



## CAPITAL UPDATE

News of legislative, regulatory, and other matters of interest to New York's physicians

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### **Physicians - Please Join Us for MSSNY's Physician Advocacy Day on March 10, 2026!**

With an Executive Budget under consideration that contains numerous threats to physician-delivered patient care, physicians must plan to be in Albany on March 10. 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 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; 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 our Albany advocacy day is essential to safeguarding patient access to care and the practice of medicine in New York. Please [Register](#) today!

**(HOSPODAR)**

### **Physicians Continue to Advocate for Legislature to Reject Budget Proposals that Will Harm Patient Access to Needed Care**

MSSNY lobbyists and physician leaders from across New York State continue to walk the halls of the State Capitol and communicate with their legislators to urge that they reject the litany of hostile proposals in the 2026-27 fiscal year Executive Budget. While there are some positive initiatives such as prior authorization reform and continuing fair telehealth payment, the combined weight of the huge new cost imposition and steep drops in insurer payment will – if enacted –

make it close to impossible for New York's relatively few remaining community-based medical practices to remain afloat, exacerbating patient access to care challenges.

### **Adverse Proposals**

- 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.
- 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.
- Urge your legislators to OPPOSE ([Preserve Physician-led, Team-based Healthcare](#)) 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.
- 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.
- Urge your legislators to OPPOSE expanding the reporting requirements for completed material healthcare acquisitions, including those completed dating back to 2023.
- Urge your legislators to OPPOSE passing from SED to DOH oversight of physician private practice incorporation, as well as giving the Commissioner unilateral authority to impose continuing medical education requirements.
- Urge your legislators to OPPOSE giving auto insurers a much longer timeframe to challenge No-Fault medical claims.

### **Positive Provisions**

- Urge your legislators to SUPPORT 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.
- Urge your legislators to SUPPORT permitting Medical Assistants to administer immunizations.
- Urge your legislators to SUPPORT extending telehealth health insurance payment parity for 2 more years.
- Urge your legislators to SUPPORT linking immunization coverage standards to those recommended by AAP, AAFP, ACP or ACOG.
- Urge your legislators to SUPPORT reducing Interest rates on court judgments from 9% to a market rate, helping to lower medical liability insurance premiums.
- Urge your legislators to SUPPORT increased investment in the Early Intervention program.

- Urge your legislators to SUPPORT the Committee for Physicians Health (CPH) being funded at historical level of \$990,000.
- Urge your legislators to SUPPORT Doctors Across New York medical student loan relief program funded at historical level of \$15.86M.

**(DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS)**

**Legislature Passes Medical Aid in Dying Chapter Amendments**

The State Legislature gave final passage this week to chapter amendments negotiated by the Governor and Legislature to amend the "medical aid in dying" legislation passed last year. The bills are expected to be signed by the Governor by midnight on February 6.

The legislation would permit a terminally ill patient with less than 6 months to live the ability to request from their physician medication to be self-administered by the patient to expedite their passing. The chapter amendments passing the Assembly and Senate this week [A.9515/S.8835](#) take a number of steps to place further guardrails on the potential use of this new patient right. These include:

- requiring a 5-day waiting period for any such prescription to be filled.
- requiring that the request be recorded via video or audio.
- requiring that the request be made by the patient in person, not by telehealth, absent extraordinary hardship to the patient.
- requiring that there be a mandatory evaluation by a mental health professional to confirm the patient has decision-making capacity to make an informed decision.
- Making violations of these provisions by a physician to become an element of professional misconduct
- Creating a 6-month implementation timeframe (which means the law will become effective in early April).

While we are aware that physicians may have differing viewpoints about this legislation, MSSNY will be working with the NYS Department of Health to help ensure physicians have necessary information about the new law to help them answer questions that their patients may have about this profound change in the law.

**(AUSTER)**

**Medicare Telehealth Flexibilities Extended to End of 2027**

Included in the final version of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2026, recently passed by Congress, and signed by the President, is an extension of important flexibilities for Telehealth services for Medicare beneficiaries. The new law is valid through December 31, 2027, and gives millions of American seniors' more complete access to their physicians and other vital healthcare services.

Following the 43-day lapse in coverage during the 2025 government shutdown, this extension restores continuity of care for Medicare beneficiaries. All provider specialties may deliver services via telehealth with no geographic restrictions and patients can receive telehealth services from their home. Moreover, physicians who were holding claims or did not submit a claim for a telehealth service, may submit a claim for consideration under the continuing telehealth flexibilities.

MSSNY strongly supports this extension and will continue to push for permanent authorization of Medicare telehealth flexibilities. For additional information, please see the updated CMS Telehealth FAQ document: [CMS Telehealth FAQ](#).

**(CARY)**

## **MSSNY Launches 2026 Prior Authorization SURVEY for Members**

Prior authorizations often impose overwhelming burdens that can cause unnecessary delays in needed care for patients. Delay in authorization of prescriptions, tests or procedures can cause needless anxiety for patients already stressed by uncertainty regarding their condition, particularly those with chronic conditions who have complex medical needs, and their health depends on following strict treatment plans.

MSSNY is advocating for policy changes during the current 2026 Legislative Session to address issues related to the prior authorization process, including a package of proposed prior authorization reforms included in Governor Hochul's budget proposal for FY2026-27 as well as stand-alone legislation (including A.3789-A, Weprin). We need your input to help us win the support of lawmakers! Please take a moment to complete the following survey to help us gauge the impact that prior authorizations are having on patients and physician practices in New York State. [TAKE THE SURVEY!](#)

**(CARY)**

## **MSSNY Council Adopts Resolution to Support New Pathways for International Medical Graduates**

At its January 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, the MSSNY Council adopted a resolution with the goal of expanding the use of International Medical Graduates (IMGs) as one way to address New York's ongoing physician workforce shortages. This policy acknowledges the critical need to expand structured, supervised pathways for IMGs to contribute to patient care—particularly in underserved communities—while maintaining rigorous standards for patient safety.

