



WESTCHESTER PHYSICIAN

April 2020

Volume 36, Issue 4



DANIEL GOLD, MD
President, WCMS

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY

As modern physicians, we were certain that we had everything under control. We understood the origins of disease. We had powerful medicines to control all forms of infection. We had even begun to make headway in understanding and treating many forms of cancer. Then all of that changed. The last 3 months has been humbling for physicians all around the world. A 0.1 μm organism has shown us how little we understand and how little is under our control. It is especially at these times that physicians must remain a reliable authority that our patients and communities can turn to for diagnosis and management of their health issues.

In the past few weeks, most of us have had to dust off our basic epidemiology, statistics and microbiology that we last encountered as first year medical students. These skills have been required to be able to evaluate the barrage of information coming from our local newspaper, television broadcast and numerous medical sources flooding our senses. There has been so much conflicting data and advice that it remains difficult for even experts to have a clear picture of where we are and where we are headed. As educated clinicians, it remains our goals to filter and distill this information to best help our patients and our communities.

Despite regional data that seems to show a trend towards improvement in many counties across our state, we still do not have a clear picture of when this healthcare crisis will end. It seems that this has been going on for much longer than eight weeks. Many physicians on the front lines have been working tirelessly for the last two months and deserve a well-earned break. Those physicians who needed to shutter their offices for safety and economic reasons, are now anxious to get back to work and a normal patient flow. It remains uncertain however, whether we will ever get back to the way things were and what the new “normal” will be. It remains our responsibility to help our patients navigate this uncertainty and maintain the healthcare systems of our communities no matter what the future may hold.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

All Upcoming Events have been Postponed or Rescheduled at this time.

WESTCHESTER PHYSICIAN

Published by the
Westchester County Medical Society
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FROM THE EDITOR...**PETER J. ACKER, MD**
PEDIATRICS IN THE TIME OF COVID

I am a primary care pediatrician in Westchester County. I am trying to rapidly adapt to the new, hopefully, temporary reality. I am fielding tons of calls from worried well (there is actually a CPT code for that), the unworried sick and everything in between. My practice is trying to keep as many people at home as possible, so I am doing virtual visits via facetime. I have been amazed at how effective it has been as a tool to assess and reassure when appropriate. I am spending much more time at home than I'm used to and my mood fluctuates constantly. Interacting with a worried mother via facetime and slowly seeing her expression soften just a tad has a restorative effect on my mood, like Antaeus regaining strength from contact with earth. It is a herculean task!

In my business I am constantly parsing parental worry, recognizing that it is usually over worry, but yet occasionally a mother is picking up something subtle that is serious. Don't overreact, I tell myself, but dear god, don't underreact when circumstances warrant! On February 4, I got an email from one of my patients who I have gotten to know quite well by dint of innumerable phone calls as she ponders every little possible threat to her progeny. "Good morning Dr. Acker, This is Ian's mom. I am seriously considering homeschooling Kyle and Ian until this Wuhan coronavirus situation is more clear because I am convinced a lot more people have it here and that it's going to be a pandemic. DO you think this is reasonable for me? Or do you think it's safe to leave them in school? I really don't know what to do. Any advice would be really appreciated. I'm losing sleep over this."

My lost sleep started a month later. I am chagrined that I did not appreciate the possible magnitude of what was to come. After all, I am a trained medical professional and am well versed in the power of microbes to have their way with humankind. As I think about this now, I believe there is a sense of hubris that is hardwired into our brains and ironically experience and knowledge contributed to it mightily, sort of a strutting "I am doctor and can handle it". So a young mother of two with no medical training got it right while I got it wrong.

A few years ago I was body surfing off the Pacific coast of El Salvador (at the end of a medical mission there). I am an experienced body surfer (in my early 20's, I spent 4 weeks camping out on Pie de La Cuesta, a small Mexican village north of Acapulco and riding monster waves day after day). Also, I was a champion competitive swimmer. Yet one wave caught me and I was powerless to change my tumbling trajectory which ended with me being slammed head first into the sand. My shoulder took the brunt of the impact and left me with an AC separation which

(Continued on page)



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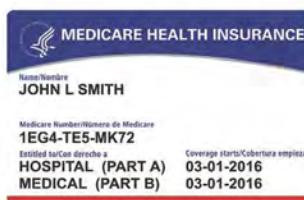
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STOP THE TRAIN

Elliot Barsh, MD

I hope this column finds you, your families, friends, and patients healthy and safe.

