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

Regarding the hospital outreach project: I will be attending the Cayuga County Medical Society Meeting on February 24, 2016. I hope to be able to get more information about Auburn Community Hospital at that time.

The MSSNY OMSS is having ongoing elections via a dropdown ballot through E-mail currently. I plan on attending the upcoming Legislative Breakfast & Roundtable Discussion on February 27, 2016 at the Onondaga County Medical Society (OCMS). Attendees from the United States Congress and the New York State Legislature scheduled to appear are listed towards the end of this report.

I attended the OCMS Executive Council Meeting on January 19, 2016. As I mentioned at the last Council meeting, I received input from almost every county in the district about the adverse effect of proposed changes to the Workers Compensation Program, specifically with regards to the proposal to eliminate the need for county medical society review of the applications of those physicians seeking to be authorized to deliver care. Detailed testimony provided by OCMS follows:

The County Medical Society Perspective: Negatives of this proposed change

- **Processing of Applications:** If the intent of this change is to make additional medical providers available to deliver needed services, the unintended consequence of taking away local County Medical Society application processing may actually be delays in the approval process due to incomplete applications or missing information. In our County Medical Society, staff assigned to this task now report that most applications need to be reviewed and returned to applicants for proper information prior to receiving our Workers Compensation (WC) Chair’s submitting endorsement. Our staff monitors information required so that applications are passed on in a timely fashion. For there to be no review prior to passing onto the NYS Workers Compensation Board for consideration would most likely cause significant delays, if not total processing approval “bottlenecks.” When a Workers Compensation application is received in the OCMS office, there is a handling fee that is either free for physician members or a cost to non-members who may then wish to apply that towards full membership dues. Our governing body reviews and approves the fee every few years.

Included in the value added services for this fee are: Periodic follow up on applicants providing missing items, answering questions from applicants and office staff, follow up with representatives at the NYS Workers Compensation Board if status is not reported within a month of submission. Likewise, inquiries are made if an applicant’s status is on hold.

- **Value of Local Review of Applications:** While the OCMS WC Chair does not grant approval for a rating (that is the domain of the NYS Workers Compensation Board), there is value in having a local review with an appreciation of any given
- applicant's circumstances before passing an application up to the NYS Workers Compensation Board for approval or non-approval.

- **Impact on the Profession of Medicine:** It is at the highest levels of organized medicine and government that the effect of taking yet another physician responsibility must be weighed. However, it is at the local level where a long-time benefit of membership in the Medical Society is most felt. This County Medical Society member benefit aids in recruitment and is a reason to say "Yes" to joining the Medical Society and thereby receiving the full spectrum of services available to member physicians. In a time when physicians are in short supply, this has been among the dwindling numbers of reasons why physicians remain in our area.

- **If this Measure is Enacted:** OCMS has a tried and true methodology for processing WC applications and would be happy to consider processing applications for all submissions in our assigned area.

I chaired the Council Workgroup meeting to develop guidelines for collaborating with non-MSSNY physician groups seeking MSSNY engagement held via teleconference on February 17, 2016.

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

**MATTERS OF NOTE**
**ONONDAGA COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY**
Mid January 2016 – Late February 2016

- Using a jointly produced OCMS & MSSNY membership recruitment PowerPoint presentation created with the assistance of MSSNY Upstate Outreach Representative Brenda Van Nest, a brief benefits of medical society membership presentation was conducted at the January 27th St. Joseph’s Hospital Medical Staff Breakfast.

- Membership recruitment efforts are ongoing in two major areas: Expansion of departmental participation within the Upstate Medical University group and recruitment efforts within medium and larger medical practices located in the county. A membership power point presentation and general membership recruitment brochure are now located on the OCMS website (www.oncms.org) for peer to peer and group recruitment efforts.

- Planned programs January & February included/includes:
  - A Medical Student & Physician Mixer, January 20th at Empire Brewing Company. Seventeen medical students and mentoring physicians gathered for this annual event. Both medical students and physicians attending gained much from the experience.
  - A Telemedicine/Telehealth Members information program was conducted in cooperation with Excellus on February 10th. Twenty three physicians, staff members and others attended this presentation to learn more on the use of this emerging technology. Dr. Marybeth McCall, OCMS/MSSNY member and Regional Medical Director for Excellus, was the featured speaker.
  - The Annual OCMS Legislative Breakfast and Roundtable Discussion is set for the morning of Saturday, February 27th. Congressman John Katko and staff representatives for Senators Schumer & Gillibrand are scheduled to be in attendance. Attending from NYS are Senators DeFrancisco and Valesky and Assemblypersons Stirpe, Hunter and Finch and staff representing Assemblypersons Magnarelli and Barclay. A variety of advocacy initiatives at the federal and state levels are to be discussed.

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