

Article by Weingarten, Reid & McNally, LLC
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Successful 2010 Academy Lobby Day

As a result of the efforts by Academy President, Mark Krotowski MD, Advocacy Chair, Phil Kaplan MD, Executive Vice President Vito Grasso and many physician, resident and student members, the New York State Academy of Family Physician's State lobby day was a great success.

On Monday, March 8th, over twenty Academy members and students from across the State participated in the annual Albany lobby day. While in town, members attended nearly thirty legislative visits arranged by the Academy's Government Affairs firm, Weingarten, Reid & McNally. Meetings included the State Health Commissioner Dr. Daines, Senate Democratic Leader Sampson, Senate Republican Leader Skelos, the Chairs of the Senate and Assembly Health Committees, the Chairs of the Senate and Assembly Insurance Committee and other key legislators and staff. Also, physicians and students met with their own Senators and Assembly Members while in town.

The key issues that were discussed in legislative visits include the Academy's:

- Support for universal health care coverage through a Single Payer system;
- Support for increased primary care funding in FY 2010-11 Executive Budget including approximately \$3.3 million in new funds for the Doctors Across New York program for loan forgiveness and practice support grants;
- Support for increased tax on cigarettes by \$1 per pack and funding for State Tobacco Control program, as proposed in the Executive Budget;
- Support for excise tax on sugar-sweetened-beverages of a penny per ounce, as proposed in the Executive Budget;
- Support for Stand Alone measure to allow for HIV testing of a source patient who is unconscious, deceased or otherwise unable to consent, in cases of occupation exposure of health care workers and first responders;
- Support for bill to allow for collective negotiations by physicians and other health care providers with health insurance plans; and
- Support for legislation to require insurance policies that currently cover annual physical exams to provide for one visit per calendar year, regardless of whether at least 365 days have passed.

Overall the lobby day was tremendously successful in bringing the issues that impact family physicians and your patients to our lawmakers in Albany. Members had very productive meetings and covered a lot of ground in advocating for the Academy's priorities. During our visits, a number of legislators expressed interest in introducing or co-sponsoring the Academy's priority legislation and expressed support for the Academy's budget priorities.

The Academy and Weingarten, Reid & McNally would like to thank all members who participated for their help in making the Academy's 2010 Lobby Day such a success!