4 reasons why this D.C. conference is a must for medical students

FEB 14, 2023

Brendan Murphy
Senior News Writer

Medical students will, by definition, shape the future of medicine. For the first time in three years, the upcoming AMA Medical Student Advocacy Conference (MAC) will be held in person.

The conference offers physicians-in-training the opportunity to do so before they start practicing medicine by meeting face to face with members of Congress and their staffers to advocate on issues directly affecting their future patients.

The conference, which takes place March 2–3, gives medical students a remarkable opportunity to advocate for the future of medicine by:

- Attending training on how to be a public health advocate.
- Learning about issues affecting medical students.
- Meeting with their local legislators on Capitol Hill.

Learn more and register now for the 2023 AMA Medical Student Advocacy Conference.

Here are four other big reasons why medical students should head to Washington to attend the conference.

**Face time and networking**

For the first time in three years, the conference will be held in-person. That allows medical students to meet face to face with members of Congress and their staffers.
Now the AMA Government Relations and Advocacy Fellow, Kylee Borger attended the last in-person MAC event in March 2020, just before the global pandemic forced the 2021 and 2022 events to go virtual.

“Returning to attending MAC in-person allows us to communicate more effectively with staff in congressional offices since we can see and respond to body language that may have been missed in a virtual meeting,” Borger said.

“We also can have conversations with our fellow medical student attendees in between meetings. These conversations are great networking and learning opportunities,” she added. “You can share with colleagues about how you and they are being successful advocates in your communities and share things you both have learned in the process.”

**Grow as an advocate**

Ahead of their visits with the nation’s lawmakers, the AMA Medical Student Advocacy Conference will feature sessions that help hone their ability to advocate and lobby effectively.

“Attending MAC helps you grow as an advocate by giving you the tools on what to say and how to say it to be the most effective when you meet with your representatives,” Borger said.

Some key tips for those interactions with lawmakers (PDF) include understanding where your expertise as an advocate lies and seeking guidance from physicians who have worked as physician lobbyists.
Target key issues

As has been the case in previous versions of the event, medical students attending the 2023 AMA Medical Student Advocacy Conference will have a few key issues on their radar.

This year, the focus is on these three issues.

**Scope of practice**, promoting federal policies that preserve physician-led teams as the primary way to provide high-quality patient care. Fighting scope creep is a critical component of the AMA Recovery Plan for America’s Physicians.

Learn more about why the AMA opposes federal legislation that expands health care provider scope of practice (PDF).

**Graduate medical education (GME) funding**, supporting more GME (PDF) to ensure the number of physicians trained today will be sufficient to treat the expand, aging population of tomorrow.

**Conrad 30**, supporting reauthorization of the Conrad 30 program for noncitizen physicians, which makes targeted improvements so that rural and underserved communities continue to have access to a physician. Learn more about the AMA’s advocacy on Conrad 30 and other visa and green-card issues.

The system needs fixing

The challenges facing health care’s future make advocacy less of an optional endeavor, according to Borger.

“Students should attend MAC because advocacy is essential to improving patient care and access,” Borger said. “If we do not incorporate advocacy into our medical practice, as medical students and as future physicians, we can only work within the broken health care system as it exists—and are ignoring the possibility of fixing it to improve patient access, health care affordability, health equity and limitless facets of the art and science of medicine.”

Visit AMA Advocacy in Action to find out what's at stake in fighting scope creep, reforming Medicare payment, supporting telehealth and other advocacy priorities the AMA is actively working on.