



AMA-MSS COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT IDEA BOOK



Welcome! The American Medical Association Medical Student Section community service project idea book is designed to help your school organize a recruitment, education, community service or National Service Project event that can be funded by a grant from the AMA. This booklet offers information on planning various types of activities, applying for section involvement grants, and involving the press and local media to advertise your event.

Table of contents

AMA Medical Student Section National Service Project 2014–2016	pg. 1
Introduction to the AMA “Improving Health Outcomes” initiative	pg. 1
Guidelines for successful project planning	pg. 2
Funding your community service event: Section involvement grants	pg. 3–4
Getting the media involved	pg. 5–8
Advertising at your school: Flier template	pg. 9

National Service Project event examples:

- Healthy eating and diabetes support group	pg. 10
- Diabetes coaches	pg. 11
- Halloween for diabetic kids	pg. 11
- Healthy Halloween carnival	pg. 12
- Community health screening	pg. 12
- Geriatric outreach	pg. 12

Recruitment event examples:

- AMA: From student to physician	pg. 13
- Orientation week recruitment dinner	pg. 14
- “Learn more about your medical school” scavenger hunt	pg. 14-15

- Specialty speed dating pg. 15
- How to succeed in medical school pg. 15

Community service event examples:

- Doctors Back to School™ pg. 16
- Pediatric health fair pg. 16-17
- Adolescent outreach pg. 17
- Youth nutrition and exercise programming pg. 18
- Mini-med school day pg. 18

Educational event examples:

- GME letter writing campaign pg. 19
- Step into Step 1 pg. 19
- Skills lab pg. 20
- Physician leaders panel pg. 20
- Health literacy education project pg. 21

AMA Medical Student Section National Service Project 2014–2016

Each local American Medical Association Medical Student Section (MSS) is encouraged to organize at least one National Service Project (NSP) event each academic year. Follow the tips below to plan a great NSP event. Every two years, the AMA-MSS selects a National Service Project theme around which to focus its community service activities. “Improving Health Outcomes Together” was selected as the [NSP theme for 2014–2016](#).

Improving Health Outcomes Together

The current [NSP](#) theme, Improving Health Outcomes Together, is broad enough to incorporate the AMA’s strategic focus on diabetes prevention and cardiovascular health while also incorporating healthy lifestyles. The inclusion of the word “together” suggests that physicians will better improve health outcomes if they work *together* with patients (relationship-centered care) and within health care teams (inter-professional team-based care). The word “together” also implies that addressing more than one aspect of well-being and tackling diseases often found together (e.g., type 2 diabetes, heart disease, obesity) will make for better health outcomes.

Introduction to the AMA “Improving Health Outcomes” initiative

Committed to answering the national imperative to measurably improve the health of the nation, the AMA, through its “Improving Health Outcomes” initiative, is tackling two of the nation’s most prevalent issues: Cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

With work already underway across organized medicine, the private/public sector, the federal government and local communities, the AMA is adding its resources and skill in orchestrating effective collaborative efforts to help tackle these two important, widespread disease conditions.

Through its initiative, the AMA is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the YMCA of the USA to reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes, as well as two groups affiliated with Johns Hopkins Medicine—the Armstrong Institute for Patient Safety and Quality and the Johns Hopkins Center to Eliminate Cardiovascular Health Disparities—to improve blood pressure control in people with hypertension, a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

We invite you to learn more about the AMA’s efforts to [improve health outcomes](#).

Guidelines for successful project planning

You are taking the first step toward choosing, planning and implementing a successful project by reading the information contained in this guide. Before deciding on a course of action, here are a few things you'll want to consider:

- Determine a comfortable level of involvement. Not every effort has to be a multi-phased program. Sometimes even the smallest amount of funds, expertise or resources can have a large impact.
- Assess community needs. Because your time and resources—and those of your fellow AMA-MSS members—are extremely valuable, your next step in planning a health education program or service project is to determine what issues need to be addressed. Besides considering your community needs, you will also want to consider what other groups are doing, and how you can fill in gaps between the needs and the services that exist in your community.
- Target your audience. For projects geared toward awareness or education, think about your audience and how you'll reach them most effectively, whether through information posted in public places, physicians' offices, the hospital, local schools or through your local media.
- Consider contacting local health care professions schools or programs; they may be interested in collaborating and providing additional volunteers for experience serving the public.

