



3/10/04 MWW Group wins PR Week's National Public Affairs Campaign of Year

**MWW Group and Medical Society of New Jersey:
*The doctor is in!***

By 2002, the cost of malpractice insurance had become a major issue in New Jersey. Fewer medical students were entering "high-risk" practice areas, and many doctors were leaving the state. The last straw came when physicians received notices from their insurance companies that malpractice premiums would jump significantly in the coming year - more than 150% for some. The Medical Society of New Jersey tapped The MWW Group to raise public awareness of the issue, generate support for physicians, and create a groundswell of political pressure to move the state assembly and legislature toward a solution. The New Jersey-based agency took aggressive steps to educate both doctors and patients about the problem. They flooded waiting rooms with literature predicting what healthcare in the Garden State would look like in the not-too-distant future without any malpractice reform. Posters featured the number for an informational hotline, and patient petitions yielded over 60,000 signatures.

A blood donation event/physician rally was organized for the state capitol in Trenton, where lawmakers had no choice but to see the support. Rallies were held outside the state legislature for two days, culminating on the day a vote was due on an important bill. Lawmakers eventually passed a bill honoring nearly all of the doctors' demands, including a \$30,000 cap on awards for pain and suffering.

More than 500 million media impressions were generated through MWW's efforts, and a public opinion poll conducted by New Jersey's largest newspaper, *The Star-Ledger*, indicated that 68% of state residents supported the position of the doctors. The hotline received more than 100,000 calls during the course of the campaign, in-office materials were seen by an estimated 500,000 New Jersey voters, and the success of the effort spawned similar programs by physicians in Pennsylvania, Texas, New York, Illinois, and Florida.