



PRESIDENT'S LETTER



*Dr. Alan Krieger
President & Chairman*

Dear NJPCAC Member:

Recently, it has become more apparent on a local and national level that patients are having an increasingly more difficult time paying for their medications, deductibles and copays. Coupled with the lower reimbursement rates for many of the services we provide, this can ultimately translate into a decrease in revenue as well as a strain on overhead making it more difficult to run an efficient practice. There is no doubt that we remain sympathetic to the obstacles our patients are facing through these turbulent times and continue to advocate on their behalf, but we must remain vigilant against any

attempts that aim to disrupt the foundation and stability of our ability to provide quality urologic services.

The practice of medicine today is getting more and more difficult. Not so much on the clinical side where I think we all welcome with enthusiasm the remarkable advances in medical technology and medications we see nearly every day, but on the financial side where it often seems we are in a constant battle simply to be compensated fairly for the services we perform.

That is one reason why it is comforting to know that on occasion we can all band together to speak up for ourselves and fight for fairness. This spring's "out of network" battles in Trenton were an example of when we all pulled together. And not just our own Coalition, which I must tell you was on the front lines, but virtually all specialties and providers.

In what I would like to believe was a well-intentioned, but misdirected effort to protect health care consumers from surprise out-of-network costs, legislators unveiled a bill that would have

punished virtually all health care providers - regardless of whether they were in or out of network - with new and costly demands. The draft bill also would have given the plans an unfair advantage when it comes to negotiating rates and subjected providers to an unfair arbitration process.

But our efforts paid off. Proponents of the legislation - including the health insurers which invested tens of thousands in this effort - were unable to convince legislators that the bill should advance even beyond committee. Our Coalition, once again, played a critical role as a trusted resource for legislators who look to us to provide sound policy analyses of how legislation will impact patient access to high quality care. We have built this credibility over more than seven years working collaboratively with legislators and policymakers in Trenton.

Sincerely,

Alan P. Krieger, MD
President & Chairman

The New Jersey Patient Care and Access Coalition (NJPCAC) promotes and represents the common interests of urological care physicians in the State of New Jersey who are dedicated to the highest standards of practice and focuses on addressing the challenges that confront our healthcare system. NJPCAC's membership includes nearly 200 practicing urologists and scores of additional healthcare professionals, including radiation oncologists, pathologists, nurses and administrative staff, who have come together to educate policy makers, regulators, insurers and other key stakeholders, including patients and peers about regulatory changes that will adversely affect the quality and accessibility to care provided to patients in New Jersey and those that will advance care in New Jersey. NJPCAC promotes and pursues educational, legislative and regulatory interests that are common to these urological care physicians and the advancement of patient care and access in the State of New Jersey.



Assembly Speaker Tours UGNJ Cancer Center



Top: L to R: Speaker Prieto, Alan Krieger, Howard Rubin, Ray Dreyfuss; Bottom: the Speaker tours the offices and exam rooms of UGNJ Cancer Center.

Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto—the fourth most powerful New Jersey leader (behind the Governor, Lt. Governor and Senate President) - visited the Urology Group of New Jersey (UGNJ) Cancer Center in West Orange on April 14th.

The Speaker was very generous with his time and gave us a full hour to tour the facility and to familiarize him with the New Jersey Patient Care and Access Coalition and our issues of protecting patient access to high quality, integrated urologic care. This was our first meeting with Speaker Prieto and was set up by our President and Chairman Alan Krieger having met him at a function for another legislator.

Alan and others from UGNJ started with a tour and was followed by our legal counsel, Howard Rubin, presenting our NJ-specific data and talking about the clinical and policy reasons why

the integrated cancer care model is worth defending.

The Speaker was particularly interested in our patient satisfaction survey responses. We are now up to nearly 3,000 patient patients who have completed these surveys following their treatment at our member practices' cancer centers. The survey responses really struck a chord with the Speaker.

We talked at length about the cost differential between care furnished in hospital outpatient and in independent medical practices. We shared a couple of the latest peer-reviewed articles on the topic, and the Speaker seemed to be in complete agreement that the independent practice model is a lower cost model that needs to be protected. He was also impressed by the AMA's recent study on utilization and cost of ancillary services in the hospital versus physician office setting. We also shared with the Speaker NJPCAC NJ-specific data on treatment decisions made by patients with prostate cancer.