All of us are experiencing some degree of emotional distress.

As physicians, we are dedicated to being here for our patients, in-person, to help them with their fears, grief, sadness, and loneliness.

Sheltering at home and social distancing may be keeping us physically separate, but it doesn't change what we do!

We can see them, listen, and be present by using telemedicine.

Telemedicine is about doing what we know how to do in a new way!

It is not for every problem, or for every patient, but is something that we can all do.

In fact, it may tell us more about our patients than we could ever know about them by doing a thorough physical exam in our office.

We can ask them to give us a tour of their home, introduce us to who they are sheltering with, and meet their pets.

We can get a look into their emotional state by seeing how clean and neat their home is.

Is their bed well made? Do they have food in their fridge? What books are they reading? Is there a puzzle they are working on?

Embracing telemedicine is a new way for us to safely embrace our patients and show them how much we care!***Now, more than ever before, we really want to talk to each other!***

Thanks for reading and be safe.

“Telemedicine is not a new type of medicine, but rather simply a care delivery mechanism that

can be utilized with some patients, some of the time, to provide high-quality care.”

<https://catalyst.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/CAT.20.0093?query=C19>

From The New York Times:

When the Pandemic Leaves Us Alone, Anxious and Depressed

We are in a dual crisis of physical and mental health. But there are ways to head off breakdowns.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/opinion/sunday/coronavirus-depression-anxiety.html?smid=em-share>

The invisible hand is the one to hold.

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMp2006607?articleTools=true>

“We can find new strengths and opportunities to monitor psychosocial needs and deliver support.

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMp2008017?articleTools=true>

From The New York Times:

Surprising Poll Results: People Are Now Happy to Pick Up the Phone

Pollsters are used to having their calls screened. But when everyone is stuck at home, a stranger with some survey questions can be a lifeline.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/17/us/politics/polling-coronavirus.html?smid=em-share>



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SOME SATIRE FOR A GOOD LAUGH...

NATION’S CHIROPRACTORS, HOMEOPATHS, NATUROPATHS NOTABLY ABSENT DURING ACTUAL HEALTH CRISIS—By Naan Detheraal—Originally published on Gomerblog.com

New York, NY— The Coronavirus continues to wreak havoc across New York City with well over 200,000 infected and 11,000 deaths so far.

NYC hospitals, ERs, field hospitals and even a Navy ship are literally all hands-on-deck to fight the crisis. Basically, every single legitimate healthcare provider around is pitching in to help out in any way that they can.

Missing in this pandemic response are chiropractors, naturopaths, homeopaths, reiki wizards, acupuncturists, Jenny McCarthy and numerous other self-proclaimed “health experts.”

One would think that a holistic, body centric approach declared to be “better than conventional medicine” for fibromyalgia, infertility, migraines, and a million other maladies would also work for a pandemic.

Many actual doctors theorize that the complete lack of demonstrable benefit of chiropractic, naturopathic, and homeopathic “interventions” in any actual conditions makes it exceedingly unlikely that these scams would help in an actual emergency.

Local chiropractor Travis Fahey expresses his hesitance to go into a COVID zone saying “without a guarantee of \$300 cash per treatment for 10-653 consecutive treatments, its not financially worth it for me. Plus, if it got COVID then I would have to see an actual doctor which would totally destroy my reputation! Also, let’s be honest, cracking someone’s necks doesn’t cure anything aside from [annoyingly intact vertebral arteries.](#)”

Youtube Z-list chiro-celebrity Eric Nepute has been social distancing by staying mostly on [Youtube promoting a quack-tactic theory that Tonic water can treat coronavirus.](#) When asked where that idea came from, Nepute admitted “I pulled it out of my ass. I was literally trying to show everyone how clueless I and all chiropractors are about actual physiology and medical diagnoses. It backfired. There are people dumb enough to believe that crap! I picked up a couple

hundred youtube followers that I can hopefully scam some money from after this is over and turn a profit!”

