

House of Delegates Report
Fam Med Forum 2022
Maria F. Ciminelli, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair

It has been my honor to serve as Chair of the Board for the past year. I need to thank the New Jersey Academy of Family Physicians (NJAFP) for giving me the opportunity to grow in knowledge, aptitude, and joy for “being at the table” as we continue on our mission of improving family medicine in New Jersey through education and advocacy.

I am more than thrilled to be back in person for our 2022 House of Delegates and annual FamMed Forum after two years of virtual sessions! Over the past year, the Board has remained committed in pursuing advancement of our efforts along many avenues including COVID-19 vaccine access for family physicians, primary care investment, the collaborative care model to increase access to psychiatric care, scope of practice, telemedicine legislation, shared savings programs, and increasing Medicaid payments. In collaboration with the NJ Psychiatric Association, their President/staff along with Claudine and I met with Senators Cryan, Gopal, and Vitale to garner support for legislation regarding reimbursement for the collaborative care model and increasing integrative behavioral health in primary care. I know that the Board will continue to press forward and gain ground on these and other initiatives to help our patients and communities get better care and to help family physicians provide that care in a more efficient and less burdensome way.

I would be remiss without acknowledging the fantastic work of Claudine Leone and our Government Affairs Committee. Because of their work, this past year was the first time the NJAFP was recognized and presented two advocacy awards by the AAFP! NJAFP received the 2021 AAFP State Government Advocacy Award for the promotion and media outreach on the role of family medicine during the pandemic and for efforts on obtaining COVID vaccines in personal physician practices. Since primary care investment was one of my main focuses during my tenure as President (but was somewhat thwarted by the pandemic), I am ecstatic that NJAFP was also awarded the AAFP Center for State Policy Primary Care Spend Grant to assist the Academy’s effort to promote Primary Care Spend in NJ. Part of the \$10,000 awarded was invested in our continued collaboration with Linda Schwimmer and the NJ Health Care Quality Institute to sponsor a two-part webinar on Primary Care in NJ that had legislators in the audience. I believe we are well on our way to continue our progress increasing the state’s investment in primary care that currently is only at an unacceptable 4-8% (depending on what source and definition used) range.

NJAFP is in awesome hands for this upcoming year with Kelly Ussery-Kronhaus as President and Michael Cascarina as Board Chair. I want to thank and congratulate them and the entire Executive Committee and Board members for their dedication and contributions. I have thoroughly enjoyed and admired this wonderful group of

colleagues and am excited for what their leadership will bring to our Academy and constituents. Moreover, I need to thank our entire staff, but particularly Ray Saputelli, Theresa Barrett, Sandi Seltzer, and Claudine Leone for their direction and guidance of the entire team that has brought NJAFP tremendous growth and recognition on a national level.

Although my tenure on the Board will be officially over now after a great nine years, I vow to remain engaged and active in serving the Academy through my work as a New Jersey family medicine residency program director and medical school faculty member; moreover, I pledge to shepherd new membership, energy, and commitment to our Academy and specialty.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria F. Ciminelli, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair, NJAFP