

The New York Eye & Ear Infirmary PHO Newsletter

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Clyde Locke, MD President
Joseph Corcoran, Vice President
Jackee C. Namwila, Director

NYEE PHO Newsletter disseminates articles of interest and classifieds to participating physicians only.

Insurance Compromise

Assembly Insurance Committee Chairman Pete Grannis, D-Manhattan, says he is willing to look at a compromise that would allow the state Insurance Department to once again review proposed health insurance premium rate increases. Mr. Grannis has proposed a bill with Sen. Michael Balboni, R-Nassau, that would require such "prior review" for any requested increases above 5%; state insurance Superintendent Gregory Serio wants the bar at 10%. But the Grannis plan is under attack from the industry, which says that prior review is tantamount to artificial price controls. The industry stays that the best solution is to go after rising drug prices and overutilization of healthcare. Meanwhile, the issue of dispensing proceeds from any nonprofit conversion continues to be debated in closed-door meetings. Mr. Grannis favors dedicating profits to foundations designed to increase health care access for New Yorkers.

-Crain's Health Pulse

NY cosmetic surgery is booming

New Yorkers are flocking to plastic surgeons in greater numbers than ever before. Local plastic surgeons report patient volume increase ranging from 20%-40%, in keeping with a national trend. The numbers are fueled in part by the plastic surgery-themed television shows such as *Nip/Tuck*, *Dr. 90210*, *Extreme Makeover* and *The Swan*. Improvements in techniques are also attracting patients, many of whom are baby boomers, who prefer smaller, less-invasive procedures.

At the same time, the patient base is becoming more diverse, with more middle-income people, and a growing number of men, going under the knife.

As the job market grows more competitive, more college-age students, as well as Wall Streeters, want to improve their looks. But New York patients differ from their counterparts in Los Angeles, local doctors say. Here, the look is more patrician than plastic. Despite the greater acceptance of plastic surgery, patients here do not like to disclose the work they've had done, and they prefer more subtle, conservative effects that make them look like young, better-rested versions of themselves.

-Crain's Health Pulse

NJ Medical Malpractice

New Jersey will make medical malpractice settlement results available online on June 23. On Monday, a U.S. District Court judge ordered public release of the information in response to a lawsuit by *The Bergen Record* newspaper, which sought data collected by the state Division of Consumer Affairs. Insurers must report settlements of a malpractice claim or a jury verdict to the state. Total payouts were more than \$214 million in 2001, \$199 million in 2002 and \$162.5 million last year. The state released the names of 2,333 physicians who made payments since March 1999, with judgments ranging from \$1,700 to \$3 million. Some 360 doctors made multiple payments, and 80 physicians were responsible for \$178 million 20% of all New Jersey malpractice payments over the past five years.

-Crain's Health Pulse

To post your classified for the monthly NYEE PHO Newsletter e-mail to: jlin@nyee.edu, or jnamwila@nyee.edu, or fax to: 212-353-5959, or by mail to: 310 E. 14th St. South Basement, New York, NY 10003.