Ravi Kulasekere is a naturopathic nutjob from Lakewood, Ohio has gone entirely online using Tele-bullshit to market his sawdust laden placebo supplements. “I thought about going to one of the ER’s in Cleveland to offer to help out but let’s be honest. In a real medical emergency, the most useful thing I can do is hold a door for someone who actually understands the human body. None of my snake oil works for COVID or any other actual conditions. Thankfully, people line my wallet with their money because I’m really good at conning them out of their money for placebos. Hopefully COVID doesn’t take out all the suckers in the world!

FDA RECOMMENDS AMERICANS REUSE TOILET PAPER—By Dr. 99—Originally published on Gomerblog.com

WASHINGTON, D.C. – It is well-known that we are still in the midst of the Great Toilet Paper Crisis of 2020. In a newly-issued guideline, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) now recommends that all Americans reuse toilet paper.

“If health care professionals can reuse masks, then the American public can reuse toilet paper, it’s very simple,” said FDA spokesperson Dr. Vera Gross, stating that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and FDA need to be consistent with their messaging. “Wipe, save, wipe again, save again. Repeat indefinitely.”

Gomerblog has found that numerous hospitals are rationing their supply of surgical masks by asking healthcare workers to reuse them for an entire week before replacing. This is likely the basis for the new FDA recommendation.

“Healthcare workers have been asked to reuse [surgical masks](#) for as long as one week, sometimes even longer,” said Dr. Brock Hammersley, an orthopedic surgeon who has been forced by the COVID-19 pandemic to become an intensivist managing non-bony things such as a ventilators and vasopressors. “If we can sacrifice our faces, then the public can sacrifice their butts.”

In related news, the FDA is expected to announce sometime this upcoming week that health care workers and the American public reuse alcohol-based [hand sanitizer.](#)



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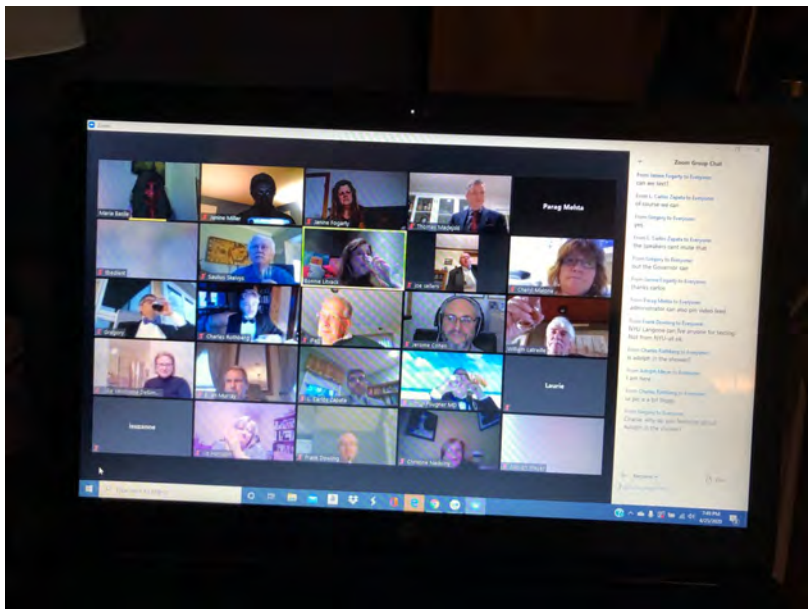
A NEW WAY OF “DOING THINGS”

Janine Miller, Executive Director

Picture it: It's Saturday, April 25, 2020 and all of the New York State MSSNY delegates are gathered in Tarrytown for the Annual House of Delegates meeting. We have just finished up a long day of House business and although exhausted, we are ready to have some fun! Everyone is dressed up in their fanciest attire as we pile into the room where the outgoing and incoming presidents will give their speeches. Dr. Fougner delivers a witty and charming address making note that he began his Presidency during a measles outbreak, and how we have come so far since then. He talks about all the amazing things MSSNY has been able to accomplish this past year while guaranteeing us that Dr. Litvack will continue to do great things this coming year. We clap and congratulate Dr. Fougner on an amazing year while raising a toast later in the evening to all of his accomplishments.

