

MCARE TIMELINE 2007-2008

Mid-February 2007	POS President Chip Hummer distributes POS legislative agenda which highlights need for keeping Mcare levels current 50/50 split, renewal of Mcare Abatement Program for 2008 and finding a dedicated funding source for retiring Mcare's unfunded liability.
June 5, 2007	POS sends letter to Governor and Deputy Insurance Commissioner requesting no change to primary insurance levels and also requests Mcare Abatement renewal in 2008.
July 20, 2007	Deputy Insurance Commissioner declares stay on primary insurance levels.
Early October 2007	Mcare Information page added to POS website. Includes message from POS President Chip Hummer indicating need for advocacy for Mcare Abatement.
October 5, 2007	POS initiates Mcare countdown in weekly email.
October 23, 2007	Sen. D. White introduces SB 1137 – this bill would renew Mcare Abatement Program for one year, but contains provision to divert Mcare revenue and surplus to hospital-based programs.
October 24, 2007	SB 1137 reported from Senate Banking and Insurance Committee.
October 25, 2007	Rep. Shapiro introduces HB 1973 – this bill would renew the Mcare Abatement Program for one year and would condition abatement on physicians' payment of state taxes and participation in a pharmaceutical awareness program.
October 29, 2007	POS issues letter to Senate opposing SB 1137 and urges Senate to preserve Mcare revenue and surplus for abatement and retirement of unfunded liability.
October 30, 2007	Senate passes SB 1137.
November 6, 2007	Save the Surplus" Campaign begins, orthopaedic residents send letter to House members. POS issues Call to Action asking members to request their state Representative to continue Mcare Abatement and to save the surplus for Mcare Abatement and retiring the Mcare Fund's unfunded liability.
November 7, 2007	POS board meets and affirms positions to support Mcare abatement renewal and preservation of Mcare surplus for abatement and retirement of unfunded liability.
November 13, 2007	POS issues letter to House Insurance Committee regarding HB 1973 and supporting continued Mcare abatement. POS issues Call to Action asking members to request their state Representative to extend the current Mcare Abatement program in 2008 and to save the surplus for Mcare Abatement and retiring the Mcare Fund's unfunded liability.
November 14, 2007	POS issues letter to Gov. Rendell requesting 2008 Mcar Abatement and dedication of the surplus to retiring the Mcare Fund's unfunded liability.
November 14-19, 2007	POS President Jon Tucker, POS lobbyist Jonathan Bigley as well as representatives of HAP and PMS met with Governor Rendell and his cabinet. Governor Rendell requests support for CAP funding mechanism.
November 20, 2007	HB 1973 reported from House Insurance Committee with support from POS.
December 3, 2007	POS issues Call to Action asking members to contact their state Representative, thank them for their past support of Mcare Abatement, to support HB 1973, and to save the surplus for Mcare Abatement surplus and retiring the Mcare Fund's unfunded liability.

