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## **New York needs more primary care and minority docs**

Training an adequate number of primary care doctors and minority doctors—and keeping them in New York—is an important issue for New York doctors, members of the House of Delegates of the Medical Society of the State of New York told Health Commissioner Dr. Nirav Shah last week at their annual meeting.

Doctors Across New York is a step in the right direction, doctors told Dr. Shah. But keeping medical students in New York is difficult, given the limited number of training spots available, with no mechanism in place to keep them here after they are trained.

Diversity also is an issue. One African-American doctor from Manhattan questioned Dr. Shah on whether the state had plans or incentives to increase the number of minority physicians. Dr. Shah said, “I think we should reflect our patients. We are trying to make our work force more diverse.” Changing the work force takes time, he said, adding that he was open to hearing ideas on the issue. The Medicaid Redesign Team, he noted, will be a vehicle for addressing health disparities “across the board. It is a very important issue for me.”

But Dr. Shah then said efforts would be limited by the lack of resources at the state Department of Health. “We’ve had a 10% cut across the board. Our work force is the smallest in a decade. We know what we want to do, but we can only do so much.”

He added that increasing primary care access in rural areas was a priority at this time.

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