Dr. Litvack then takes the podium ready to give her first speech as MSSNY President. It includes a “thank you” to all who have mentored her, to the MSSNY staff for supporting her along her journey to get to this day, and to her family. It also includes a plan for how we will tackle the challenges of the upcoming year. She speaks to all of the things she would like to see MSSNY accomplish and how she plans to accomplish them. We welcome her and tell her how excited we are to work with her.

After all of this, we go party, because that's the best part right?



Whelp...in a perfect world the above scenario would have played out something like this, but for all of the obvious reasons the photo (to the left) was how the evening actually went. Although it was not what we had all planned for, worked for and were looking forward to, in its own way it was special and memorable. The Zoom meeting that was hosted by Dr. Maria Basile on April 25 to thank Dr. Fougner and Welcome Dr. Litvack was not a big lavish dinner dance, but rather a look into the lives that we have all been living since social distancing was implemented.

We got to see each other in our home environments and raise a glass to toast two amazing physicians for all the work they have done and will do. I know that we will celebrate these two great leaders when the time is right, but for now Cheers to Dr. Litvack and Dr. Fougner and all of the NYS physicians and the MSSNY admin staff. We have proved that we can adapt and even in a time of crisis, can still find a way to have fun and laugh together.

THE BUSINESS OF MEDICINE**TORN UP BY COVID**

Rick Weinstein, MD, MBA

Director Orthopedic Surgery Westchester Sport & Spine at White Plains Hospital Center

I have so much and so little going through my head these days. I don't sleep normally and I have bizarre dreams. I see fewer patients in the office currently than I have since I started in practice over 20 years ago, but I am working harder than ever to see these patients. I don't have any medical assistants to bring the patients in or obtain the histories. I don't have any physician assistants to help me see the patients, screen the patients for x-rays or help with reducing fractures, casting and injections. I am wearing an N95 mask and can barely breathe or talk to my patients. It is a constant struggle to get my patients to figure out how to use Telehealth on their phones or computers.

I am grateful that, as far I know, I have not been infected yet. I have unlimited respect for my colleagues manning the ERs and ICUs dealing with death and the sickest people in the world. We are very fortunate to have strong hospitals in Westchester that are weathering the tsunami of patients and working well as a community supporting each other.

I have done several emergency surgeries in the past few weeks, but no elective surgeries. Forty of my patients are impatiently waiting to be "fixed" and I feel bad for them. One is 17-year-old girl who tore her ACL cheerleading a week before the pandemic started and she wants to cheer next year in college. With a 6-9 month recovery, any delay in her surgery jeopardizes her chances of cheering next year. It is not fair. There are so many upsetting situations caused by this microscopic, 100-nanometer single strand of RNA that it is hard to comprehend. And there is nothing I can do about it.

How do we deal with the financial devastation to our practices? Staff has been furloughed or de-

ployed to other locations to help with the pandemic. We don't want anyone coming into our practice that puts us, our employees or other patients at risk. We stay available for all emergencies risking our own health with possible viral exposure, but we, as physicians, consider this our responsibility.

We must plan for the financial implications of not only what is happening now, but what is to come in the next few months. Some patients will be unwilling to come in to the hospital or our medical practices because of their fears even when the "all clear" is given. We must guarantee as much safety as possible by keeping the waiting rooms from getting crowded and maximally disinfecting examination tables, chairs and door knobs. Get the word out that you are sterilizing your office and looking to protect your patients and staff. We are all in this fight together.

