

Academic Medical Program Committee Meeting Minutes – 9/27/2024

Attendance: Co-Chairs Redetha Abrahams-Nichols, Richard Veenstra

Phil Glick, Steve Grassl, Martha Livingston, Tom Melendy, Mike Lyon, David Norton, Geoffrey O’Connell, Steven Walker, Anthony Tracey, Amy Jacobs, Shane Brownell (staff)

Minutes

- Budget Advocacy for our SUNY Hospitals and Medical Schools
 - Increase our advocacy efforts with our federal representatives in addition to our state representatives; e.g. Hakim Jeffries, Chuck Shumer, Reps. Tim Kennedy, John Mannion, Josh Riley; NYS Sens. Myrie and Ryan (Mannion’s replacement), Pam Hunter, Al Stirpe, Bill Magnarelli, etc.
 - Requests
 - \$90 million for debt service relief for the hospitals and medical schools;
 - \$150 million in capital funding for Upstate UH ER expansion;
 - \$1 billion in capital funding for a new Downstate hospital;
 - Medicaid – Medicare reimbursement rate parity
- Increase access to healthcare for all New Yorkers
 - Martha Livingston and David Curry will prepare a presentation on the NY Health Act to present first to the AMPC and then to UUP Chapters and a Delegate Assembly workshop.
 - Support the right of Physicians to collectively bargain reimbursement rates to level the playing field with monopoly health insurers; without violating anti-trust ban or price fixing, the AMA supports the rights of physicians to collectively bargain.
 - In 1999, Texas became the first state to pass a law allowing physicians to collectively bargain with managed care plans for fee-related activities
- Discussion on Federal Outreach
 - People to contact: Jeffries, Mannion, Schumer Yvette Clark, Brian Cunningham, Hakim Jeffries wife was a Social Worker at Downstate
 - Feds want to see what the states will do, how much from states and federal governments
 - Phil Glick - \$450 mi UB mortgage, \$250M stat, rest is UB Foundation bonds, 40 yrs at 5.5% guaranteed, if UB doesn’t want to remortgage, state must pay the bonds, management has no appetite to remortgage. Tom Melendy – debt relief is \$12M/yr, Tim Kennedy knows all this.

- Redetha – Stony Brook is doing okay, by privatizing outpatient clinics, Downstate building is not inhabitable and care is inadequate, there are real estate considerations, AT – private equity is running medicine
- Discussion on universal healthcare
 - Martha Livingston mentioned a pro universal healthcare UAlbany student she knows is currently at Roswell who should contact Tom Melendy, Tom is reaching out to University Medical Resident (UMR) organizers. The medical residents are in a Foundation shell company (UMR Services, P.C.) but they have formed a union. UAPD (Union of American Physicians and Dentists). Martha had mentioned, in reference to the Medicaid reimbursement rates, that with universal healthcare, the payer mix goes away. However, there is union opposition to the NY Health Act, NYSUT opposes it and can't get an open discussion of the issues. The retiree health insurance benefits are a complicated issue. Redetha mentioned that universal health care would take some bargaining power away from the unions since they negotiate the health insurance with the state.
 - Martha - Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP) is a national organization of physicians in support of a single-payer national health program. The costs would be paid by taxes, it is a progressive plan. Richard Gottfried, former Health Committee Chair in the NYS Assembly, is a supporter of the NY Health Act (he later wrote an article dated 3/1/2025).
 - Anthony Tracey stated that he supports what is being said, private equity is controlling health care costs and taking money away from patients, he supports giving physicians the ability to negotiate fees.
 - Plan is to develop a presentation to present to the AMPC in January with future rollouts to the Chapters and the DA.

Note: Physician collective bargaining rights were a hot topic at the time since Excellus Blue Cross/Blue Shield was offering such low reimbursement rates that St. Joseph's Hospital and the FamilyCare Medical Group (FCMG, union organized by Dr. Dennis Nave) were going to drop the Excellus BC/BS insurance, thus affecting thousands of patients. Dr. Nave, who has retired from the FCMG (and is the past president of the GSLC) now works with St. Joe's. In both cases, Excellus eventually came to agreements with both provider organizations.