



Connecticut State Medical Society 2015 Legislative Agenda

In 2015, the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) will continue to advocate for its physician and physician in training members, and the patients they serve. CSMS will focus efforts in several areas to strengthen the healthcare system, ensuring that the highest quality of care is available and delivered.

Professional Liability Insurance and Reform

CSMS intends to again be a coalition leader in continued, yet more focused and proactive efforts to push for the development and implementation of comprehensive medical liability reforms. Priority agenda items include:

- Continue efforts to establish alternate and viable means of dispute resolution such as special health courts and early mediation
- Seek legislation to protect the personal assets of physicians in liability cases
- Continue support for traditional tort reforms such as limits on damages, periodic payments, and reduction to pre-judgment interest levels
- Support for the establishment of an “Expert Witness Certification” process prior to testifying in medical negligence cases
- Immunity for physicians providing volunteer or *pro bono* services.
- Expansion of protections for physicians providing mandated care such as services required under EMTALA
- Continue to oppose efforts to weaken current tort laws such as the Certificate of Merit, Accidental Failure of Suit statutes as well as any efforts to expand the statute of limitations

Contracting, Transparency and Fairness

CSMS will continue its legislative efforts to strengthen the position of physicians within the marketplace, allowing them to better serve their patients and communities

- Allow for the assignment of benefits by a patient to the physician for allowable out of network benefits. Seek legislation requiring health plans to grant network participation to any physician willing to join the network and meet the network requirements
- Clarify balance billing laws and allow physicians to “Direct Contract”
- Opposition to the use of tiered and limited networks
- Require credentialing application decisions be made with 45 days of receipt of a complete application; 30 days for previously credentialed physicians changing employment (billing under a different tax ID number)
- Allow for retroactive billing of services to date of submission for an approved credentialing application
- Permission for physicians to limit patient panel size based on insurance payer or insurance product
- Require reimbursement for any mandatory screening tests required by the state.

Physician Workforce Issues

CSMS will continue proactive measures to:

- Enact state exemptions from federal laws to allow physicians to negotiate as a group to strengthen their contracting abilities. Benefits would include the ability to seek opportunities to implement electronic medical record systems, establish ACOs, and cover increased liability insurance costs and support recruitment of new physicians.
- Reduce regulations that impede physician services such as those required by the Certificate of Need process
- Establish student loan forgiveness and insurance premium assistance programs for new physicians

Proactive Public Health Initiatives

CSMS and its members have been leaders on many initiatives to protect and promote the public health of Connecticut residents. CSMS believes that it represents two groups of people: physician members and *patients*. Therefore, an important aspect of our agenda will continue to focus on the quality of the health of every person in our state. These will include:

- Student Concussions – ensure ALL organized youth programs must meet the state’s “return to play” statute, not only interscholastic and seek to expand the statute to address “return to learn” issues as well
- Seek a standard definition of surgery to provide clarity to state statute that currently refers to surgery, yet does not define surgery in numerous citations
- Investigate the need for delineation and definition of “urgent care facility” vs. “walk in clinic”
- Strengthen “Truth in Advertising laws” and others that require disclosure of accurate information about a health care provider’s training and abilities. Legislation should include the requirement that health care professionals clearly identify their level of independence and any involvement, collaboration, supervision or delegation by a physician.
- Expand reporting statutes to require ALL medical professions to report impaired colleagues to the proper authorities for investigation and treatment
- Seek a review of the membership, authority and actions of medical professional boards
- Seek to implement recommendations of the Federation of State Medical Board for an interstate licensure compact
- Partner with legislative leaders to review and strengthen state laws regarding childhood obesity, nutrition and “clean schools”