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## Health commish: “Let’s try again” on med-mal reform

<http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20110411/PULSE/110409878>

Doctors throughout New York want to know what went wrong with medical-malpractice insurance reform. This year’s state budget negotiations offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to overhaul the reviled system, but it didn’t happen.

So when health Commissioner Dr. Nirav Shah addressed the House of Delegates of the state medical society on Friday morning and thanked doctors for their support of the Medicaid Redesign Team, a fellow doctor corrected him by saying MSSNY officially withdrew its support for the MRT when the budget passed without a \$250,000 cap on noneconomic damages. Physician delegates broke into applause.

Another delegate thanked Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Dr. Shah for trying to get reform but added: “The House [of Delegates] is very disappointed in the outcome, and we’re trying to understand the events that took place. Help us understand how your office and the governor will examine the failure of tort reform.”

Dr. Shah was gracious. “This is not the final word,” he said. MSSNY had supported the governor’s med-mal proposals, even if the cap failed. The debate increased public and media awareness of the need for reform, Dr. Shah said. “We know med-mal reform is now part of the lingo for the public.”

Most important, “the MRT is not done,” he added. “We are continuing our work. Let’s try again. We still have the MRT as a potential vehicle to make that reform happen.”