

2006 AMA Health Care Advocacy Agenda

The AMA will help doctors help patients by focusing on the most important issues facing medicine:

Medical liability reform

To preserve patients' access to care, the AMA will continue to lead an aggressive, multi-year campaign to reduce medical liability premiums:

- At the federal level, the AMA is fighting in Congress for MICRA-like reforms, including a \$250,000 cap on non-economic damages in medical liability cases.
- At the state level, the AMA is providing resources to support similar state reforms.

Medicare physician payment reform and regulatory relief

As the leading force in Washington for Medicare reform, the AMA will be relentless in the battle to replace the flawed Medicare physician payment formula. The AMA will also push Congress and federal agencies to reduce costly and counterproductive administrative burdens and to eliminate unfunded mandates, which interfere with access to quality care for America's seniors.

Expanding coverage for the uninsured and increasing access to care

The AMA is committed to leading the response of America's physicians to solve the health coverage crisis for all uninsured patients:

- In the short term, the AMA will strongly advocate for incremental measures to expand coverage for children and lower income families and individuals. Further, the AMA will work to build political pressure for action on both coverage and access to care.
- In the long term, the AMA will continue to press for the adoption of a consumer-driven, market-based plan to expand coverage through tax credits and insurance market reforms.

Improving the health of the public

The AMA will provide effective programs and tools to help doctors improve the health of the public around:

- **Healthy lifestyles**—provide tools for physicians and advocate for national policies that help improve patient behaviors around obesity, tobacco and alcohol.
- **Health disparities**—help physicians reduce racial and ethnic disparities in health care and health status.
- **Disaster preparedness**—develop training programs to help physicians and their communities prepare for disasters and to equip them to provide an effective medical response.

Patient safety and quality improvement in health care

In 2005 the AMA led the passage of the Patient Safety law. In 2006 the AMA will continue to lead physicians' efforts to measurably improve patient safety and quality of care by:

- Working to ensure the law's implementation and to advance other measures, including voluntary reporting systems with strong confidentiality protections.
- Continuing to convene the highly respected *Physician Consortium for Performance Improvement* to develop evidence-based performance measures to improve the quality of care.

Managed care reform

The AMA will continue to combat third-party interference with the physician-patient relationship, including advancing anti-trust reform; eliminating unnecessary hassles and unfair payment practices; and fighting for reimbursement decisions that are based on optimal patient care, not economics.

