

The AMA's top 10 news stories of 2020

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The COVID-19 pandemic has exacted a toll on physicians battling to save lives that has been unlike any other in living memory. For months, the AMA has advocated fiercely to get doctors the personal protective equipment (PPE) they deserve, and the financial support they need to survive the pandemic's economic strain.

Physician readers, awakened to the new demands of practicing and serving patients amid the novel coronavirus, have frequently turned to the AMA as a powerful ally for insightful, timely news coverage on top-of-mind issues such as patient questions on mask-wearing and how to reopen practice safely. That coverage includes an outstanding new offering in 2020, the "AMA COVID-19 Update" daily video series.

Here are the AMA's top 10 stories of the year.

The 6 things doctors wish patients knew about masks

Physicians have been dismayed to see the evolving science on the efficacy of masks at preventing spread of SARS-CoV-2 become a political and cultural football. This news story by senior news writer Sara Berg drew from AMA members' expert advice to help send the #MaskUp message on why masks are so effective, and how and when to wear them.

How physicians can keep their families safe after providing COVID-19 care

One of the most profound stressors for physicians delivering clinical care during the

pandemic has been the fear of acquiring SARS-CoV-2 and bringing it home to their loved ones. Eminent infectious diseases physician Mark Rupp, MD, weighed in with expert advice to empower physicians to prevent further coronavirus spread.

What I told the president we need to effectively fight COVID-19

Then-AMA President Patrice A. Harris, MD, MA, had the opportunity to meet with President Donald Trump and others just as the novel coronavirus began to hit the U.S. hard in March. She sent American physicians' message to the president "loud and clear" on the need to alleviate PPE and testing shortages while addressing the pandemic's financial strain on medicine. Learn more about the AMA's effective COVID-19 advocacy efforts.

Use this COVID-19 screening script when reopening your practice

As physicians across the nation geared up to safely reopen their practices for in-person visits, they turned to the AMA for key guidance on how to properly screen patients before their arrival as detailed in this widely read story by senior news writer Andis Robeznieks. The AMA's COVID-19 physician guide to keeping your practice open is regularly updated.

New CPT code for COVID-19 testing: What you should know

The AMA Current Procedural Terminology (CPT[®]) Editorial Panel, like so many in American medicine, has responded nimbly to the pandemic's unprecedented demands. This widely read story details the CPT code describing laboratory testing for SARS-CoV-2. Stay up to date on COVID-19 CPT coding and guidance. Another top-performing article relayed the AMA's expert findings on the three big limitations of SARS-CoV-2 serology tests.

Dr. Fauci offers 2021 forecast on COVID-19 vaccines, treatments

The pandemic seems to have served as a superspreader of misinformation and disinformation, from the bowels of internet comment threads to some of the most high-profile positions of authority in the country.

Standing against all that has been the frank and evidence-based messaging of Anthony

S. Fauci, MD, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and chief medical adviser to President-elect Joe Biden. In a one-on-one interview with AMA Executive Vice President and CEO James L. Madara, MD, ahead of the November 2020 AMA Special Meeting, Dr. Fauci gave physician readers powerful insights on what lies ahead in the year to come.

What the \$2 trillion coronavirus relief plan means for doctors

The AMA and other physician organizations sought congressional help to the tune of \$100 billion to aid practices financially battered by the pandemic—and they got it. This news article described the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act and set out the main provisions of relevance to physicians. Get more tips from the AMA on keeping your practice in business during the pandemic.

E/M office-visit changes on track for 2021

It became clear with the proposed Medicare physician payment schedule that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services would finalize E/M office-visit guidelines and pay rates as planned for Jan. 1, 2021. This news article shared the raft of E/M resources from the AMA to help physicians prepare the major overhaul.

AMA: Racism is a threat to public health

Building on its June pledge to confront systemic racism and police brutality, the AMA took action in 2020 to explicitly recognize racism as a public health threat and detailed a plan to mitigate its effects.

“The AMA recognizes that racism negatively impacts and exacerbates health inequities among historically marginalized communities. Without systemic and structural-level change, health inequities will continue to exist, and the overall health of the nation will suffer,” said AMA Board Member Willarda V. Edwards, MD, MBA. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the AMA is curating critical health equity resources from across the web to examine the structural issues that contribute to and could exacerbate already existing inequities.

The assault on physicians and science must end

In this moving and sadly necessary AMA Leadership Viewpoints column, AMA President Susan R. Bailey, MD, described how physicians have been pulled into a two-front war. “At every turn, at the highest levels of government, our motives and efforts are undermined, questioned and discredited in a misguided attempt to downplay the seriousness of the pandemic we continue to fight,” she wrote.

“A safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine will be a remarkable feat, and a true turning point in the pandemic,” Dr. Bailey wrote, presciently. “The language we use about this accelerated process and the checks and balances meant to ensure safety and efficacy is critical. We cannot afford to lose the faith of our patients. Not when so much death and suffering has already occurred. Not when physicians—and our entire health care community—have already paid so steep a price.”

The AMA recognizes the critical importance of scientific integrity, transparency, and public trust in the fight to contain the global spread of COVID-19 and the planning to authorize, distribute and administer COVID-19 vaccines. Learn more with the AMA about COVID-19 and vaccine development.