



**Clarence W. Brown, MD**  
**ISMS President**  
**2022-2023**  
**Chicago, IL**  
**Dermatology**

# Archived Materials



Illinois State Medical Society

## President's Forum

Clarence W. Brown, Jr., MD, JD, is a board-certified dermatologist and currently practices at the Advanced Skin and Mohs Surgery Center, out of Chicago, IL and St. Joseph, MI, where he is the Medical and Surgical Director of Mohs Micrographic Surgery.

An ISMS member for 22 years, he previously served as a trustee of ISMS and was elected president-elect in April 2021. His term of office as president will begin in April 2022.

Dr. Brown received his medical degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He completed his residency at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, Chicago, IL and a fellowship at Baptist Medical Center in Kansas City, MO. He also completed a Juris Doctorate degree at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago, IL.

His term as ISMS president will run through April 2023.



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## President's Message

### Doctors for Doctors

#### Clarence W. Brown, MD

In more than a decade of ISMS leadership, I've gotten to know this organization well. Serving on the Medical Legal Council, I've seen how ISMS advocates for physicians in the courts and provides resources for our members. On the Council on Economics, I've become more familiar with payer issues and how ISMS fights for physician reimbursement. And in eight years on the Board of Trustees, I've come to appreciate how ISMS makes the physician's voice heard in every forum.

I am honored and excited to build on these experiences and to represent your voice statewide over the next year as your president.

The reason I have been so engaged with ISMS, and the common thread in everything we do, is that ISMS is a professional society "of physicians, by physicians, and for physicians." I believe we need this now more than ever: Doctors for Doctors.

With the pace of change in healthcare, the pandemic, and all the administrative hassles doctors face, the role of the physician is being diluted and devalued. The Illinois State Medical Society is here to fight that trend. ISMS protects and promotes the physician's voice as we engage with elected officials, with other stakeholders, and the public. We remind them that our training as physicians matters. Our experience and our leadership are the foundation of a functioning health care system. And our perspective is needed as we work

together to solve problems physicians face daily, many of which impact patient care and public health.

We must also work together as ISMS members to address the challenges we face as a society. The changes to our governing documents that were finalized at our recent Annual Meeting are an excellent example of this. Our new policymaking process emphasizes feedback from all members and allows every member to participate fully. This will enable us to hear each other's voices as we decide together what future we will work to create for our profession and our patients.

Collectively, we've opened the door. Individually, we must walk through it – and encourage our colleagues to do the same. We must view ISMS as our first stop and our best tool for driving change in healthcare, and we must follow through by submitting resolutions, engaging with our colleagues, and advocating for ourselves and each other every day.

As president, I look forward to hearing ideas from physicians and students around the state about how to promote the work that physicians do. I also plan to explore new avenues for those conversations. When we foster creative exchange and collaboration among members, the best ideas lead to resolutions... resolutions lead to ISMS action... and ISMS action leads to real change for Illinois physicians.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving as your president this year.

### Understanding Emerging Healthcare and Telehealth



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## President's Column

### A Message to Congress: Quit Threatening Doctors with Medicare Cuts!

**Clarence W. Brown, MD**

#### **Reform Medicare's payment system now**

It's getting to be an annual tradition: Physicians are threatened with Medicare payment cuts. And so it is again. The next slashing of reimbursements is scheduled to hit on Jan. 1, 2023. Now add the current inflation rate of 8.3% and the nearly 50% increase in the consumer price index during the past two decades while doctors' compensation has increased at a fraction of the CPI. All of this combined represents a dramatic reduction in physician earnings, which in turn will harm access to care for Medicare beneficiaries.

Lawmakers say they want to provide medical care for older and disabled Americans, but don't seem to acknowledge that doctors are the key to this endeavor. Instead of properly funding Medicare, they place budget shortfalls on the backs of those who provide the medical care.

For the doctors who have been around since the days of the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula, you know all too well about these annual traditions that threaten to slash doctors' pay. Well those days are back. Last year, physicians faced a devastating combination of Medicare payment cuts that would have amounted to a whopping 9.75%! This setback was temporarily averted due to rigorous advocacy by the medical community.

Congress must act to stop this annual "payment cut tradition" and fix Medicare once and for all! ISMS has endorsed AMA's set of principles to guide advocacy efforts on Medicare physician payment reform.

In the meantime, congressional lawmakers must not allow for the 2023 scheduled cuts to take effect!

The temporary 3% increase in the Medicare physician fee schedule (PFS) conversion factor can be extended. This increase, which was enacted by Congress, would evade payment cuts associated with budget neutrality adjustments.

Lawmakers can also replace the scheduled and anticipated cuts in payments with positive, inflation-based updates for at least the next two years to buy some time while innovative models are developed and implemented.

We must protect our older and disabled patients.

Contact your U.S. Senators and U.S. Representative and urge them to cancel the 2023 Medicare cuts!