

Fifth District Report to the MSSNY Council Meeting
June 18, 2015 (Report last updated June 8, 2015)

The Fifth District includes Cayuga, Chenango, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, and St. Lawrence counties.

Per the President Dr. Joseph Maldonado's instructions, I am going to report on my early impressions on membership recruitment efforts within our district.

The Medical Societies, Counties of Oneida, Herkimer, Madison, Chenango, Oswego, Cayuga and St. Lawrence offer free Workers Compensation Rating application filing as a membership benefit, whereas nonmembers are charged the equivalent of a year's MSSNY/County Medical Society dues for the filing. Last year, Onondaga County Medical Society raised the fee for filing the Workers Compensation Rating application to also be equivalent to that of a year's MSSNY and County Medical Society dues. Jefferson County is now annually increasing the Workers Compensation Rating application fee for nonmembers and last year started offering the free filing of this application as a member benefit.

Alliance with the Medical Society of Jefferson County does fund raising and gives out approximately ten scholarships a year to local students in healthcare-related fields. I sit on the Scholarship Committee every year to support our Alliance members, and in turn Alliance members encourage their spouses to remain members of the County Medical Society.

I reside and practice, in Jefferson County. At the time of my arrival here, interest in organized medicine was waning. Dr. Lewis Yecies, who at the time of his passing was the AMA-OMSS Alternate Delegate to the AMA, was long the primary champion for MSSNY in our county. Despite Dr. Yecies remaining active in MSSNY and the AMA-OMSS and presenting at the majority of the meetings at the largest medical staff in our county, that of Samaritan Medical Center, most physicians here seemed apathetic about organized medicine. Despite Dr. Yecies an impassioned and cogent plea, interest was waning, especially as more and more of the medical staff became partially employed or employed by the hospital. An additional challenge here locally is that a lot of private physicians here have relied more on the local IPA, Jefferson Physicians Organization, rather than MSSNY, and continue to do so. Based on Dr. Bonnie Litvack's presentation to MSSNY Council last year, my strategy going forward has been and will continue to be to try to get the buy in of some leaders and influential members of the medical staff, especially by featuring the benefits that MSSNY can offer on top of the benefits already afforded to physicians who are already members of our local IPA.

I presented along with Brenda Van Nest, MSSNY Upstate Outreach Representative, at the Carthage Hospital, Carthage, NY Medical Staff meeting April 22, 2015. The few members of the Carthage Hospital Staff that do belong to and believe in MSSNY were welcoming, but the majority of the staff seemed uninterested, or perhaps even suspicious. That wariness may stem, in part, because I am based out of a competing hospital. What Brenda and I tried to at least do was answer any questions they had, and for those items requiring further research, we found the answers and forwarded them to the medical staff members who had asked the original question.

I spoke with Ms. Van Nest, who has attended a number of other hospital medical staff meetings, and it was her impression that some medical staffs were welcoming and interested in learning and benefiting from what MSSNY presenters had to say. On the other hand, some other medical staffs appeared disinterested, even when she came with some of MSSNY's top leaders and speakers.

I have been attending most Oswego County Medical Society meetings. Dr. Renato Mandanas is President of the County Medical Society and also Chief Medical Officer of Oswego Hospital. Therefore, Dr. Corliss Varnum and I and especially Kathleen E. Dyman, EVP Medical Societies, Counties of Oneida, Herkimer, Madison, Chenango, Oswego, Cayuga and St. Lawrence, have been encouraging Dr. Mandanas to push for an Institutional Membership Agreement between his hospital and MSSNY. I will be attending the Oswego County Medical Society meeting on June 17, 2015 and hope to have an update at that time.

Ms. Dyman is also talking to a hospital in Oneida County that recently spent a large amount of money to have its Medical Staff bylaws reviewed yet was potentially interested in further review. As a selling point, Ms. Dyman is highlighting that were that hospital to enter into an Institutional Membership agreement with MSSNY, some pro bono legal services for bylaws review would be available.

