



Philip E. Kline, MD Presidential Remarks – October 25, 2020

It has been about 5 months since I last addressed the membership of the Medical Society of New Jersey. At that time, I had said that medicine has changed dramatically since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic hit the United States and New Jersey. I have to say that since that time the executive committee, the board of trustees, the county executives and most importantly the staff of MSNJ and of course our CEO, Larry Downs, have been working tirelessly to keep up-to-date with new policies regulations and bills that have been affecting us in the state.

Besides our work securing Personal Protective Equipment, we are also working with the state regarding the initiation of influenza vaccine and the soon to be available COVID-19 vaccine. It is imperative that our membership work to administer influenza vaccines to as many of our patients as possible. Whether you are in a specialty or primary care and whether you are in private practice or hospital based, our members need to lead on flu vaccine for our patients.

Further; we are working with solo practitioners, large group practice physicians, hospital based physicians and telemedicine doctors to try to keep everyone working and also to try to receive reimbursements for their work. A high legislative priority is to retain payment parity for virtual visits as well as in person visits with physicians.

So far the Policy and Strategy Panel developed policies regarding restrictive covenants. Additionally, we are working with our State legislators on Truth in Advertising legislation that will require anyone seeing a patient to accurately state their degree and title so that patients know the training, experience and credentials of the healthcare practitioner treating them.

We have worked with a few insurance companies as they have attempted to change reimbursement policies during the Pandemic. Specifically, we know that Horizon is not reimbursing for medically necessary EMG studies based on a recent policy changes. Additionally, MSNJ is coordinating with the NJ OBGYN Society and the American College of OB/GYN to end United Healthcare's practice of requiring pre-authorization of vaginal cultures and other high volume procedures.

I encourage you to join our efforts by reporting insurance denials through MSNJ's new Insurance Denial Registry which is easily accessed on www.msnj.org. Your participation in documenting denials helps us monitor insurance industry behavior and bring data to regulators and legislators to solve problems.

There is still more that I have on my agenda for the rest of my term including physician burn out, drug pricing and surprise billing legislation.

In the next month, MSNJ will convene the Presidents and key staff of NJ Specialty Societies to develop a common legislative agenda to advance health and healthcare in NJ. This meeting, started last year under Immediate-Past President Marc Levine, solidified our mutual support for the Truth in Advertising legislation now being considered by the Senate and Assembly.

I am optimistic that once the COVID-19 Vaccine is offered, we as a Society and as a State will be able to work with some normalcy.

Thank you