Doctors are financial victims of the pandemic. In Westchester, almost 20% of our residents (over 80,000 people) are employed in the healthcare industry and most of them have been affected. The financial success of doctors' practices and hospitals is the very core of supporting the income to these 80,000 people. Our revitalization is critical to the future of the Westchester economy. Resources must be made available to resurrect our damaged practices. Doctors returning to successful practices is an absolute prerequisite to our economic recovery. Failing to plan is a plan to fail.



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FROM THE EDITOR...

PETER J. ACKER, MD

PEDIATRICS IN THE TIME OF COVID

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took 2 months to heal. As I thought back on the experience, I felt a chill as I thought about how the slightest shift could have resulted in a fatal cervical fracture. I felt a sense of shame about my casual attitude toward the coming of the storm. In the words of Dante, “And as he, who with laboring breath has escaped from the deep to the shore, turns to the perilous water and gazes.”

Now we are collectively nearing the crest of a powerful wave and I remember how powerless I was when an ocean wave was exerting its full natural power upon me. I’m feeling the same way now and can hope that our government will abandon its hubristic attitude and recognize the awful power of this storm. In the meantime, I will wear my mask and do the best I can for my patients.



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY

(Continued from page 1)

One thing that this health crisis has shown us is that physicians (and healthcare workers in general) were underappreciated in the New York State and US healthcare systems. We were always assumed to just be there despite attacks from regulators, lawyers and insurance companies. Over the past decades, we have had to fight to maintain fair reimbursements for the clinical care we provide and support for our local hospitals. We have struggled to continue funding for medical education, basic science research and our major public institutions. All of these have now been recognized to be essential weapons in the fight against an uncertain and insidious infectious enemy. Had we not fought so hard as an organized group for the last few years, one could only imagine the dire circumstances that we would have found ourselves in as a state and as a nation. It remains the responsibility of every physi-

cian to stand up as an active participant in the protection of our patients and our healthcare system. Only as a united group of physicians can we help navigate our state and our country through the current crisis and those yet to come.

I wish all physicians and healthcare providers the strength to tackle what comes and the best of health during these trying times.



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**The New Year is here with that said PCI
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Beginning in February 2020, medical practices must be EMV (Europay, MasterCard and Visa) compliant if they wish to avoid the risk of being 100 percent at fault for any credit card fraud initiated from their office. The new EMV policy places the risk on us the medical practice rather than the credit card processor if any fraud is committed. Therefore it is imperative to be EMV compliant before 2020, with new machines or your current terminal wiped and reprogramed.

In an effort to bring you more benefits here at the society we have a vetted vendor that will not only give you the machines necessary to meet the new requirements, but we have also pre-negotiated medical credit card processing rates as low as 1% based on all of our membership as a whole, **saving you thousands of dollars a year on average.**



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Dr. Carl Weber WCMS Past President

