

# *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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## **NYS Medical Society Commends Attorney General Cuomo on Exemplary Agreement with Empire on Physician Ranking Program**

Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Robert Goldberg. I am president of the Medical Society of the State of New York. I am speaking here today as a representative of the medical society's physician members who practice medicine in all specialties throughout the state, but the substance of my comments are also spoken on behalf of our New York patients who will benefit most from Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's latest agreement on physician ranking programs.

The medical society applauds Attorney General Andrew Cuomo and Empire BlueCross BlueShield for signing an agreement that will ensure that patients will be provided with clear and comprehensive information about doctors and that any rankings will accurately reflect the quality of health care provided by doctors. Patients' key element in judging the competency of physicians will, therefore, be quality of medical care – not money.

This agreement with Empire is even more momentous because it has been consummated *before* Empire commenced its ranking program. Therefore, Attorney General Cuomo's speed and alacrity in negotiating this agreement is yet another reason to commend him.

Empire's agreement to rank physicians based on verifiable measures of clinical skill, instead of on measures 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.

Attorney General Cuomo has negotiated a doctor ranking system based on a balanced process, a process that will ensure that data provided to patients is accurate and that doctors are evaluated fairly. This plan fairly balances the interests and concerns of consumers, the medical community and insurers.

What is particularly important too is the Attorney General's inclusion of a continual oversight initiative that will assure the integrity and effectiveness of the program.

Although the oversight agency has yet to be appointed, the agreement calls for an independent ratings examiner to oversee compliance with all aspects of the new ranking model and to report to the Attorney General's office every six months.

We believe that this plan – in addition to the agreements already consummated – puts New York State in the forefront of an historic movement to provide assurance that patients will have reliable information on which to select the best physicians for their personal care. With the Attorney General's continued leadership, it is our hope that this exemplary agreement will become the cornerstone of all future relations on the subject with health insurance carriers, patients and physicians.

The Medical Society of the State of New York will continue to aggressively 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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