

NEW YORK STATE UROLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

www.nysurologicalsociety.org

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Albany – 1986-1988

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Buffalo – 1990-1992

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Rochester – 1992-1994

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New York City – 1994-1996

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Buffalo – 1997-2000

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Rome – 2010-2012

CLAUDE WOLGEL, M.D.
Forest Hills – 2012-2014

RONALD P. KAUFMAN, JR., M.D.
Albany – 2014-2016

Dear New York State Urologists,

Last fall, I had the privilege of speaking with 1 of the only 12 humans who have walked on the moon, General Charlie Duke, the Lunar Module (LM) pilot for Apollo 16. One of his jobs was to ignite the engines for the Lunar Ascent stage. The engines had to work without oxygen and use so-called 'hypergolic fuels', chemicals that are so explosively corrosive that the engines can never be tested and were fired only once...on the moon. I asked him what were the back up plans if the hypergolic engine simply didn't fire? The General said, well, there was one method where the fuel lines could be accessed behind a certain wall panel of the LM but that was it. Plan C was to stand down and wait for ideas from Houston. Plan D was to take a long walk outside.

It seems that the entire moonscape of medicine has become divvied up into 'must work' scenarios, vast hospital mergers, ACOs, EHRs, Quality Payment Programs (e.g. MIPS), APMs, AAPMs, MIPS APMs, and all the effort that goes into making these 'hypergolic engines' ignite. What if they don't? What is plan B? One thing is for certain. In addition to advocating for our patients and ensuring their care, we must educate ourselves about, and keep ahead of, the legislation and 3rd party payor changes that affect our bottom line.

NYSUS and You

NYSUS works to represent the many unique voices that make up the healthy landscape of Urology in the Empire State. There are many challenges facing us all, from the solo practitioner to those in LUGPAs and large hospital-based networks and academia. Even some of the most difficult issues, (e.g. adopting EHRs, participating in MIPS, being fairly reimbursed) can be understood, embraced, and even used to create clinical and financial opportunities in today's world.

You may have noticed the new NYSUS Facebook page where we try to update the membership with any updates and thoughts from colleagues on the issues that affect us all. The website had also undergone a major facelift and can be viewed at <https://nysurologicalsociety.org>. You'll see on the contact page a map of the state of New York divided up into the 8 regions that CMS uses to administer Medicare. Each region now has a voluntary NYSUS representative colleague whom you can contact with concerns, issues, or needs with which NYSUS and the executive board may provide assistance.

Two great educational opportunities available to us, urologists, which we would strongly recommend your accessing, include the AACU's State Society Network Advocacy Conference and the newly rebranded AUA Advocacy Summit.

AACU State Society Network Meeting

The 10th annual AACU meeting, chaired by Kevin Loughlin and AACU President Charles McWilliams was held last October in autumnal Rosemont, Illinois and hosted nearly 200 colleagues from around the nation. NYSUS was well-represented by myself, Philip Ashman (University of Rochester Medical Center), Past-President Ron Kaufman (Albany Medical Center), Kevin Barlog (Western NY Urology, Buffalo), and Michael Ferragamo, Jr. (Urocare Associates, Garden City) who provided a well received and comprehensive lecture on office coding updates. NYSUS has prepared a formal Power Point presentation and summary for you which contains the

salient notes from all the lectures, topics, debates, and discussions. Please e-mail Michelle Smith for a copy.

Joint Advocacy Conference and the new AUA Advocacy Summit

The Joint Advocacy Conference held in March, 2017 at the famous Willard Inter-Continental, came on the heels of the Inauguration and imminent passage of the promised 'sweeping' but now moribund health care reform law. Major topics of advocacy then and continue to be support for legislation calling for transparency of the USPSTF and repeal of the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB). Things in Congress move, by design, slowly, but there has been some movement on several topics with importance to you.

Representative David Roe (R-Tennessee) co-sponsored H.R. 849 "Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act" which received bipartisan support to effectively repeal the Obama-era IPAB before any members were even elected to it. The IPAB had been empowered to make cross-the-board cuts in reimbursement if certain CMS triggers had been reached.

Representative Steve King (R-Iowa), one of the early release proponents of the Nunes memo, sponsored H.R. 1215, the "Protecting Access to Care Act" which promised to make major pro-physician changes to medical malpractice. Passing the House, in the spring, H.R. 1215 was received by the Senate on June 29th, 2017 and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. The legislation makes several reforms to medical malpractice laws, including placing a hard cap of \$250,000 on non-economic damages that can be awarded in lawsuits. The Congressional Budget Office projects King's legislation will save taxpayers at least \$50 Billion over the next 10 years, reduce deficits by about \$14 billion over the 2017-2022 period, and almost \$50 billion over the 2017-2027 period.

Another Tennessee Volunteer, GOP Congressman Marsha Blackburn sponsored HR 539, the "USPSTF Transparency and Accountability Act" which was introduced into the House more than a year ago but has lingered in the House Ways and Means Committee. The bill aims to ensure that the USPSTF operate with oversight, provide open comment periods, and receive input from public stakeholders, as with any federal organization that can affect discretionary spending. Skopos Labs, an Artificial Intelligence firm that interprets unstructured data (e.g. public policy statements), predicted only a 6% chance of HR 539 becoming law in its current form.

For those of you who like history, elegance, and marble, marble, marble, both the March 2018 AUA Advocacy Summit and the October 2018 AACU State Network meetings will be held at the Willard InterContinental.

MSSNY, March 23-25th, 2018 Adams Mark Hotel, Buffalo

NYSUS will also be sending a delegation to this year's semi-annual state-wide meeting of the Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY) next month in sunny Buffalo. We are proud to have Dr. Richard Schoor (Schoor Urology, Smithtown), Dr. Willie Underwood (Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center), and former AUA Gallagher Health Policy Scholar, Dr. Thomas Rectshaffen (Advanced Urology, Scarsdale), author and submit resolutions to be heard on the floor of the main and specialty session. See you there!

Robotic Prostatectomy Public Comment Period

You'll note on the website our September 2017 update regarding the CMS decision to list robotic prostatectomy as an 'outpatient procedure'. Provided on the website is a link for you to provide your thoughts and opinions regarding what could be a substantive and negative change in the way Medicare part A and B, and private payers, reimburse for services rendered.

NYSUS functions well only with your support and the work of our indefatigable Executive Secretary, Michelle Smith. We look forward to seeing you at the AUA in San Francisco and we'll be having a member social event at the MSSNY meeting in Buffalo in March.

Respectfully Submitted



John Phillips, MD, FACS
New York State Urological Society, Inc. President