

Frequently asked questions

Q: What is the AMA?

A: The American Medical Association (AMA) is a not-for-profit organization with more than 236,000 medical student, resident, fellow and physician members representing all states and specialties. The AMA Medical Student Section (MSS) is the nation's largest medical student organization and represents students from all accredited medical schools across the country on issues that affect medical education, accreditation, medical students and public health.

Q: Why should I join the AMA?

A: The AMA is the only organization that represents all physicians and medical students on issues affecting medicine at every stage in your career and on a national level. Your membership in the AMA helps to ensure that students have a voice in Washington. In addition, through involvement with your local medical school AMA chapter you can influence your community through the AMA-MSS National Service Project and other public service endeavors. There is also ample opportunity to develop as a leader through local, regional and national leadership positions.

Q: What's the difference between AMA and AMSA? Why should I join the AMA if I already joined AMSA?

A: Both the AMA and the American Medical Student Association (AMSA) advocate for students nationally. However, here's the important difference: Unlike AMSA, which is composed solely of medical students and was once part of the AMA, the AMA is the only organization that represents all physicians at every stage in their career. You can join the AMA as a medical student and maintain your membership through residency, fellowship and as a practicing physician.

With a large pool of resources from which to draw, the AMA has a hand in every aspect of medicine, and its stance on various issues is determined by its members. Through member seats and involvement, the AMA's voice is heard through the Licensing Committee on Medical Education (LCME), the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) and the AMA's own political action committee (PAC), which is one of the top PACs on Capitol Hill.

Through the work of its Ethics Group—the Ethics Institute, the Ethics Resource Center and the Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs—the AMA provides ethical guidance for all physicians, regardless of specialty or location. The Ethics Group is in essence the national specialty society for ethics in medicine. The Ethics Group—and especially the Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs—is most effective when it can point to a constituency passionate about ethical issues in medicine. By joining the AMA, you can help support this important work.

Q: Why is AMA policy on relationships between medicine and the pharmaceutical and device industries less stringent than AMSA's "PharmFree" campaign?

A: The AMA's Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs was one of the first bodies to address these relationships. The Council's policy Opinion E-8.061, "Gifts to Physicians from Industry" first appeared in the AMA's *Code of Medical Ethics* in 1991. The Council continues to work on these issues as it updates ethics policy and the Code.

Q: What does the AMA do for me as a medical student?

A: As a medical student, you have so much to gain from the AMA. The AMA believes strongly in investing in its youngest members. After all, you are the future of medicine, and it's your passion and enthusiasm that will make a difference.

Participation in all national AMA events is free to student members, and you receive complimentary subscriptions to a number of AMA publications, most notably the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA). In addition, as a student in the AMA, you have a voice that physicians and leadership want to hear and that helps shape our agenda. The AMA's positions on the NBME and LCME and its own Council on Medical Education work primarily in the interest of medical student education, helping set the standards for every medical program—standards that you, as a member, have the power to shape and change.

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Q: What does the AMA do on campus?

A: Through involvement with your medical school AMA chapter, membership in the AMA allows you to influence your local community through a related National Service Project and/or community service outreach initiatives. Again, there is ample opportunity to develop as a leader through local, regional and national leadership positions.

Q: How does the AMA differ from the state/county medical society?

A: Both the AMA and your state/county society represent medical students and physicians on issues affecting medicine. However, only the AMA represents physicians on a national level. Your membership in the AMA helps to ensure that our voice is heard in Washington and that national medical issues are adequately represented.

Q: How much does AMA membership cost medical students?

A: A four-year membership is \$68, and you receive a choice of incentive. You can also join for one-, two- or three-year memberships at \$20, \$38 and \$54, respectively.

Q: When does my membership begin?

A: Your membership begins as soon as the AMA processes your application. The amount of time it takes to process your membership depends on when the AMA receives your application from your chapter recruiter or the state or county medical society if these associations handle the applications.

Q: When will I start getting *JAMA*?

A: You can access *JAMA*, *American Medical News* and *Archives* specialty journals online immediately following your membership processing. Once your membership has been processed, please contact AMA Member Relations at (800) 262-3211 to obtain a temporary username and password for online access to AMA member resources.

Q: I haven't yet received my AMA benefits, membership card, etc.

A: If you haven't yet received your AMA member benefits, it's because your membership processing has been delayed for one of the following reasons:

- Your check or credit card payment was not valid.
- The AMA has an incorrect address for you.

If you think either of these is the case, or if you have other questions regarding membership, contact [AMA Member Relations](#) or call (800) 262-3211.

Q: How do I join?

- A: 1. Visit www.ama-assn.org/go/joinstudent and sign up online.
2. Contact your chapter liaison and/or complete a paper application during the orientation.
3. Or call the AMA service center at (800) 262-3211.