

Report to Council

David Jakubowicz, MD, Membership Commissioner
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Update On Issues of Individual Membership

Many of our members are not aware of the sheer number of distinct individual dues amounts at MSSNY.

There are 38 unique price points for individual active dues, and these increase when you include the categories that are based on a percentage of active dues (resident/fellow, retired, part time, etc.). The complexity results from the number of dues categories multiplied by the different dues amounts charged by each county in each category, as well as from the diversity of district dues and voluntary assessments offered by each county.

This lack of standardization has grown organically over decades. It leads to great difficulties when we have to prepare invoices. We will continue to offer payment by monthly installments with our new database, and the necessary programming has to deal with 9,000 different monthly dues combinations. These discrepancies lead to extra costs and time, and they have pushed back our new database go-live date by six weeks.

More importantly, all these variations are detrimental when we recruit new members who naturally ask about the cost, as well as those who apply for membership online. We continue to work on a simplified, consistent response to this issue.

Meeting With CMS Leadership

As part of the effort cited above, David Podwall, Jocelyn Young and I joined Membership staff on August 1 at a meeting requested by county society execs and leaders. The agenda was formed with county input. We explained the ongoing work of the Membership Committee and the reasoning behind the recent reduction of 28 individual membership categories to 8, which removes barriers to recruitment and entry. Recognizing that our fates are completely linked, all agreed that simplification is key. Citing our current 38 dues price points – and asking how we would structure dues amounts if we were beginning de novo – we posited the possibility of decreasing every county's dues to three or four different dollar amounts.

We also discussed how our new cloud-based database will affect our need to change business practices relating to how we handle collected credit card fees and how members' dues will be displayed for counties that do their own dues collection.

Topics for future meetings include options for counties that are struggling financially, building ties with institutions not linked to individual membership,

leadership training for early career physicians, and membership retention and growth strategies.

The takeaway is that while being respectful of our bylaws, change is necessary. MSSNY and the county societies must be on the same page, one-click joining is sorely needed, we must simplify our billing and dues collection, and transparency is of utmost importance. We are a scientific people; we need a scientific process.

Group/Institutional Memberships

The Membership Committee continues to tackle this thorny issue, and our report is forthcoming. We are looking at the history of group and institutional memberships to determine how we've arrived where we are, as well as at how other states handle this matter. We have surveyed MSSNY members for their thoughts and are focusing on where the problems lie and on how we can address them in order to come up with consistent policy. Rest assured that the members of your Membership Committee reflect the diversity of opinions within the organization. Our target is an interim report this Fall and a final report in Spring 2023.