

2021 tested doctors even further. They found an ally in the AMA.

DEC 16, 2021

Andis Robeznieks

Senior News Writer

As physicians nationwide work valiantly amid widespread pandemic burnout to save lives and get as many of their patients vaccinated as possible, the AMA has served as the doctor's powerful ally and advocate among key decision-makers in Washington, the states and corporate boardrooms.

Check out this updated dashboard to find out about the AMA's recent and ongoing COVID-19 advocacy efforts in areas such as financial relief, telehealth, personal protective equipment and medical supplies, COVID-19 testing and vaccination.

Also see this resource that tracks the AMA's 2020–2021 advocacy efforts across a range of issues, including Medicare physician payment, scope of practice, surprise billing, medical liability reform and more.

Below are a few highlights from our news coverage of the AMA's outstanding work this year on behalf of patients, physicians and public health.

1

Congress moves to tackle Medicare physician pay cliff

The AMA and other organizations successfully persuaded Congress to forestall a series of Medicare physician payment cuts totaling nearly 10% and set to take effect in January. Learn the highlights of the physician-payment provisions of the legislation enacted by the House and Senate. Earlier in the year, a solid House majority signed a letter asking congressional leaders to avert the Medicare physician payment cliff.

2

Surprise billing rule provision jeopardizes patient access to care

The AMA and the American Hospital Association sued the federal government over the Biden administration's misguided plan for implementing a narrow but critical provision in the No Surprises Act—a new law designed to protect patients from unexpected out-of-network medical bills. The suit, filed in the district court for the District of Columbia, details how the plan ignores statutory language and would result in reduced access to care for patients.

3

Pandemic's telehealth advances will be lost if Congress doesn't act

The pandemic has proven telehealth is a critical part of effective, efficient and equitable health care, and the AMA is encouraging Congress to act now so patients don't lose the option of connecting with their physicians through this convenient, accessible mode of care.

4

Five evidence-based steps to end the overdose epidemic

An AMA-convened expert task force has detailed evidence-based recommendations to help prevent deaths happening in a new phase of the overdose epidemic that is driven by illicit fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, methamphetamine and cocaine. These recommendations drive advocacy at the federal and state levels. Learn more with the AMA's "2021 Overdose Epidemic Report" (PDF).

5

How the AMA's pressing on all fronts to fix prior authorization

From state legislatures to Capitol Hill, the AMA's push to reduce prior authorization burdens on physicians and eradicate the dangers they pose to patient care continues. Read about how the AMA is taking on this time-consuming health plan tactic, whose burdens did not ease much during the COVID-19 pandemic.

6

Biden's coronavirus relief bill: What physicians should know

The AMA was neutral on this overall legislative package enacted in March, called the American Rescue Plan Act, but supported many provisions to extend health insurance coverage. That included extending postpartum coverage under Medicaid and CHIP and

increasing premium subsidies for Affordable Care Act marketplace plans.

7

Feds warned that algorithms can introduce bias to clinical decisions

The AMA advised the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality that clinical algorithms—if not developed accurately—can carry the potential to introduce bias and racism that can threaten health and perpetuate inequities already experienced by historically marginalized communities. This was one of the AMA’s many efforts to embed racial justice and advance health equity, such as supporting a new federal law that targets anti-Asian hate crimes tied to COVID-19.

8

Eight states defeat efforts to expand APRN scope of practice

Advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) are valued members of the health care team, but their medical education and training does not come close to matching that which is required of physicians. That is why the AMA Advocacy Resource Center works to safeguard patient safety by opposing measures to expand APRN scope of practice that are introduced each year in state legislatures. Learn about the AMA’s successful efforts on this and other scope-of-practice issues.

9

VA standards for health professionals threaten veterans’ care

The AMA and more than 10 other physician organizations objected to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Supremacy Project, which involves developing national standards of practice for 48 categories of health professionals that would override long-established state laws governing scope of practice and health-professional licensure.

10

Rescinding Title X restrictions a win for patients, physicians

The AMA welcomed the Biden administration’s rule rescinding restrictions the Trump administration imposed on the Title X family planning grant program, which included a gag rule that unlawfully dictated what physicians practicing at facilities funded by the grant program could not say and had to say to their patients.

Physicians’ voices are powerful. Learn how, with the Physicians Grassroots Network, you can make sure views are heard on key issues such as:



- Medicare physician payment cuts.
- Prior authorization.
- Prescription drug-price transparency.
- Telemedicine.

With “AMA Advocacy Update,” you can get exclusive advocacy news and information on key national and state issues impacting physicians, patients and the health care environment.