AMA in the News: December 2020

AMA in the News covers media coverage and mentions about the American Medical Association. Find articles recognizing our efforts in health care, advocacy, medical education and improvements in public health. Read coverage on the achievements of our leadership and the members of the AMA community.

Vaccinating Black Americans is essential. Key states aren’t doing the work to combat hesitancy
ProPublica, Dec. 18, 2020

The best way to help a worried individual, whether scared about data collection or the vaccine itself, is a conversation with a trusted caregiver, according to Susan Bailey, MD, president of the American Medical Association.

“Time and again it’s been shown that one of the most valuable things to encourage a patient to undertake a change, whether it’s stopping smoking or losing weight, is a one-on-one conversation with a trusted caregiver—having your physician saying, ‘I took it and I really want you to take it too,’” she said. “But patients have to have the opportunity to ask questions, and not to be blown off or belittled or feel troublesome for asking all their questions.”

Somehow, we still don’t have enough N95 masks
Fast Company, Dec. 18, 2020

“This spring, I was ordering N95s off of Amazon, because that’s the only place I could find them,” says Susan Bailey, MD, president of the American Medical Association, who works in a small clinic with three physicians. “It’s not unusual for someone who sells PPE to have a minimum order of 5,000 to 10,000 units. And that’s not something that a small physician practice needs or can afford.”
Nursing, doctor and hospital groups urge health workers to take COVID-19 vaccine
*The Hill*, Dec. 15, 2020

In an open letter published Tuesday, the American Nurses Association, the American Hospital Association and the American Medical Association said health professionals must "push for high rates of vaccination within the U.S. population if we hope to overcome this virus."

COVID-19 vaccine stickers could encourage people to get vaccinated
*CNN*, Dec. 15, 2020

However, the stickers are unlikely to change the minds of people who are worried about getting the vaccine or opposed to it. Vaccine hesitancy in the U.S. may be the biggest challenge facing the vaccine’s rollout, said Susan Bailey, MD, president of the American Medical Association, in a statement Saturday.

"Manufacturing, distribution, and administration still pose challenges, but the biggest threat remaining may be people’s willingness to get vaccinated," she said.

Inside America's ICUs, the sacrifices of health care workers never cease
*USA Today*, Dec. 14, 2020

"We're not trained to deal with that much death and in that rapid a sequence over such a long period of time," says Susan Bailey, MD, president of the American Medical Association. She worries about burnout among her colleagues.

Doctors hail transparency in FDA And CDC vaccine authorizations
*Forbes*, Dec. 13, 2020

“With the recommendations approved today by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine in persons age 16
or older in the U.S. population, we are one critical step closer to the first vaccines being distributed and administered,” American Medical Association president Susan Bailey, MD, said Saturday. “We commend ACIP for their transparent, science-based recommendations, which the AMA recognizes as the standard that physicians should follow when making decisions about vaccinating patients.”

**COVID-19 vaccine en route to every state as health officials say they hope immunizations begin Monday**
*CNN, Dec. 13, 2020*

American Medical Association President Susan Bailey, MD, said in a statement Saturday the biggest obstacle to the vaccine is people's willingness to be vaccinated.

"To be clear, these vaccines will reduce death and severe illness. They have been rigorously evaluated, and if enough of us roll up our sleeves and get vaccinated, we can eventually reclaim normalcy," she said.

**Heightened COVID-19 dangers for smokers, vapers**
*Fox 59 News, Dec. 11, 2020*

FOX59 spoke with Susan Bailey, MD, the president of the American Medical Association, and Matthew Myers, the president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. They talked about why this pandemic can serve as a perfect reason to either quit tobacco products, or prevent people from even starting.

**Smokers at higher risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms, doctor says**
*9 News, Dec. 11, 2020*

AMA President Susan Bailey, MD in video interview.

**Modern Healthcare’s 100 Most Influential People in Healthcare | Dr. Susan Bailey**
*Modern Healthcare, Dec. 11, 2020*
For most of the year, Bailey used her pulpit as head of the American Medical Association to defend the physicians who were attempting to save the lives of COVID patients. Most recently, Bailey took on President Donald Trump’s claim that doctors make more money when a patient is diagnosed with COVID-19. “During this COVID-19 pandemic, physicians are unfortunately fighting a two-front war,” she wrote in a blog post on the association’s website. “We have been pulled into a public battle we did not want over the very legitimacy of our work and our motivation.” (Publication subscription is required for full or unlimited access.)

Central Florida doctors battle against COVID-19 vaccine misinformation
Bay News 9, Dec. 10, 2020

The American Medical Association shares Khan’s concerns. “Vaccine hesitancy was at an all-time high before the pandemic began and unfortunately has just gotten worse,” said AMA President Susan Bailey, MD.

