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November 5, 2020

Dear MSSNY Colleagues:

I am pleased to submit to Council this report on the activities of MSSNY's 4th District.

As was the case at the time I presented my last report, COVID-19 has dampened the activities of the county medical societies in the Fourth District. Nature abhors a vacuum, however, and New York State government has not been idle. Specifically, the legislature nearly unanimously passed, and the Governor signed, legislation requiring all offices to post information advising patients about how to complain about what they perceive to be professional misconduct. Physicians throughout the Fourth District have expressed their outrage. Many are aghast that physicians have gone from being "health care heroes to health care zeroes." Many also expressed concern that this will make it even harder to recruit physicians to upstate New York and even opined that they would leave if conditions permit.

A second source of outrage has been Dr. Zucker's letter of September 21, 2020. In that letter, Dr. Zucker outlined the additional reporting requirements that New York State requires with regard to testing for both COVID-19 and influenza. Many physicians have already contacted Dr. Zucker expressing their concerns.

The silver lining to these legislative and regulatory assaults has been that many physicians in the Fourth District are awakening to the idea that they must take a more active role in advocacy. It may be the case that physicians will finally realize that Pericles was correct when he said, "Just because you do not take an interest in politics does not mean politics will not take an interest in you."

On December 9, the Saratoga County Medical Society will host its first meeting since last winter. Dr. Malene Ingram will present the Veterans Matters course on Women Veterans.

Best personal regards,

Gregory L. Pinto, M.D.