention, so that we can become an even more effective advocate for physicians and patients.

A partial list of MSSNY successes in improving business operations to improve our ability to serve and advocate for you, our physician members, includes:

Building Membership. Taking important steps towards improving MSSNY membership recruitment, engagement and retention.

- **New Website.** The MSSNY website was completely rebuilt to be more appealing, accessible and relevant. We are continuing to work on development, but the virtual face of MSSNY is much improved.
- **New MSSNY Pulse.** Revamped newsletter that is also available via our new MSSNY app.
- **New MSSNY Insider.** A new newsletter for members only, featuring brief items of interest to members.
- **Member Database Upgrade.** We have selected a new member database that promises to improve the ability of members to join, renew, serve on a committee, get help fighting insurer hassles, find CME and other educational programs, connect with other physicians for collaboration or mentoring, and link up with member benefits.
- **Revamping Member Benefits.** MSSNY added a number of new benefits, including improved legal services that includes a free consult and discount; discount on STI credentialing and billing services; discount on Resolve for contract review + negotiation; discount on Adirondack medical records management. In addition, MSSNY has dropped unused or unwanted benefits, including curriculum vitae services, travel service, diamond discounts, and fitness center.

- **Presentations.** MSSNY has upped our game on presenting a number of new presentations on a variety of matters, including a successful Women's Leadership Conference and – with thanks to Dr. Mehta – programs for IMG young physicians.
- **Easing the Path to Membership.** We have taken important steps to reduce barriers to becoming a MSSNY member, including simplifying dues structure. We reduced individual membership categories from 27 to 8. We are also in the process of adopting more standardized group and institutional membership categories.
- **Refining MSSNY's Value Proposition.** MSSNY has been developing improved marketing to convey our value proposition to members, including:
 - **Advocating** to protect your profession with national, state and local officials.
 - **Fighting insurers** on preauthorization, claim denials/delays, excessive medical record requests and more.
 - **Connecting you** with colleagues through networking and mentoring.
 - **Providing our expert information and representation** with regulators and policy makers on public health matters.
 - **Educating you** through presentations and CME.
 - **Giving you concrete benefits and discounts**, including legal representation, credentialing services, employment contracts review and more.

Reducing Unnecessary Expenses. Specific changes to eliminate unnecessary costs, including:

- **Office Space.** Reduced the size and cost of our Albany and Westbury offices, saving approximately \$1 million over 5 years.
- **Meetings.** Using virtual Council and Board meetings has saved approximately \$100,000 over the past two years.
- **Renegotiated equipment, supplies and services**, including phones (\approx \$35,000), postage machines (\approx \$18,000), copiers (\approx \$14,000), IT support (\approx \$12,000), office supplies (\approx \$2,000) and email service (\approx \$10,000).

Advancing Our Advocacy Agenda.

- **Fighting Malpractice Hikes.** In the most impactful grassroots ever in many years, MSSNY successfully fought to win a Governor's veto of the Grieving Families Act which would have increased malpractice costs by 40%.
- **Passed Telehealth Payment Parity** requiring insurers to pay telehealth on parity with in-office visits.
- **Increased Funding for Doctors Across NY's** student loan forgiveness for physicians in underserved communities.
- **Restored Funding** for proposed cuts to Medicaid and Excess Medical Malpractice coverage.
- **Increased Medicaid Payments for E+M and Medicine Codes.** For the first time in many years, payments for these codes were increased.

- **Restricted Insurers' Mid-Year Drug Formulary Changes.** Limited the ability of insurers to change the drug formulary in the middle of a patient's insurance plan year, an important example of MSSNY joining with consumers to fight insurers.
- **Established Regulation of Pharmacy Benefit Managers.** The Department of Financial Services – primary regulator for insurers – will now be authorized to regulate pharmacy benefit managers, establishing the first rules for their fair play.
- **Stopped Pre-Judgment Interest** in certain cases (including malpractice). We successfully fought back against another proposal from the trial lawyers to slap physicians (and their employers) with increased medical malpractice costs.
- **Expanded Insurance Coverage** in the Essential Plan and Child Health Insurance Program, as well as for Medicaid post-partum care up to one year.
- **And much more.** MSSNY has successfully won many other victories too numerous for this document.

This session, we are advocating for several important bills including:

- **Gold Card** bill that exempts physicians from insurers' prior authorization requirements if the insurer approves 90% or more of the physician's treatments.
- **Prohibition on Repeat Insurer Pre-Authorizations.** This bill would place further limits on the ability of insurers to require repeated preauthorizations.
- **Copay Accumulator** bill would limit the ability of insurers to prevent patients using a copay card or coupon to count towards their out-of-pocket deductible.
- **Step Therapy** bill would exempt mental health medications from insurers' step therapy rules.
- **Fighting Numerous Practice Mandates, Scope Expansions.** There are many dozens of bills that MSSNY is fighting along with various physician specialty organizations that would restrict your professional judgment and practice.

Modernizing MSSNY Practices. In 2021-22, the MSSNY President and EVP worked to modernize oversight of MSSNY business practices, including:

- **Reorganizing.** We reorganized MSSNY divisions, including creating a newly charged Division of Physician Payment and Practice, with changes to the Membership, Communications, Finance and Government Affairs divisions.
- **Leadership.** We brought on new leadership for Communications, Membership and our newly created Physician Payment and Practice, which recovered \$7 million on behalf of MSSNY members this year.
- **KPIs.** We set goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) for each Division with regular reports from the EVP to the Council and Board.
- **Evaluations.** We have made performance evaluations routine and universal.

- **Training.** We are in the process of enhanced training, including DEI training. Of course, we have more to do in this area. But it's an important start.
- **Budget.** We reorganized the budget statements to make them more easily understandable for our leadership and staff.

Structural Changes. To maximize effectiveness of the above changes, we need structural changes. For example, we must lower barriers to becoming a member, including simplifying our dues structure. We started by reducing the number of individual dues levels from 27 down to 9. We are also reviewing group dues levels to make them more transparent, consistent, and fair.

- **Collaboration and Consolidation of Counties.** We seek to improve county collaboration, with enhanced MSSNY support for counties to engage members more actively. Discussions have occurred between MSSNY state and county leaders and staff about how some of the more active counties can help some of the challenged counties achieve a higher level of engagement.
- **Increasing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** We have taken a number of steps to realize the MSSNY Council's resolution in June 2021 to promote diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) within MSSNY, our profession, and our communities. For example, we included equity provisions in MSSNY's Legislative Agenda. We also have proposed amendments to MSSNY's Mission Statement. And we have worked on a potential grant with the Health Equity Committee to help promote DEI within MSSNY. However, we still have much to do, and we look forward to working with MSSNY leadership in the coming year to improve DEI. We recognize that improved diversity is a key to MSSNY's growth and success.

As your new Executive Vice President, I am honored to have served with Dr. Mehta as MSSNY President, Dr. Reid as MSSNY Board of Trustees Chair, and the rest of MSSNY leaders and staff. I look forward to the upcoming year with Dr. Pipia as President and other new and returning leaders. Most importantly, thanks to all of you – the Delegates, leaders, and members of MSSNY – for your service to the patients of New York during the pandemic and beyond.

My best to each one of you. Enjoy the HOD.



Troy Oechsner
MSSNY Executive Vice President