December 4, 2007	Governor Rendell holds press conference outlining CAP funding models and calls on General Assembly to engage in meaningful discussions to find solutions to Mcare abatement and to provide healthcare insurance to the uninsured. Rep. Eachus announces amendment to SB 1137 that would condition continued Mcare abatement on the General Assembly's adoption of legislation to create and fund a healthcare insurance program. In response to reporter's question, Governor Rendell issues veto threat against SB 1137 in its Senate-passed form.
December 5, 2007	House Insurance Committee chairmen announce agreement to work together to resolve Mcare abatement and insurance program funding mechanism. Committee adopts amendment, but declares that amended bill will not be the final version. POS issues press release praising House Democrats and Republicans for their willingness to work together to resolve the issues of Mcare abatement, Mcare retirement and insurance for the uninsured.
December 10, 2007	Senate Appropriations Committee amends HB 489 with language of Senate-passed version of SB 1137.
December 11, 2007	Full Senate passes amended version of HB 489 - this is the language that Governor Rendell already stated he would veto. POS called on all four caucuses in PA General Assembly and the Governor to begin productive discussions to enact Mcare Abatement for 2008 and reserve surplus Mcare funds for retirement of the fund and future abatement.
December 12, 2007	Both the Senate and the House adjourned for the holiday break. Governor Rendell and leaders in the House and Senate all agree for the need to continue the Mcare Abatement Program as critical for keeping high-risk specialty surgeons practicing in Pennsylvania. The dispute centers on the use of the surplus in the fund. Media reports indicate Governor Rendell is willing to defer 2008 Mcare assessment until April, 2008. General Assembly recesses without renewing Mcare Abatement Program.
December 18, 2007	POS President issues letter to Governor Rendell in support of his proposal for 10 year Mcare Abatement and CAP with the caveat that retirement of the Mcare Fund be included in the proposal.
December 19, 2007	POS distributes December 18 th letter to the General Assembly.
December 21, 2007	Governor Rendell defers collection of Mcare surcharge until March 31 st . Governor Rendell links Mcare Abatement Program to CAP.
January 14, 2008	Governor Rendell holds press conference at PCOM in support of Mcare Abatement Program and CAP. POS Legislative Chair Dick Schmidt implores the General Assembly to end the gridlock.
January 28, 2008	POS President Jon Tucker issues letter to POS detailing the Society's support of ten-year Mcare Abatement, retirement of the Mcare Fund, and CAP.
January 29, 2008	POS President Jon Tucker issues opinion letter to statewide media.
January 31, 2008	POS President Jon Tucker, Past-President Chip Hummer and lobbyist Jonathan Bigley meet with PMS President Peter Lund, PMS Executive Director Roger Mecum, and the PMS lobbying staff in an effort to find common ground on multi-year Mcare Abatement, retirement of the Mcare Fund and health care insurance for the uninsured.
February 3, 2008	Scranton Times publishes Dr. Tucker Op-Ed.
February 8, 2008	POS Board of Directors sets strategy to ensure Insurance Department refund of Mcare Assessments of Mcare Abatement Program is renewed after March 31 st .

February 10, 2008	Harrisburg Patriot publishes Dr. Tucker Op-Ed.
February 15, 2008	AAOS Now publishes article on Mcare by Beth Weachter.
February, 20, 2008	Jonathan Bigley meets with PMS lobbying staff to discuss models developed as a result of the January 31 st meeting.
February 26, 2008	This week Pennsylvania acting Insurance Commissioner Joel Ario announced at a Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing that if the Mcare Abatement Program is renewed after March 31st , the Insurance Department will "promptly refund" directly to physicians any Mcare surcharges collected.
March 3, 2008	POS President Jon Tucker meets (via telephone), Beth Weachter and Jonathan Bigley with Healthcare Reform Director Rosemarie Greco to discuss Mcare Abatement/retirement/healthcare insurance model known as the 10 year incremental plan.
March 4, 2008	Beth Weachter and Jonathan Bigley meet with Roger Mecum and PMS's lobbying staff to discuss 10 year incremental plan.
March 5, 2008	POS Executive Committee meets (via teleconference) to discuss 10 year incremental plan and to determine further strategy.
March 6, 2008	Jonathan Bigley meets with Rosemarie Greco to discuss POS concerns with 10 year incremental plan.
March 10, 2008	POS Executive Committee meets (via teleconference) to finalize strategy for the coming House action during the remainder of the week.
March 11, 2008	POS President Jon Tucker meets with House Majority Leader Bill DeWeese.
March 12, 2008	POS President Jon Tucker meets with various legislators, HAP representatives, and PMS's Roger Mecum (via telephone). Final strategy vetted with Executive Committee (via email). POS issues email to House members requesting they vote in favor of Eachus Amendment to SB 1137 and expressing POS's concerns that more work needs to be done on the bill. House approves Eachus Amendment on a bipartisan 114 – 81 vote.