The Resolution adopted by the MSSNY Council emerged after extensive discussion within the Legislative & Physician Advocacy Committee, which carefully reviewed the original proposal introduced by the Medical Society of Kings County and Dr. Lisa Eng, DO, at last year's House of Delegates. At that time, there was broad support for creating IMG pathways, alongside important questions about appropriate training, testing, and supervision requirements. Committee members recognized that enabling qualified IMGs to enter supervised practice is far preferable to expanding independent practice for non-physician clinicians, consistent with MSSNY's long-standing commitment to protecting high-quality, physician-led care. The Committee emphasized that any such pathways must be structured, supervised, and focused on service in medically underserved areas or shortage specialties.

The significance of this policy is underscored by the numerous legislative proposals already under consideration in Albany. During the 2025 session, Senator Robert Jackson and Assemblymember Catalina Cruz introduced S7840/A7319 to establish a supervised licensure pathway for internationally trained physicians to practice in underserved communities. Assemblymember Nader Sayegh's A4219 proposed expanding both the scope and duration of New York's existing limited medical permit, while earlier efforts—such as S7002/A8382 introduced by Senator Andrew Gounardes and Assemblymember Karines Reyes—seek to create a restricted license for ECFMG-certified IMGs with significant international clinical experience.

MSSNY's advocacy will focus on ensuring that any expanded licensure pathways for IMGs include the safeguards necessary to maintain patient safety, support high-quality clinical training, and reinforce the central role of physicians in the healthcare system. At the same time, MSSNY will work collaboratively to help craft solutions that meaningfully strengthen access to care, especially where physician shortages are most severe.

**(GOLOVINA)**

## **Application Deadline Extended for New Health Care Student Loan Repayment Program**

The New York State Office of Health Insurance Programs has extended the application deadline for the new Health Care Access Loan Repayment (HEALR) program. This extension is intended to ensure a robust applicant pool across eligible titles and the state, to make it easier for residents

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and fellows to complete their programs in June 2026 to apply, and to allow more time for individuals and employers to submit their application materials.

Governor Hochul recently announced the launch of the new \$48.3 million student loan repayment initiative which is designed to expand access to care for Medicaid beneficiaries and uninsured individuals in New York state. The HEALR program will provide significant financial incentives to health care professionals who agree to care for vulnerable communities to help address critical workforce shortages and expand access to vital health services in underserved communities. The loan repayment program is available through New York's federal 1115 waiver aimed at bolstering the health care workforce in underserved areas.

Health care providers who are awarded loan repayment through the HEALR program must make a four-year, full-time commitment to maintaining a personal practice panel or working at an organization that serves at least 30 percent NYS Medicaid members and/or uninsured individuals. Organizations that are contracted with a state-designated Social Care Network and provide health-related social needs screening, referrals and/or services also qualify. Maximum loan repayment awards for each title are as follows:

- Psychiatrists: up to \$300,000 per awardee.
- Dentists and Primary Care Physicians: up to \$100,000 per awardee.

To learn more about this new initiative including how to apply: [Student Loan Repayment Program.](#)

**(CARY)**

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

Did you know that MSSNY has SEVEN new outstanding CME webinars coming up? Be sure to register NOW for the upcoming *Women Physicians Leadership Academy* (WPLA) sessions and the REQUIRED *Pain Management, Palliative Care & Addiction* courses.

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

#### **Winter 2026 Women Physicians Leadership Academy**

The Winter 2026 WPLA series will take a comprehensive look into *Designing Your Medical Career, Enhancing Physician Wellness & Wellbeing* and *The Importance of Networking*.

The Winter 2026 WPLA schedule is below with registration links:

Saturday February 7<sup>th</sup> @ 9:45AM-1:15PM

- [Designing Your Medical Career](#)

Sunday March 1<sup>st</sup> @ 9:45AM-1:15PM

- [Enhancing Physician Wellness & Wellbeing](#)

Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup> @ 9:45AM-1:15PM –

- [The Importance of Networking](#)

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 3.0 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

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

February 11<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> and, March 11<sup>th</sup> @ 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. 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 11, 2026 @ 7:30-8:30a.m.***

[Understanding the Current Legal Landscape in New York State for Prescribing Controlled Substances](#)

Faculty: Greg Meyer, Esq., Deputy Counsel for NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS), and Pamela Mund, MD, Chief of Addiction Medicine, State Opioid Treatment Authority (OASAS)

Educational Objectives:

- Discuss pain management guidelines.
- Summarize New York State and federal requirements for prescribing controlled substances.
- Explore use of non-pharmacological pain management options.

***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.

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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](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](mailto:mhoffman@mssny.org) or 518-465-8085.

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***Medical Matters: Virtual Drill 2026: Diagnosing, Reporting & Employing the Incident Command System***

When: February 18<sup>th</sup> 7:30-9:00a.m.

Faculty: Arthur Cooper, MD, Lorraine Giordano, MD, & William Valenti, MD,

Educational Objectives:

- Outline information about local, state, and national chain of command in a public health emergency and learn how to access resources.
- Analyze a scenario in which the incident command system plays a critical role.
- Recognize the importance of planning and preparation for the next public health emergency.
- Distinguish best practices for diagnosing, reporting, and messaging.

Click [here](#) to register.

*Funding provided by the New York State Department of Health*

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 this live activity for a maximum of 1.5 *AMA PRA Category 1 credits™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

**(HOFFMAN)**