Health care workers can decline a COVID-19 shot—for now
Stateline, Dec. 8, 2020

Susan Bailey, MD, president of the American Medical Association, said she was confident the nation’s doctors would voluntarily sign up for a shot once they get access to the clinical data. “As physicians we look to the science and the evidence when we make any type of medical decision. Physicians need to see that evidence before they can decide. But I’m very confident that once they do see the data, the uptake in the physician population will be very rapid.”

Health experts on COVID-19 vaccine: Americans have ‘a lot of distrust’
ABC News, Dec. 4, 2020

ABC News spoke to three experts about the American public’s confidence in getting the vaccine and what they think needs to be done to ensure people get vaccinated once it’s available to them. (Interview questions include AMA President Susan R. Bailey, MD.)
The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the health impacts of racism
WABE 90.1 FM, Dec. 3, 2020

Willard Edwards, MD, with the American Medical Association, says the health disparities laid bare by COVID-19 contributed to the AMA’s recent decision to officially recognize racism as a public health threat.

Medicare finalizes 2021 physician pay rule with E/M changes
MDedge, Dec. 3, 2020

The American Medical Association is among those urging Congress to prevent or postpone the payment reductions resulting from Medicare’s budget neutrality requirement as applied to the E/M overhaul.

In a Tuesday statement, AMA President Susan R. Bailey, MD, noted that many physicians are facing “substantial economic hardships due to COVID-19.”

CMS finalizes physician fee schedule, including controversial updates to E/M visits
Fierce Healthcare, Dec. 2, 2020

The decreases, the group said, would represent an 11% cut to the Medicare conversion factor.

"For this reason, the AMA strongly urges Congress to waive Medicare’s budget neutrality requirement for the office visit and other payment increases. Physicians are already experiencing substantial economic hardships due to COVID-19, so these pay cuts could not come at a worse time," said AMA President Susan R. Bailey, MD, in a statement.

Prisons are COVID-19 hotbeds. When should inmates get the vaccine?

Now several groups, including the American Medical Association, are calling for
coronavirus vaccines to be given to inmates and employees at prisons, jails and detention centers, citing the unique risks to people in confinement—and the potential for outbreaks to spread from correctional centers, straining community hospitals. (Free registration is required to view content.)

2021 Medicare fee schedule includes 10.2% cut in conversion factor  
Medpage Today, Dec. 2, 2020

Susan Bailey, MD, president of the American Medical Association (AMA), which represents a variety of physician specialties—including both winners and losers in the final rule—took a measured approach in her statement. She praised the rule’s E/M payment increases and its other steps to simplify physician paperwork, calling them "foundational improvements," but then added, "Unfortunately, the newly adopted office visit payment rates, and other payment increases finalized in today's rule, are required by statute to be offset by payment reductions to other medical services covered by Medicare. This will result in a shocking reduction of 10.2% to Medicare payment rates in the midst of the worsening COVID-19 pandemic while physicians are ... trying to keep the lights on in their practices." (Free registration is required to view content.)

CMS finalizes 2021 Physician Fee Schedule, including E/M changes  
RevCycleIntelligence, Dec. 2, 2020

"Unfortunately, the newly adopted office visit payment rates, and other payment increases finalized in today’s rule, are required by statute to be offset by payment reductions to other medical services covered by Medicare,” Susan R. Bailey, MD, president of the American Medical Association (AMA) said in a statement.

CMS finalizes physician fee schedule, including controversial updates to E/M visits  
Fierce Healthcare, Dec. 1, 2020

"For this reason, the AMA strongly urges Congress to waive Medicare’s budget neutrality requirement for the office visit and other payment increases. Physicians are already experiencing substantial economic hardships due to COVID-19, so these pay cuts could not come at a worse time," said AMA President Susan R. Bailey, MD, in a statement.
Health groups pledge transparency about COVID-19 vaccine plans
*The Hill*, Dec. 1, 2020

In an open letter to the American public, the American Hospital Association, the American Nurses Association and the American Medical Association said they are committed to establishing and sharing safe and effective processes for administering a COVID-19 vaccine.

Telehealth, ACO changes cemented in physician fee schedule rule
*Modern Healthcare*, Dec. 1, 2020

"The (American Medical Association) strongly urges Congress to prevent or postpone the payment reductions resulting from Medicare's budget neutrality requirement. Physicians are already experiencing substantial economic hardships due to COVID-19, so these payment cuts could not come at a worse time," AMA President Susan R. Bailey, MD, said in a statement. (Publication subscription is required for full or unlimited access.)