



# **MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

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**Remarks by Dr. Robert Goldberg**

**President – Medical Society of the State of New York**

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## **Attorney General Cuomo's Announcement of Settlement With CIGNA Regarding Doctor Ranking Programs**

Good morning. My name is Dr. Robert Goldberg. I am president of the Medical Society of the State of New York.

The announcement today of an agreement between New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo and CIGNA is a major step in assuring consumers that quality of medical care...not money...is the key element in judging the competency of physicians in the state. Attorney General Coumo and his staff are to be commended by patients throughout New York State for their focus on this critical healthcare issue and the months of effort they have spent in bringing about this historic agreement.

Importantly, CIGNA's agreement to rank physicians based on verifiable measures of clinical skills...rather than on measurers of how little money is spent on an individual patient...is a milestone in assuring that patients have a prime role in selecting physicians based on what is important to their personal health care needs.

What Attorney General Cuomo has negotiated is a doctor ranking system based on a balanced process, a process that would ensure data provided to patients was accurate and doctors were evaluated fairly. Until today, no plan existed that fairly balanced the interests and concerns of consumers, the medical community, and insurers.

The critical aspect of this agreement is that the measures that have been agreed upon will lead to doctor ranking programs that provide patients with clear and comprehensive information that accurately reflects the quality of healthcare provided by doctors. This model also ensures transparency for both patients and doctors -- patients will now understand the criteria upon which doctors are ranked; and doctors will be able to provide input into the ranking system. We also believe that the Attorney General's inclusion of a continual oversight initiative will assure the effectiveness of the program.

This agreement will become a model for similar agreements in New York State and across the country and I expect that it will become a cornerstone in the future relations between health insurance carriers, patient and physicians. It is important to recognize that all three players are winners in this agreement but that patients are the ultimate

beneficiaries. The use of factual information to establish physician credentials is as important to patients as any medical research in the past 100 years.

We believe that this plan is historic. Attorney General Cuomo's initiative sets up a fair process that works for all and represents an important step forward for the healthcare community. It will provide assurance that patients will have solid information on which to select the best physicians for their personal care.

The Medical Society of the State of New York will continue to support Attorney General Cuomo's efforts on behalf of both patients and physicians as we all strive to make New York a better and healthier place to live. Thank you.

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