

Nov. 1, 2018: State Advocacy Update

2018 Health Workforce Mapper now available

An updated version of the AMA Health Workforce Mapper is now available. This interactive tool helps medical associations, legislators or regulators, researchers and others identify underserved patient care areas and understand trends and gaps in patient access to care essential to pursuing a proactive scope of practice advocacy agenda.

In addition to illustrating the geographic locations of the health care work force in each state—including physician specialties and subspecialties—the tool provides population health data by geographic location. The Population Health Explorer feature offers data on a variety of population health factors, including health care access and quality, health behaviors such as smoking and alcohol use, demographics, and social environment factors. This feature enables users to not only see where the physicians of the country practice, but overlay where the patients are located, and the factors that influence their health and access to care.

Here's how some state medical associations and national medical specialty societies have used the tool to aid their advocacy efforts:

"We've used it to show the distribution of psychiatrists, psychologists, nurse practitioners and naturopaths in scope battles. We've also used it to show that states who have passed scope legislation have no different distribution of labor (rural is still sparse for access.)"

"Helpful to show legislators the distribution of practitioners in their districts. Helps link up telemedicine and collaborative care."

"We have used it to help advocate for funding for our medical education and GME program expansions. We've been able to show legislators that additional funding—particularly for rural training tracks—would add providers to their communities."

"We used the mapper to create a poster for a hearing to fight against a bill to grant advanced practice registered nurses independent practice."

For information please contact AMA's Advocacy Resource Center at ARC@ama-assn.org.

MMA holds lawmakers accountable on opioid epidemic

In a richly detailed report (PDF), the Maine Medical Association evaluated its state's progress in reversing the opioid epidemic by matching the 2016 goals and objectives with progress made as of April 2018. With few exceptions, the state has considerable work to do, according to the report's findings. For example, Maine's physicians and other health care professionals have reduced opioid prescribing by 32 percent between 2013 and 2017, but little or only moderate progress has been made on measures established by the state with respect to treatment. This includes little progress to improve access to the full continuum of substance-use treatment for adolescents in all counties in Maine. There was also little progress in reducing the stigma, shame, and cultural barriers around substance-use disorder for women who are pregnant and/or who are the primary caregiver for a child under the age of six. In addition, there is only moderate progress toward filling gaps in publicly funded treatment options, prioritizing integrated medication-assisted treatment across all regions and districts.

For questions about the report, please contact MMA EVP Gordon Smith at gsmith@mainemed.com

More articles in this issue

- Nov. 1, 2018: Advocacy spotlight on A note from the AMA President
- Nov. 1, 2018: National Advocacy Update
- Nov. 1, 2018: Judicial Advocacy Update