

House of Delegates Report
Report of the President

Michael Cascarina, MD

Well, hopefully 2021 will be the last year we have to include COVID19 in every professional or personal conversation we have. My guess is that in a few years we'll be talking about this era as "The Days of The Giants." For now, enough is enough.

Despite the challenges of the epidemic, the NJAFP has continued working hard on behalf of our membership and our patients.

We were on the forefront of efforts to get COVID19 vaccines into the offices of family doctors so they can keep patients safe from the epidemic. We partnered with other state physician groups, the New Jersey Department of Health, and the White House COVID-19 response team. As a result, primary care practices such and my own now have easy and unfettered access to the lifesaving vaccine that will help end this COVID19 scourge.

The NJAFP has also been very active concerning the issue of alternative payment model insurance contracts, sometimes known as value-based or risk-based contracts. For those of you not familiar with these terms, it is an insurance reimbursement model that financially rewards practices that provide quality care for patients while saving money for the insurance carrier. Although these contracts can benefit the patient, provider, and insurance company, there are also potential pitfalls to all involved. Your NJAFP has been active with other New Jersey physician groups and at the State House discussing this issue and considering possible legislation to protect the interests of our patients and our practices.

Nurse Practitioner scope of practice has been another issue over the past year. While the NJAFP understands and appreciates the contributions of APN's, we are currently active at the state level assuring that our legislators understand the difference between and MD and an APN and appreciate that the scope of practice between the two is very different.

Our efforts (along with the efforts of others) have resulted in a state law mandating telemedicine reimbursement parity until December 2023. Other advocacy projects also include a boost in Medicare reimbursements, and increased primary care spend by insurance companies in our state.

I would be remiss in my reporting not to state that the bulk of our efforts have been put forth by Ray Saputelli, Claudine Leone, and the entire staff of the NJAFP. While your board has been duly active in direction and oversight, it's our "boots on the ground" that really make the NJAFP tick.

Well, that is it for 2021 and for me as your president. It has been an honor serving the membership of the NJAFP for the past 12 months. And while I won't be going off to Disney World to celebrate, I will be going back to my Family Practice office in Brick, NJ. That's where I would rather spend my time, anyway.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Cascarina MD