

# Newsday

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## **Rate hike perils primary doctors**

We applaud your work to illustrate the potentially crippling effects of the recent medical malpractice insurance rate hike in New York State ["Rising malpractice premiums: Doctors feel the pinch," News, July 16]. The stories you told of the Long Island doctors struggling to see how they can make ends meet with the staggering increase in medical liability insurance rates are shared by hundreds of doctors across New York State.

This rate increase poses an even greater threat to our primary-care physicians, who already are under great duress because of vast shortages of these critical doctors in our state. According to a recent report from the New York Chapter, American College of Physicians, primary-care medicine is under-represented in 45 of 62 counties in New York, largely because of shockingly low reimbursement rates and high levels of debt. With these existing problems plaguing our primary-care physicians, they will be hit incredibly hard by this rate increase, likely crippling their practices and forcing many to seek other opportunities in administrative, specialty or corporate medicine.

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Editor's note: The writer is executive director of the New York Chapter of the American College of Physicians, Albany.