

# Big changes ahead in medicine require bold leadership: AMA CEO

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The AMA is making strides toward becoming a model for other physician organizations and professional associations through its commitment to ambitious goals, partnership-building efforts that yield real-world results, and a “narrative that drives success,” AMA Executive Vice President and CEO James L. Madara, MD, said during Saturday’s opening session of the 2016 AMA Interim Meeting .

One sign of the AMA’s progress is how others outside organized medicine are taking note of the Association’s achievements, Dr. Madara told the hundreds of physicians, residents and medical students gathered for the meeting in Orlando, Fla. He noted that APCO Worldwide, a widely known public relations firm, recently ranked the AMA first in its annual list of the 50 most effective professional associations nationwide. That first-place finish came among professional associations across all economic sectors, not just health care. The ranking takes into account how well an association builds coalitions, communicates with stakeholders, mobilizes members and works across partisan lines, among other factors.

Other recognition has come in the form of President Obama’s praising of the AMA’s work to address the opioid epidemic and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services’ recommending AMA digital tools in its rule-making process. Such tools include the Quality Payment Program Payment Model Evaluator, an “action kit” to help physicians with the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act, and the STEPS Forward™ collection of practice-improvement modules.

Such continuing medical education (CME) opportunities were purposefully crafted with the goal of immediate physician use in mind, Dr. Madara said.

“We believe that when physicians obtain CME they should feel that pragmatic, practical learning, applicable to their practices was achieved—not that they wasted time on topics of questionable value to practice,” he said.

## Partnering for impact

In the category of working with other organizations to heighten the effect of the AMA’s reach, Dr. Madara cited the Association’s partnerships with the American Heart Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and others to improve health outcomes in prediabetes and hypertension.

“We worked nationally and across dozens of states to expand access and enrollment in effective diabetes prevention programs, including an innovative scaling statewide partnership in Michigan focused on communities at high risk,” Dr. Madara said.

Work on the prediabetes front also included a national advertising campaign launched to raise public awareness of the condition and point patients to the AMA’s online risk-assessment tool at Prevent Diabetes STAT. The campaign pushed nearly three-quarters of a million people to the AMA’s prediabetes site.

Such work is “a great example of the leveraging power of partnerships,” Dr. Madara site.

The AMA’s executive vice president and CEO also highlighted the Association’s work this year to:

- | Prepare a textbook for use in medical education that explores health systems science, which is available for preorder now and goes on general sale in mid-December. “This nascent field will enable a systemic understanding of health care and thus comport with the shift in disease burden which has occurred over the last half century—that shift being from dominantly episodic to dominantly chronic disease,” he said.
- | Work with technology innovators and entrepreneurs, MATTER in Chicago and through Health2047 in San Francisco, to design and develop solutions that are “optimized for more efficient, effective practices and continuity of care ... and save every physician one hour a day every day of the year.”

The AMA’s “bold decisions” to aim high in creating the medical school of the future, make tangible improvements in chronic disease outcomes and improve physicians’ professional satisfaction “all have real traction,” Dr. Madara concluded.

Many outside the AMA are seeing that “we are ‘living the mission,’” he said, promising that the



commitment to big ideas is just beginning. Dr. Madara said he hopes that what is yet to come from the AMA “will make practicing physicians acutely aware, day by day, of the strong career ally they have in their corner.”

Read more news coverage or see speech transcripts from the 2016 AMA Interim Meeting.