



Join Us for MSSNY's Physician Advocacy Day in Albany on March 10

With budget negotiations underway in Albany, physicians must speak up. Following the release of the Executive Budget, several proposals threaten to make it harder for physicians to deliver timely, high-quality care to patients. Please Register today! [Physician Advocacy Registration](#).

The timing for this event is critical because it is around the same time that both the Assembly and Senate are finalizing their respective one-House Budgets setting the stage for negotiations with the Governor.

This year's event will take place in person in Meeting Room 6 in the Empire State Plaza, Albany, from 7:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. During the morning session, physicians, residents, and medical students will hear from legislative leaders as well as the Commissioner of Health in which they will have the opportunity to ask them critical questions about their policy priorities. In the afternoon, participants will meet with their legislators in sessions organized by their county medical societies.

MSSNY has been advocating a range of critical issues that directly impact patient care and the practice of medicine. Key priorities include advancing Prior Authorization Reform to reduce administrative delays and ensure timely access to care; preserving the role of county medical societies in the Workers' Compensation application process; protecting physicians' right to a fair and independent Dispute Resolution (IDR) process; opposing proposals that would shift excess medical malpractice insurance costs onto physicians; and preserving physician-led, team-based healthcare to ensure patients receive high-quality, coordinated care guided by medical expertise.

Your participation in Albany is essential to safeguarding patient access to care and the practice of medicine in New York.

(HOSPODAR)

Physicians Must Continue to Urge Legislature to Reject Budget Proposals that Will Harm Patient Access to Needed Care!!

Physicians must continue to [contact](#) their Senators and Assemblymembers to urge that they reject a number of problematic proposals in the 2026-27 Executive Budget that will adversely impact patient access to community-based physician care. Last week, MSSNY President Dr. David Jakubowicz delivered [testimony](#) at a joint Senate-Assembly hearing highlighting some positive initiatives such as prior authorization reform and continuing fair telehealth payment, but also

warning the State Legislature about the patient access to care consequences arising from the potential huge new cost imposition and steep drops in insurer payment that would be caused by various unfair Budget proposals singling out our state's dedicated physicians. These include:

- **Reject Excess Cuts.** Urge your legislation to OPPOSE ([Reject Physician Cost-Share](#)) the proposed new \$40 million in costs to the 16,000 physicians who receive Excess Medical Malpractice Insurance coverage by requiring them to pay 50% of the coverage cost. This will hit many of these physicians with thousands of dollars in additional new costs when they can least absorb it.
- **Don't Let Insurers Put Their Thumb on the Scale in IDR.** Urge your legislators to OPPOSE ([Protect Fair IDR Process](#)) a proposal that threatens available on-call specialty care availability in Emergency Departments across New York State by upending New York's innovative IDR payment resolution process for non-participating provider claims, altering the criteria to make it one-sided towards health insurer interests and eliminate ability to appeal out of network Medicaid Managed Care disputes to IDR. Essentially, this would enable the health insurer to "put its thumb on the scale" in what is supposed an INDEPENDENT dispute resolution process.
- **Preserve Physician-Led Team Care.** Urge your legislators to OPPOSE ([Preserve Physician-led Care](#)) permitting many PAs to practice without any defined physician supervision after 8,000 hours practice, despite a law enacted last year giving PAs significantly more care responsibilities.
- **Preserve County Medical Society Peer Review.** Urge your legislators to OPPOSE ([Workers Compensation](#)) eliminating the historical vetting role of the county medical society in recommending physicians to participate in the Workers' Compensation program. The problem with Workers Compensation is not the application process, but its low payments relative to the enormous hassles of claim submissions and non-payment months and years after providing complex care to injured workers.

There are some positive Provisions in the Executive Budget, including:

- A series of prior authorization reforms, including prohibiting health plans from requiring Prior Authorization for the treatment of chronic conditions more than once per year, and requiring greater transparency of Prior Auth denials.
- Permitting Medical Assistants to administer immunizations.
- Extending telehealth health insurance payment parity for 2 more years.
- Linking immunization coverage standards to recommendations of AAP, AAFP, ACP or ACOG.
- Reducing Interest rates on court judgments from 9% to a market rate, helping to lower medical liability insurance premiums.
- Increased investment in the Early Intervention program.
- Funding the Committee for Physicians Health (CPH) at its historical level of \$990,000.
- Funding the Doctors Across New York medical student loan relief program at its historical level of \$15.86M.

(DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS)

AG James Announces Reforms to Address Emblem’s Inadequate Provider Networks

New York Attorney General Letitia James announced [this week](#) a settlement with Emblem Health following an investigation which revealed the company repeatedly failed to ensure New Yorkers had access to comprehensive mental health services. The press release noted that the AG investigation found that Emblem had widespread “ghost networks”, maintained inaccurate provider directories, overstated the availability of in-network mental health and substance use disorder providers, and failed to comply with state and federal behavioral health parity laws, leaving many New Yorkers unable to find timely, affordable care. Under the settlement, Emblem will pay \$2.5 million in penalties and fees, provide restitution to members who were forced to pay out-of-pocket for mental health care, and implement sweeping reforms to improve access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

The investigation began 2023 with a “secret shopper” survey of mental health and substance use disorder providers listed in the company’s online directory. The investigation found that Emblem’s directories contained many errors, including listings for providers who were unreachable, no longer practicing, not accepting new patients, or not actually in the plan’s network. It concluded that more than 80% of the behavioral health providers that Emblem listed as accepting new patients were effectively unavailable – creating “ghost networks” of providers that existed only on paper.

Here is AG James’ [full report](#) and [settlement](#).

(CARY)

In February & March, MSSNY Has CME, CME, & More CME!

Did you know that MSSNY has FOUR new outstanding CME webinars scheduled for late February and early March? Be sure to register NOW for the next two upcoming REQUIRED *Pain Management, Palliative Care & Addiction* courses and two more Winter 2026 *Women Physicians Leadership Academy* (WPLA) sessions.

Dates, times, and registration information for each of these courses is below:

CME Series on Pain Management, Palliative Care & Addiction as Required by New York State Statute

February 25th and, March 11th @ 7:30a.m.

These live webinars are being offered **FREE OF CHARGE ONLY to MSSNY members**. Once they have been recorded, they will be offered at the MSSNY CME website for \$50.00 per course for non-members.

The Medical Society of the State of New York announces an updated series of three one-hour CME webinars on Pain Management, Palliative Care, & Addiction. The first course took place on February 11th and will be available on the MSSNY CME website soon.

Since 2017, New York State statute requires all prescribers holding a DEA license to complete **THREE** hours of coursework every three years.

The Medical Society of the State of New York has worked with the New York State Office of Addictions Services and Supports (OASAS) in the development of this program series, ensuring that it covers all eight of the required topics.

Following the webinars, the courses will be offered on-line at the MSSNY CME website, <https://cme.mssny.org>, remaining free to MSSNY members. For all non-MSSNY members, there will be a \$50.00 charge per course for.

Please click on titles to enroll in each webinar:

Wednesday February 25, 2026 @ 7:30-8:30a.m.

[When to Consider Opioid Therapy for Chronic Non-Cancer & Palliative Care](#)

Faculty: Charles Argoff, MD

Educational Objectives:

- Discuss evidence based best practice recommendations for opioid therapy for chronic pain, patient risk assessments, and documentation.
- Describe palliative medical care and end-of-life care.

Wednesday March 11 @ 7:30-8:30a.m.

[Patients with Opioid Use Disorders: Identification, Treatment, and Management of Co-occurring Pain](#)

Faculty: Pamela Mund, MD, Chief of Addiction Medicine, State Opioid Treatment Authority (OASAS) & Jeffrey Selzer, MD.

Educational Objectives:

- Describe the Potential for Addiction, Patient Screening, Diagnosis and Subsequent Treatment or Referral
- Recommend Tools to Assist in the Identification of High-Risk Patients for Whom Opioids are Indicated and Prescribed
- Describe Strategies for Treating Pain in Patients with Substance Use Disorders

These three webinars include the state required elements: New York State and federal requirements for prescribing controlled substances; Pain management; Appropriate prescribing; Managing acute pain; Palliative medicine; Prevention, screening, and signs of addiction; Responses to abuse and addiction; and End of life care.

Following successful completion of the three hour of coursework, prescribers must attest to the NYS Department of Health that they have taken the course: https://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/narcotic/mandatory_prescriber_education/docs/neat_instructions_prescriber.pdf

Additional information or assistance with registration may be obtained by contacting Melissa Hoffman at mhoffman@mssny.org or 518-465-8085.

The Medical Society of the State of New York is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The Medical Society of the State of New York designates each live activity for a maximum of 1.0 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Winter 2026 Women Physicians Leadership Academy

There are two more Winter 2026 WPLA sessions coming in March: *Enhancing Physician Wellness & Wellbeing* and *The Importance of Networking*.

The Winter 2026 WPLA schedule is below with registration links:

Sunday March 1st @ 9:45AM-1:15PM

- **[Enhancing Physician Wellness & Wellbeing](#)**

Saturday March 7th @ 9:45AM-1:15PM

- **[The Importance of Networking](#)**

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(HOFFMAN)