1937-2020



Purchase - Dr. Carl Weber, born April 15, 1937, died April 1, 2020 at his home in Purchase NY. He was a graduate of Albert Einstein College of Medicine, where he served as an Assistant Clinical Professor early in his career. He then served the White Plains community and beyond for 50 years. An ardent advocate for compassionate patient care, he held many leadership positions at White Plains Hospital, including Director of the Emergency Department, Chair of the Department of Surgery, and President of the Medical Staff, while serving on the Medical Board and Board of Directors. Dr. Weber was a Governor of the American College of Surgeons and served as the President and Program Chairman of the Westchester chapter of the ACS. He published in Surgery, JAMA, the Journal of American Medical Association, and the Archives of Surgery, as well as in the op-ed pages of the New York Times. Dr. Weber's private surgical practice, Weber, Homan MD, PC, was the founding practice of White Plains Hospital Physician Associates. His commitment to White Plains Hospital and its patient population was recognized in 2015, when the hospital opened the Carl Weber Wound Care Center in his honor. Creative and prescient, he promoted the use of xenografts in the 1960's to address the shortage of organs for transplantation and the use of plasma transfer for immunologic diseases. As an architect of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system for Westchester County and the Hudson Valley, he received the Dawson Award for his lifetime contribution and commitment to EMS in the Westchester region. He was a passionate defender of the American Health Care System, recognizing that insurance company practices were undermining the system. With his colleague and dear friend, Dr. Richard Frimer, he created Code Blue to redirect the national conversation and offer a viable and innovative alternative. Throughout his professional life, Dr. Weber demonstrated an abiding respect for his patients and for his profession. Through his example, Carl taught generations of medical professionals to strive for excellence and to do so with benevolence and humanity. Above all, Dr. Weber exemplified the highest ideals of the medical profession, while modeling for future generations what it means to live a life of service, with integrity, grace, and compassion. His devotion and pride in his family superseded all else. He inspired them with the life he led, one of dignity, courage, and humility, and they, in turn, filled his life with immeasurable joy and happiness. Preceded in death by his father, Martin J. Weber and his mother, Toby Messler Weber, Dr. Weber is survived by his wife and devoted life partner of 60 years, Joan (n. Heyman); his beloved children, Adam Weber and his wife Monica; Dr. Philip Weber and his wife Linda; Anna Weber and her husband, Dr. Martin Schapiro; Dr. Kaare Weber and his wife, Dr. Pamela Weber; and his daughter, Jennifer; his sisters, Ellen Weber and Marilyn Marsden; and his brother-in-law, Charles Marsden. He is also survived by his ten adoring grandchildren, Daniel, Justin, Sydney, Evan, Katie, Noah, James, Hannah, Rachel, and Samantha. In lieu of flowers, if you wish, please make a donation to White Plains Hospital in his memory.

Published in the The Journal News from Apr. 11 to Apr. 12, 2020

NEWS FROM MSSNY

MSSNY: Community Docs Should Be Part of Testing Efforts

The Medical Society of the State of New York applauded Gov. Andrew Cuomo's efforts to increase Covid-19 testing but said community physicians should be at the forefront.

The group expressed concern over a new executive order to allow pharmacies to become collection sites for tests.

"In particular, we are concerned that there has not been any specification for how such test results will be shared with the patient's primary physician or physicians to help explain to the patient what the results mean ... as well as what the patient should do," said Dr. Art Fougner, president of the medical society, in a statement.

The group also questioned the lack of effort to involve community physicians in any statewide testing program and to help them obtain the supplies and personal protective equipment needed to provide Covid-19 tests.

"Not only are community physicians an integral part of New York's health care system, but many of them have been—unaware to many—working tirelessly to keep the surge of patients from becoming a tsunami, which would have overwhelmed our hospitals," Fougner said.

People place trust in community physicians, he said, adding that the medical society is urging Cuomo to enlist them to fully expand the state's testing capacity, which is critical to reopening businesses.



MSSNY Proposes "Peer to Peer" Program for Physicians' Post Traumatic Stress

"The tragic suicide of emergency physician Dr. Lorna Breen is yet one more terrible consequence of the coronavirus pandemic and the leadership of the Medical Society of the State of New York wishes our condolences to her family. We fear that there

could be many more physicians and other health care workers who have been on the front lines of treating the unending number of gravely ill patients in New York hospitals who may also be confronting post-traumatic stress and at risk for taking similar action. To assist these physicians, MSSNY has proposed to create a "Peer to Peer" program similar to programs for veterans and police officers to help these physicians in coping with their post-traumatic stress.

However, many physicians in need of this help will not feel comfortable in sharing their experiences unless they know that what they share will be kept strictly in confidence. To that end, MSSNY is working with the New York State Department of Health to approve the parameters of this proposed peer to peer program including ensuring that physician peers providing this greatly needed assistance will not be required to divulge any element of these conversations to any person or governmental body."

Statement Attributable to:

Art Fougner, M.D.

President, Medical Society of the State of New York

April 28, 2020



HHS Posted FAQs re Second Tranche of Disbursement of CARES Act

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has posted new [Frequently Asked Questions](#) regarding the second tranche of disbursement of the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund. Please note there is conflicting information about whether a provider who has not previously received money from the first round of funding can apply for this round. The AMA is trying to clarify this and other questions with HHS.

Please visit [MSSNY.org](https://www.mssny.org) for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19