

Tackling negative perceptions

As an MSSOP recruiter, you have the opportunity to turn negative perceptions into positive teaching moments. Here are a few examples.

I don't like politics.

Many students, especially those just beginning their training, express this feeling or concern. Here's how you can turn the conversation toward the positive:

- Remember, at this early stage, most medical students don't know much about how the AMA is fighting to protect and positively shape both their professional development and the future of medicine—and health care overall. From medical education to resident work hour reform to helping doctors help patients, the AMA is involved in improving every aspect of a physician's career.
- One cannot stress enough that the practice of medicine and the art of healing should always remain beyond the scope of politics. Protecting the patient-physician relationship and working so that all patients have access to health care are, and will always be, a fundamental part of the AMA's philosophy.
- In a world where health care resources are under relentless pressure, politics does play a role in their development and allocation. That's why as the nation's most effective physician advocacy organization, the AMA takes its responsibility very seriously. As the only national group that unites every state and medical specialty, the AMA is fully engaged in addressing the most pressing professional and public health issues of our time. From the nation's capitol to the grassroots level, the AMA is focused on forging a unified front that gives every physician a powerful voice as we work together for meaningful change.

I don't have time—I don't do extracurricular activities.

As an AMA member you have the option to be as active or passive as fits your needs. The AMA will work toward your interests even if you choose not to take an active role, but should you decide to voice your opinion, it will be heard. The AMA is more than just an "extracurricular activity." Most extracurricular activities do not extend beyond your medical school, or your time in medical school, but AMA membership extends through your training into practice and even through retirement. By remaining an AMA member you guarantee that you have a voice in an organization that is working for you regardless of how active a role you decide to take.

I'll join when I'm a doctor.

The benefits of joining while you are a student arguably outweigh the benefits of waiting to join until you become a doctor. The AMA can help you network with physicians, provide scholarships to its student members and teach you about the ever-changing health care climate in America. The impact of Medicare/Medicaid, the various proposed solutions to the expanding health care disparity in America, and medical liability reform are rarely taught as a part of the medical education curriculum, and as a physician you often will be forced to learn more slowly. The AMA offers you not only the opportunity to learn about these and many more aspects of health care but also the chance to voice your opinion now, as a student, before you even finish your MD.

The AMA is pretentious.

- The AMA is such a large organization that it might not seem very down-to-earth. Although it appears to some to be bigger than life, it's really not—it's actually very accessible to students who want to get involved.
- In fact, the AMA is made up of individuals who want to make a difference. It's full of hardworking students, residents and physicians in all stages of their careers who want more than anything to do what's right for patients and for the profession of medicine.
- AMA members are working together to shape the future of medicine at every level—in medical schools, in physician practices, in communities and in Congress.
- Visit www.ama-assn.org to explore the many ways to get involved in the AMA and to learn about how the AMA can help during medical school and beyond.

The AMA only cares about reimbursement and financial issues.

- Not true. As proof, we encourage everyone to review the [AMA Agenda](#). This agenda, which explains and guides all of the AMA's most important efforts, addresses issues that concern our members, such as expanding coverage for the uninsured, improving patient safety, and combating racial and ethnic health disparities.
- To improve the overall environment in which medicine is practiced and health care is delivered, the AMA is committed to finding comprehensive solutions that take into account the many social, financial and ethical considerations facing medical students, residents and physicians today.

The AMA is republican and AMSA is democratic.

- The AMA is neither republican nor democratic—it's nonpartisan and, for the record, more progressive than many people realize.
- While there are definitely differences between the AMA and AMSA (AMA integrates the efforts of students and physicians, while AMSA is students only), the two groups agree on many big issues, such as expanding coverage for the uninsured, resident work hours and medical school debt relief.
- Our members hail from all parties and work together to overcome challenges locally and federally. The best part? The AMA's impressive track record for making important change happen in the medical and public health arenas is unmatched.

The AMA is too conservative and not sensitive to diversity issues.

- The AMA is not the stuffy, conservative organization that some believe it to be. Recently, we completely overhauled the AMA's brand identity. Why? To accurately reflect that the nation's most influential voice for medicine has not only undergone significant changes, but that its commitment extends to all physicians.
- By adopting the powerful "Together we are stronger" call to action, the AMA actively invites all medical students and physicians to participate in protecting and advancing the interests of physicians and patients nationwide.
- The AMA's commitment to recognizing and providing timely information and representation to an increasingly diverse membership is paying off. With four professional life-cycle sections (e.g., medical students, senior physicians) and seven special interest group sections (e.g., the Women Physicians Congress, the Minority Affairs Consortium), we're doing a better job each day of addressing the incredible variety of needs and interests that our members have. Just one example of this success is the AMA International Medical Graduates Section, which today has more than 35,000 members representing dozens of countries and cultures.