We flagged two other topics – potential out-of-network legislation, and the Ambulatory Care Facility tax and made clear to the Speaker that we are here to serve as a resource for him on these and other health policy issues

Coalition Members Have Breakfast with Assembly and Senate Health Committee Chairs

April was a busy month for NJPCAC. We had breakfast with both the Chairman of the Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee, Dr. Herb Conaway, and the Chairman of the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee, Joe Vitale. *(continued on p. 3)*



L to R: Dr. Taylor, Dr. Conaway, Dr. Krieger and Alan Plotkin at the April 8th breakfast

As always, our meeting with Dr. Conaway on April 8th at Mastoris Diner in Bordentown was nothing short of phenomenal. Dr. Conaway "gets" our issues as only a practicing physician can. We discussed a wide range of topics with him during our meeting that lasted more than an hour, but concentrated primarily on our concerns with how the plans are developing policies that undermine patient access to quality care; our experiences with Medicaid patients; our concerns regarding looming Out-of-Network legislation; and our desire to see the Ambulatory Care Facility (ACF) assessment phased out. Dr. Conaway was not just sympathetic to our concerns, but pledged to work with us on these issues.

We met with Chairman Vitale on April 23rd at the Skylark Diner in Woodbridge. Senator Vitale gave us more than an hour to listen to our concerns about Out-of-Network issues, the ACF assessment and our billing issues with the Plans and how that affects patients.

With respect to the challenges that we and our patients face with the Plans, Senator Vitale suggested that he might consider having his Committee partner with NJSpotlight on a conference at which both providers and plans would be invited to share their perspectives.

Republican Legislative Leaders Renew Their Support for NJPCAC Issues

The New Jersey Patient Care and Access Coalition met with both Assembly Republican Leader Jon Bramnick and Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean for breakfast on April 15th at the Westfield Diner.

This was our "Third Annual Breakfast" with the Republican Leaders. We covered the topics of Out of Network care; the ACF assessment phase out and the need to ensure that the Plans do not erect barriers to patient access to high quality care.

These two key leaders remain steadfast in their support for our Coalition.

State House Day 2015

The New Jersey Patient Care and Access Coalition held its third annual "State House Day" on June 18th to promote "Men's Health Month" in June. The day was a good opportunity for NJPCAC to further develop relationships with legislators and staff. Thanks to our President and Chairman Dr. Alan Krieger and to Dr. Eric Seaman, Dr. Krieger's partner at Urology Group of New Jersey and Alan Plotkin from Urology Care Alliance for giving up part of their day to make this day a success.

Check out photos of the day on the next page!

State House Day 2015 Photos



President and Chairman Dr. Alan Krieger, Dr. Eric Seaman and Alan Plotkin met with (across from top left): Assemblyman Whip Wilson, Senator Joe Kyrillos, Assemblyman Jerry Green, Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean Jr., Senator Christopher "Kip" Bateman, Assemblyman Reed Gusciora, Senate President Steve Sweeney, Assemblyman David Wolfe and Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan Jr.

Advocacy Update



By Donald Sico, Donald Sico & Co. LLC

A Busy Spring and Early Summer in Trenton Yields a Win and a Time Out

Generally speaking, as the weather heats up, so do things under the “Golden Dome” in Trenton and this year was no exception. The New Jersey Patient Care and Access Coalition was very active working to promote our issues.

How did we fare?

Well, as the late great Satchel Paige once said, “You win some. You lose some. Some get rained out. But you dress for every game.”

First the win: We had a huge victory this spring when it comes to protecting physician and patient interests surrounding the so-called “Out-of-Network” issue. Legislation introduced in both the Assembly and the Senate in early May appeared to be on a very fast track with momentum building from illusory projections that passage of the bill could save the State millions of dollars in public worker health benefit costs.

This issue has been around for quite some time, but this year legislators appeared to be poised to act and finally pass legislation they felt would protect consumers from unintended and surprise Out-of-Network costs. Unfortunately, the legislation would have also imposed new and burdensome

mandates on ALL physicians and their offices whether they were in or out of network – burdens that create serious impediments to our physicians being able to focus on the delivery of care to their patients. The bill also would have established for the very first time a mandatory arbitration system that was skewed toward the health insurers.

The introduction of this complex legislation led to strong opposition from hospitals, physicians and other health care providers.

