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CAPITAL UPDATE

News of legislative, regulatory, and other matters of interest to New York's physicians
Published by Governmental Affairs Division/Medical Society of the State of New York ★ 155 Washington Ave. ★ Albany, NY 12210
(518)465-8085 ★ www.mssny.org ★ email: albany@mssny.org ★ Morris M. Auster, Esq. ★ Oksana V. Golovina, Esq. ★ Zina Cary ★ Nicholas Hospodar

Physicians Across the State Coming to Albany for MSSNY's Physician Advocacy Day on March 10 – Will You Join Us?

With State Budget negotiations underway in the State Capitol, it is essential for physicians to make their voices heard about adverse proposals under consideration in the State Budget that could jeopardize community-based physician care availability for patients in New York State.

Next week, both the Senate and Assembly are planning to finalize their respective "one-House" Budget proposals, setting the stage for 3-way negotiations with the Governor towards adoption of a State Budget by April 1. Legislators need to hear from their constituent physicians about the impact of these Budget proposals on patient care in their communities.

That is why it is important to be in Albany March 10 for Physician Advocacy Day. If you have not already, please Register now! Physician Advocacy Registration

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 the New York State Commissioner of Health, the Chairs of the Senate and Assembly Health and Insurance Committee, the Senate Deputy Majority Leader, and the Senate Minority Leader about their vision for health care in New York State, and their position on the various Budget proposals. In the afternoon, participants will meet with their legislators in meetings organized by their county medical societies.

MSSNY is actively 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; protecting physicians' right to appeal insurer underpayments to a fair and independent Dispute Resolution (IDR) process; opposing proposals that would shift thousands of dollars in new costs on physicians for obtaining Excess Medical Malpractice Insurance coverage and opposing efforts to eliminate needed physician supervision over the care provided by various non-physicians.

Your ability to practice is at stake! Please plan to join us in advocating to safeguard patient access to skilled physician care at a time when we are facing so many challenges.

(HOSPODAR)

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Please 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 the litany of problematic proposals in the 2026-27 Executive Budget that will adversely impact patient access to community-based physician care. It is likely that both the Assembly and Senate will be releasing and passing their respective "one-House" Budget proposals next week, setting the stage for 3-way negotiations with the Governor towards adoption a Budget by the April 1 fiscal year deadline.

The Executive Budget proposal does contain some positive Budget initiatives such as prior authorization reform, continuing fair telehealth payment, permitting medical assistants to administer vaccinations and ensuring that state vaccination requirements are based on the recommendations of specialty medical organizations. However, there are numerous unfair Budget proposals singling out our state's dedicated physicians that will further exacerbate patient access to care challenges in New York. Your advocacy is essential to MSSNY's efforts to request that these measures be removed from the State Budget.

- **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.

The time to act is now! Please contact your legislators today!

(DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS)

New York Senate Passes Legislation to Protect Access to Vaccinations & Uphold Vaccine Efficacy Standards

The New York State Senate passed a package of bills this week to expand and protect access to important vaccines for all New Yorkers. This package includes legislation that would expand who could administer vaccinations and immunizations, require children's vaccine to follow regulations issued by the state Department of Health (DOH) and directs insurance plans to expand coverage and reimbursements for vaccines and immunizations. Among the bills included in the Senate's Vaccine Package include:

- **Authorizing Medical Assistants to Administer Vaccinations:** S.5340B, sponsored by Senator Toby Stavisky, would authorize and train medical assistants to administer immunizations under the direct supervision of a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant.

- **Broadening Immunization Recommendations and Coverage:** S.8496C, sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey, authorizes health care providers to order and administer immunizations recommended not only by the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), but also by independent, state, or interstate entities and requires state-regulated insurance plans to cover vaccines recommended by these entities.

- **Ensuring Sound Childhood Immunization Practices:** This bill, S.8853, sponsored by Senator Shelley Mayer, calls for children's vaccine requirements to conform to regulations issued by the New York State Commissioner of Health.

- **Requiring the Reimbursement of Vaccination Expenses:** S.5852, sponsored by Senator James Skoufis, would require insurance companies to reimburse total direct and indirect practice expenses associated with vaccinations.

(CARY)

MSSNY has More CME Upcoming This Month

Register now for upcoming CME webinars scheduled for early March. Sign-up NOW for the third of three *Pain Management, Palliative Care & Addiction* courses and the last of the Winter 2026 *Women Physicians Leadership Academy* (WPLA) sessions.

Dates, times, and registration information for each of these courses are below.

CME Series on Pain Management, Palliative Care & Addiction as Required by New York State Statute
Final Webinar on 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 two courses took place in February 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.

The next program, scheduled for next 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 will be one more Winter WPLA session tomorrow **March 7th from 9:45AM-1:15PM on *The Importance of Networking***

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(HOFFMAN)