AMA in the News: August 2021

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.

Calls grow to discipline doctors spreading virus misinformation

The Federation of State Medical Boards, which represents the groups that license and discipline doctors, recommended last month that states consider action against doctors who share false medical claims, including suspending or revoking medical licenses. The American Medical Association says spreading misinformation violates the code of ethics that licensed doctors agree to follow. (Publication subscription is required for full or unlimited access.)

J&J booster generates ninefold increase in antibodies, company says
*Healio*, Aug. 25, 2021

Perspective by AMA Board Chair-elect Sandra Adamson Fryhofer, MD, MACP.

Get shots or get out, U.S. employers are telling workers
*Bloomberg* Aug. 25, 2021

Gerald Harmon, MD, head of the American Medical Association, said society’s fight against COVID could drag on for years: “The way to regain the upper hand in this fight is requiring vaccinations—specifically vaccine mandates,” he said. (Publication subscription is required for full or unlimited access.)
American Medical Association calls for public, private sectors to mandate vaccines
_The Hill, Aug. 24, 2021_

“The simple fact is unless a significant percentage of our population is vaccinated against COVID-19—we could be stuck fighting this virus for many more months or even years to come,” AMA President Gerald Harmon, MD, said in a statement. "Now is the time for the public and private sectors to come together, listen to the science, and mandate vaccination."

Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine becomes first to win FDA's full approval, paving way for boosters, mandates
_USA Today, Aug. 23, 2021_

About 30% of unvaccinated people in polls said they were waiting for full approval to get vaccinated, according to a joint statement from the American Medical Association, the American Hospital Association and the American Nurses Association.

“If uncertainty was holding you back, now is the time to act,” the statement said.

AMA finalizes CPT codes for third doses of Moderna, Pfizer vaccines
_RevCycleIntelligence, Aug. 20, 2021_

“Given that CDC data shows some immunocompromised patients lack the antibodies needed to fight COVID-19 infection, adding an additional dose to the primary series for this population can help protect these individuals from unnecessary hospitalizations and deaths,” Gerald Harmon, MD, president of AMA, said in response to the FDA’s authorization.

Health care system is ready to bill for third vaccine shots
_Axios, Aug. 19, 2021_

The American Medical Association has created new billing codes so insurance programs
can pay doctors, hospitals and others to administer a third dose of the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines.

**VA pushes for new national standards of practice**  
*The Clinical Advisor, Aug. 18, 2021*

Gerald E. Harmon, MD, AMA president, said that these standards “will have the unintended consequence of reducing the quality of health care for veterans, many of whom suffer from complex symptoms that require expertise from trained medical professionals.”

**AMA announces CPT codes for third doses of Moderna, Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines**  
*Healio, Aug. 16, 2021*

The AMA said today that the CPT code set has been updated to include codes for a third dose of the Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines.

**Hospitals prepare rollout of COVID-19 booster shots**  
*Modern Healthcare, Aug. 16, 2021*

The American Medical Association expedited approval of new Current Procedural Terminology codes for a third dose of both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, the organization announced Monday. (Publication subscription is required for full or unlimited access.)

**Why now is the time to schedule that check-up or screening**  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Aug. 14, 2021*

“The pandemic has had wide-scale negative health consequences beyond COVID-19. Many Americans have delayed important routine health services critical to keeping them healthy, including vital pediatric immunizations and preventive cancer screenings. Prevention is the best cure, so it’s important to get your health back on track today,” says Gerald E. Harmon, MD, American Medical Association (AMA) president. (Publication subscription is required for full or unlimited access.)
CDC panel backs third COVID shot for the immunocompromised
Medpage Today, Aug. 13, 2021

"Given that CDC data shows some immunocompromised patients lack the antibodies needed to fight COVID-19 infection, adding an additional dose to the primary series for this population can help protect these individuals from unnecessary hospitalizations and deaths," said AMA President Gerald Harmon, MD, in a statement. (Free registration is required to view content.)

AMA, AAP support teen patient access to care, vaccines
PatientEngagementHIT, Aug. 13, 2021

The American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, the Society of Adolescent Health and Medicine and two Washington, D.C. medical societies have filed an amicus brief that they say advocates for adolescent patient access to care, particularly as it relates to vaccine access.

Nearly 1,500 health systems across the United States mandate COVID-19 vaccination
CNN, Aug. 9, 2021

In July, nearly 60 major U.S. medical organizations called for employers to mandate all health and long-term care workers get vaccinated in a joint statement that included the American Medical Association and the American Nurses Association. The Department of Veterans Affairs gave health care personnel eight weeks to get the shot.

AMA releases provisional CPT code for potential third dose of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine
Healio, Aug. 4, 2021

The AMA has announced the CPT codes for a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine if one is authorized or approved by the FDA.
AMA releases provisional CPT code for third dose of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine

"The FDA and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have analyzed data indicating that at this time individuals do not need to exceed the standard two doses authorized for Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine," AMA President Gerald Harmon, MD, says in the release. “The AMA supports the position of the CDC and FDA since it is based on a careful consideration of the available evidence to date. We are confident that federal health agencies will continue to review emerging evidence on a potential third dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. The CPT code set stands ready to meet the immediate needs of the health system if third dose shots are considered necessary.”

People chasing COVID-19 vaccine boosters create headaches for the health care system

The Mayo Clinic, University of Washington Medicine and Wellforce Health System are also not providing booster shots, spokespeople said. AMA President Gerald Harmon, MD, said in an email that the group supports the FDA and CDC position as well.

AMA using more open process to update impairment guides

The AMA has revamped the way it revises its impairment rating guides in an effort to persuade all of the parties involved in workers' compensation—doctors, attorneys and regulators—to agree on a common methodology for rating the degree of impairment according to the best scientific evidence available. Revisions included in an update that took effect July 1 were the first changes to the guides since 2008.

AMA, physician groups slam VA's planned standards of practice changes
Medpage Today, Aug. 2, 2021

"These back-of-the-envelope standards will have the unintended consequence of reducing the quality of health care for veterans, many of whom suffer from complex symptoms that require expertise from trained medical professionals," said AMA President Gerald Harmon, MD, in a press release. "These new standards of practice are unlikely to encompass the complexity of modern medicine. They will supersede longstanding state regulations and laws and create confusion. This is a solution in search of a problem." (Free registration is required to view content.)

New mask guidelines trigger backlash
The Hill, Aug. 1, 2021

“With cases of COVID-19 continuing to increase in the United States and a significant number of people who remain unvaccinated, the CDC’s updated mask guidance is needed to help curb the spread of COVID-19—particularly the Delta variant, which we know is much more contagious,” said Gerald Harmon, MD, president of the American Medical Association.