As your lobbyist, I participated in scores of meetings, phone calls and strategy sessions on this issue with dozens of Legislators and their staff. A marathon “sensing” session on May 22nd was conducted by Senator Joe Vitale, Chairman of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee; Assemblyman Craig Coughlin, Chairman of the Assembly Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee; Assemblyman Gary Schaer, Chairman of the Assembly Budget Committee; and Assemblyman Troy Singleton. Various staff from the individual legislative offices and the Office of Legislative Services also attended. Our Coalition was well represented by myself and Neal Shah from our Counsel Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP.

This was truly a “strength in numbers” effort as we were joined at this session by the Medical Society of New Jersey, the New Jersey Chapter of the American College of Emergency Room Physicians, the New Jersey State Society of Anesthesiologists, the New Jersey Neurosurgeons Society, the Radiological Society of New Jersey, the New Jersey Society of Pathologists, the New Jersey Academy of Family Physicians and the New Jersey Society of Pediatric Specialists.

As a result of a lot of hard work, we have managed not only to get a commitment from legislators for numerous concessions on the bill, but to derail it at least until after the November election. (*Continued on next page.*)

We had hoped we would be able to report on a second victory regarding reduction of the Ambulatory Care Facility (ACF) assessment. Bills were introduced in both the Assembly and the Senate to reduce the Ambulatory Care Facility (ACF) assessment, but those bills were not passed before the summer break despite our best efforts and as so many had hoped.

The good news is that, for the very first time, we now have these bills ready for action in BOTH houses and we are optimistic we can get them

Comings and Goings

Three Christie Administration cabinet members have recently announced their resignation, all of them integral to the issues affecting the New Jersey Patient Care and Access Coalition: **State Treasurer Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff**, **Health Commissioner Mary O'Dowd** and **Banking and Insurance Commissioner Ken Kobylowski**

Deputy Treasurer **Robert A. Romano** will become Acting Treasurer. **Catherine Bennett**, the Department of Health's Director of Policy and Strategic Planning, will become acting health commissioner. Governor Christie immediately announced he will nominate **Richard J. Badolato**, a partner at the law firm of Connell Foley in Roseland, to replace Kobylowski as Commissioner of Banking and Insurance.

Assemblyman Angel Fuentes (D-5) is resigning his legislative seat to fill the position of Deputy Clerk of Camden County.

Assembly Majority Executive Director **Steve Gardner** is leaving to become Associate Director of State Government Affairs and Alliance Development at Bristol-Myers Squibb.

passed in the post-election session in November. Passage would mean a \$12M statewide reduction in this tax for all facilities. This is another effort that required numerous meetings with key legislators, but also with the Governor's office.

So because the ACF tax issue effort is ongoing, perhaps it is more properly placed in the "Rained Out" category!

George LeBlanc, Deputy Executive Director and longtime Director of Budget and Fiscal Analysis, will be leaving the Senate Majority Office to take a government affairs position at Rutgers University.

Governor Christie's Communications Director, **Maria Comella**, has left the Governor's Office and accepted a position at Leadership Matters for America, a political action committee supporting Christie's presidential campaign.

Frank Schultz has been promoted to the State Director for Senator Menendez. Prior to his current position, Mr. Schultz has served in the Senator's Barrington office since 2006 as a Staff Assistant, Project Specialist, and most recently as the Deputy State Director.

The New Jersey Business & Industry Association has named a former member of the state Department of Banking and Insurance as its new vice president of health & legal affairs. **Mary Beaumont**, who had been DOBI's director of legislation and regulation since 2010, started her new job in early July.

Letters, We Get Letters

We recently received this nice note from **Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz**, an APN who serves on the Assembly Health Committee:



I would like to thank you and New Jersey Patient Care and Access PAC for your contribution to my campaign for re-election to the General Assembly. It is greatly appreciated. I was so happy that two people from The Stone Center were able to attend the event at the Grand Summit Hotel. I enjoyed speaking with them.

It has been an honor for me to serve in the Legislature over the past six years and to represent the people of District 21. I look forward to continuing to work on issues of mutual interest. Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Warm regards,
Nancy

Must Read



New York Times July 6, 2015

“Opinion: Bring Back Prostate Cancer Screening”

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/06/opinion/bring-back-prostatescreening.html?ref=todayspaper&_r=2

Calling All New Jersey Urologists

We are always looking to expand the New Jersey Patient Care and Access Coalition because we understand there is “strength in numbers.” If you know of a colleague who is not a member, please invite him or her to join and to take a look at our [webpage](http://www.njpcac.org) (www.njpcac.org) for additional information. There is also a membership application form on the webpage they can use to contact us if they want to join.

New Jersey Patient Care and Access Coalition

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