

Treasurer Supplemental

Robert S. Rigolosi, MD

House Action: Filed

Many of you may not be aware of how your dues are collected. Invoices are sent from either the county or the state, including fees for both parties. The process is that upon receipt, the dues would then be transmitted to the appropriate party.

MSNJ has been experiencing a cash shortfall from dues paying members as a result of the late transfer of state dues from certain counties. In my position as Treasurer of the state Society, I am suggesting and urging the county societies to allow the state to bill for them.

Currently the state Society sends invoices to our members on behalf of 12 counties. The remaining 9 counties do their own billing, including my county. After several years the participating counties including Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Passaic, Salem, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren have been very satisfied with this arrangement.

Initially, our goal was to assist the smaller counties who did not have full time staff. Recognizing the convenience and cost savings, some larger counties began accepting the state's assistance in sending out invoices on their behalf. You will hear from one of them later as well as Julie Lynch, MSNJ's Director of Finance and Administration.

When I review the details of the state billing practice, I cannot imagine why any of the counties would choose to bill for themselves. Not only does the state handle the logistics of creating the invoices and following up with monthly reminders to the unpaid members, but they bear all the costs associated with billing, including staff time, marketing and printing costs, even postage! From a cost standpoint, it's a no-brainer.

When you start looking at the other benefits, the argument becomes even more compelling. There is consistency with the invoices. Physicians throughout the state would receive the same invoice with their specific county dues requirement. This would demonstrate organization within organized medicine. They would also receive updates on current events and issues at both the local and state level.

Not only will you reduce your budget for postage and printing, but you will free up your staff to focus on recruitment and retention efforts. Why duplicate efforts? The state will deposit your dues directly into your county's account on the 15th and 30th of every month. They will even continue to pay a rebate to the county for dues collected by the scheduled dates. And your county gains from not having the aggravation of invoicing!

It was brought to my attention that some of the counties that do their own invoicing were having difficulty retaining their members. Sometimes the problem can be as simple as not having enough hands to get all the tasks completed. The state has the increased manpower and technology to make sure the billing occurs, even when other things seem to get in the way.

I urge you to go back to your counties and consider this option for next year. The decision is made in the summer, so now is the time to act.

Our goal is to increase membership and improve the finances of the county and state societies. As pointed out repeatedly this weekend by Dr. Rohack of the AMA, and Doctors Moss and Scott, if we work together we can be stronger.