I was also able to speak to some key members of the St. Lawrence County Medical Society during their recent annual meeting, St. Lawrence County being one of the areas where there have been successful membership initiatives. Two physicians there have been instrumental in keeping a County Medical Society presence there over some previously slow years, namely Dr. Vijay Kumar Mandalaywala, immediate past President of the County Medical Society, and Dr. Manuel Palao. Canton-Potsdam Hospital currently has an Institutional Membership Agreement with MSSNY. Last year Massena Hospital, also in St. Lawrence County, established an Institutional Membership Agreement with MSSNY as well. Speaking with Dr. Palao and others, they see value in continuing membership with MSSNY, in particular by utilizing some of the pro bono attorney bylaw review benefits. They also believe that they derive great benefit from the wisdom of experienced MSSNY staff, in particular from Ms. Dyman, her staff, and her ability to access MSSNY resources. Also, with St. Lawrence County being a geographically large county, I found that members attending the Annual Meeting benefitted from the networking aspect.

In summary, my impression thus far, based on both successes and yet unrealized efforts, is that membership initiatives are more successful when you can get buy in from key, local and thereby known and trusted physicians, who in turn can exert a positive influence on their respective medical staffs. Obviously, some medical staffs are more difficult to convince than others. Some membership benefits that potential members value include the expertise of experienced MSSNY staff that are available to answer questions and concerns from members on a daily basis and pro bono legal services, such as medical staff bylaws reviews.

As mentioned above, I attended the St. Lawrence County Medical Society Annual Meeting on May 21, 2015. Dr. Michael Maresca was installed as the new county president. Congratulations to Dr. Maresca. I attended the AMA-OMSS meeting in Chicago, IL from June 4-6, 2015 and served on the reference committee and as State Chair. I am planning on attending the Onondaga

County Medical Society Executive Council Meeting on June 16, 2015, the Oswego County Medical Society Annual Meeting on June 17, 2015, and the Combined Annual Meeting of the Medical Societies of the Counties of Chenango and Madison on June 24, 2015.

Jim Coulthart, EVP of the Onondaga County Medical Society (OCMS), reported on recent activities of the OCMS.

MATTERS OF NOTE
ONONDAGA COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY
May 6th - Early June 2015

- 2015 House of Delegates 6 Eight delegates from Onondaga County Medical Society (OCMS) represented the County Society at this year's House of Delegates as well as the 5th/6th District Branches Caucus: Delegation Leader Dr. Jef Sneider, Drs. Adrienne Allen, Brian Johnson, Anthony Weiss, Barry Rabin, Michael Fischl, Richard Semeran, and Phil Kaplan. In addition, Medical Students Liz McIntosh and Sam MacKenzie represented Upstate Medical University.
- The Fourth Annual "Ask the Carriers" Conference was held May 21st at the SRC Arena on the campus of Onondaga Community College. This daylong conference allowed 80 attendees to hear the latest in coverage protocols and procedures from major market insurance carriers. In addition, a vendor table display area, featuring 27 business services and vendors, gave office practice staff members and office managers the chance to explore new and different business services available for use in their offices ranging from electronic health records vendors to banking services.
- OCMS partnered with the HealthConnections RHIO to conduct a May 28th "Are You HealthConnected" Forum for new and late adopters exploring the use of electronic health records programs. Almost 30 participants (including physicians and office staff members) were able to ask panel members questions about using electronic health programs, the latest with meaningful use, and emerging services. RHIO Board members and OCMS past presidents Drs. David Page and Jef Sneider were two of the featured speakers who spoke about "reducing the cost of care" and "how to use the health information exchange" respectively.
- The first OCMS Clambake will take place on June 18th at the Spinning Wheel Restaurant in North Syracuse. Fifty physicians, family members, and friends are pre-registered to attend as of the date of this report. The event hopes to raise funds to assist with the replacement costs for some needed OCMS office equipment.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Huang, MD, Jefferson County, 5th District Councilor