

# How medical students can shape medicine—in pandemic and beyond

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Medical students' efforts during the pandemic have been essential and could lay the groundwork for future leaders in medicine, AMA President Susan R. Bailey, MD, said in a recent discussion with medical students from Tarrant County in her home state of Texas.

"Medical students like you are flexing your power, helping people sign up for vaccine appointments, manning the phones at testing sites, triaging with patients and even making hand sanitizer," Dr. Bailey said.

"As a physician of 30 years I'm really inspired by what people like you—our future physicians—are doing to aid us in this fight."

Learn with the AMA what medical students need to know about leadership.

## The importance of leadership

Dr. Bailey advised the medical students to take the leadership reins early in their careers.

"An effective leader is a problem solver who takes less credit than he or she deserves when things go right, and a greater share of the blame when they don't," Dr. Bailey said. "A great leader does not create followers; a great leader creates more great leaders. Leadership is about what gets accomplished, not who receives the glory for what has been accomplished. I personally have always been inspired by the concept of servant leadership—that the most important aspect of leadership is helping others."

Medical students will eventually have the responsibility of leading care teams, Dr. Bailey added. Leadership know-how coupled with clinical skills can create an effective physician.

Find out how medical students aim to cut medicine's red tape.

## Medical students and the AMA

Dr. Bailey got her start within the AMA through the AMA Medical Student Section (AMA-MSS). She highlighted why that portion of the AMA's membership is key to shaping policy.

The group has over the years championed key positions such as ending smoking on airplanes in the 1980s. More recent areas of focus include health in LGBTQ+ populations, encouraging research into medical student mental health to address factors leading to burnout, and the potential negative mental health effects of social media use.

"At 55,000 members strong, the AMA-MSS acts as our medical students' gateway to wider opportunities available such as mentorship and leadership training.

"We are so much better off because of the participation of our student leaders," Dr. Bailey said. "Time and again, you prove that medical students have the capacity to push forward not only the AMA, but the broader medical community and even the general public."

Check out this great advice on how to get involved in advocacy as a medical student.

## Involvement in organized medicine

Whether it is through the AMA or local organizations, such as the Tarrant County Medical Society, Dr. Bailey said involvement in organized medicine is a professional responsibility.

"The times we are in right now require that all physicians demonstrate leadership, and that all physicians, —even physicians-to-be—advocate for change," Dr. Bailey said. "Being part of the American Medical Association or Texas Medical Association or Tarrant County Medical Society gives you the allies you need and the platform you need to change medicine so that it is more accessible, more affordable and more equitable for everyone."