



October 2015

A newsletter from:

## AfPA Health Policy Council

Physician Legislators Promoting Patient Access

[www.allianceforpatientaccess.org](http://www.allianceforpatientaccess.org)



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Del. Dan K. Morhaim, MD  
Temporary Vacancy

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## CT REP. SRINIVASAN LOOKS TO RESTORE PHYSICIAN-LED HEALTH CARE

For Connecticut state representative Prasad Srinivasan, MD, becoming a physician legislator was, “not a question of chance, but definitely a question of choice.” Board certified in pediatrics as well as allergy and immunology, Rep. Srinivasan says he wanted to get involved in policymaking since his early days of medical school. In January he begins his sixth year in the Connecticut House of Representatives.



Prasad Srinivasan, MD

Rep. Srinivasan has worked to advance a range of health policy priorities. A member of the Alzheimer’s and dementia legislation task force, he helped to expand dementia training requirements for nursing facilities staff. He has also introduced legislation that would train school personnel to administer life-saving epinephrine for first-time allergic reactions.

But a broader and more complex issue continues to irk Dr. Srinivasan—the “total change in landscape” that has redefined how physicians today can direct their patients’ course of treatment. A practitioner for nearly 40 years, Dr. Srinivasan recalls a time when a physician could manage what he or she thought was best for an individual patient. Growing pressure from insurance providers has changed that dynamic.

Now, Dr. Srinivasan explained, “This has to be approved; that has to be approved. You definitely feel handcuffed.” Dr. Srinivasan characterized the increasing reach of health plan rules and restrictions as “a total loss of control in terms of patient care.”

Regaining that control is no simple task. But, Rep. Srinivasan explained, it begins with “properly educating legislators.” And that, Rep. Srinivasan acknowledged, is “something I want to do more of in my career.”

### ABOUT AfPA’S HEALTH POLICY COUNCIL (HPC)

HPC serves as a physician led non-partisan forum to promote interstate communications between physicians serving in public office. HPC provides for a free exchange of ideas and best policies on issues impacting the practice of medicine. HPC members will join with AfPA’s physician leadership to examine issues and promote policies that strengthen the physician-patient relationship while ensuring patient access to appropriate clinical care and approved therapies.



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## MEMBER MEETINGS HIGHLIGHT HEALTH POLICY COUNCIL GROWTH

Over a simple breakfast in a Seattle diner, three members of the Health Policy Council sat down in August to talk healthcare. Maryland Del. Dan Morhaim, MD, Hawaii Sen. Josh Green, MD and Hawaii Rep. Richard Creagan, MD's small get-together marked the council's first in-person meeting. And the conversation underscored one of the organization's driving factors: health policy is more complicated than ever, and it needs the benefit of physician legislators' insight.

Del. Morhaim, council co-chair, acknowledged as much in an open invitation to physician legislators this month. "As physicians and state legislators, we bring a unique perspective to the legislative process," Del. Morhaim explained, adding, "We know that many key healthcare issues are managed at the state level and that too often decisions are made by those who do not have familiarity with health care delivery at the clinical level."

The goal of bringing together physician legislators to share ideas and explore health policy solutions spurred the Health Policy Council's creation. By March 2014, its ranks had grown to 16 members. By August 2015, the council had more than doubled in size, reaching 36 members.

In-person meetings allow members to discuss their own projects and priorities, swap opinions on current health care issues and strategize on how the council can support physician legislators. Drs. Morhaim, Green and Creagan considered key topics for upcoming HPC publications, such as medication shortages or vaccine legislation. They even floated the idea of a conference for members in coming years.

The next Health Policy Council meeting corresponds with the Council of State Government's December 10-13, 2015 meeting in Nashville. All members are invited to meet their like-minded counterparts, discuss ideas and brainstorm ways for the council to support physician legislators' individual and collective vision for good health policy.

### HPC AND AFPA

The Health Policy Council (HPC) functions as a non-partisan policy forum and there are no dues or fees to join, nor are its members compensated. HPC is sponsored by the Alliance for Patient Access (AfPA), a physician led 501(c)(4) non-profit corporation. HPC programming is also supported by the Institute for Patient Access (IfPA), a related 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. HPC is not a lobbying organization and its funding is derived from grants, donations, and sponsorships provided by both for-profit and non-profit entities. Visit AfPA's website at [www.allianceforpatientaccess.org](http://www.allianceforpatientaccess.org) for more information.

### JOIN HPC TODAY

As a physician serving in elected office, you are invited to join the HPC. There are no membership dues, only a small investment of your time working with fellow physicians toward the promotion of health policies that strengthen the physician-patient relationship while ensuring patient access to appropriate clinical care and approved therapies.

To join or learn more about AfPA or the Health Policy Council, contact [brafferty@allianceforpatientaccess.org](mailto:brafferty@allianceforpatientaccess.org) or call (202)499-4114.