Events are divided into four categories:

1. **National Service Project events** – These must focus on the AMA's current NSP theme. For 2014–2016, "Improving Health Outcomes Together" is the theme that your event must support. This program emphasizes improving health outcomes by focusing on diabetes prevention and cardiovascular health while also incorporating healthy lifestyles.

Examples: Provide health screenings in the local community, taking blood pressure, glucose checks, and measuring weight and BMI or purchasing blood pressure cuffs for use in hypertension screenings.

2. **Recruitment events** – Educate your peers about the importance of AMA membership and opportunities for medical students within the AMA-MSS. Recruitment events are most beneficial at the beginning of the school year. At these events AMA information is presented, and AMA members from your local section share how the AMA contributes to their medical school experiences and professional growth.

Examples: Socials, BBQs, study sessions, upperclassmen panels and member-bring-a-nonmember activities.

3. **Education events** – The AMA-MSS encourages local sections to provide individual development opportunities for their members. These grants focus on events that help to

develop local sections and enhance medical school curriculum, such as educational sessions, workshops, retreats and lunchtime seminars on various topics.

Examples: Panel discussions with resident physicians, specialty-speed dating, speakers on health policy or ethics.

4. **Community service events** – The AMA and AMA-MSS have many [policies](#) that address topics that are relevant to public health, medical education, medical practice, patient safety, community outreach and more.

Examples: Doctors Back to School™ program; recycling drive for textbooks or supplies; organizing a workshop to train medical students on health and/or vision screenings so that they can do screenings in the community throughout the year; or planting a garden in a local community.

Something to consider:

- Creating a t-shirt for your event? Use the AMA [t-shirt template](#) and [flier](#).

Note: Any other use of the AMA logo must be approved by the AMA.

There are **lots** of different ways that you can use a grant—you can tailor it to the needs of your project. Get creative and have some fun while helping others and showing everyone that your school and the AMA are effective and engaged.

You can also contact the [AMA-MSS](#) for more information.

Funding your community service event

Apply for an AMA-MSS Section Involvement Grant (SIG). Local sections are eligible to receive up to \$1,000 per academic year, with a maximum of \$500 to support recruitment and \$500 to support education, community service and National Service Project (NSP) events. Grant awards generally range from \$150 to \$500 per event, so we encourage you to organize several projects throughout the year. Local sections are strongly encouraged to use the grants as *seed money* to support a project that has start-up costs, but can then be maintained for little or no money. Please remember that funding is not guaranteed, and each event will be evaluated on an individual basis.

You can use the [AMA Policy Finder](#) and the [AMA-MSS Digest of Policy Actions](#) for help completing the “Supporting AMA Policy” section of your application.

Register your event. [SIG](#) provides the opportunity for recap forms to be submitted for all section events, including those that did not request or require SIG funding. All events submitted through the recap form are eligible for the “Event of the month” nomination. If you are planning an [NSP](#) event, please indicate “NSP” as your “event type” on the SIG application so that we can publicize it on our Web page. Your event could very well serve as an example for others to replicate.

Getting the media involved

Timeline: How to prepare for an event with the media

Two weeks before the event

- Prepare media advisory and press release.
- Designate a media contact to whom reporters can speak about your event and who can fulfill interview requests.
- Create a media list, choosing the media outlets and specific reporters you will contact about the event.

5–7 days before the event

- Send out a media advisory to the media outlets and reporters you would like to attend your event or cover your story. Email is generally the most effective way to reach the media.

2–3 days before the event

- Your designated media contact should contact media outlets directly, reminding them about your event and offering a brief explanation as to why you think they should cover your event. For example, *“Hi, I’m Jane Smith, and I am calling to make sure you received the media advisory I emailed you about the medical student event on Friday. I think it will make a great story because medical students will be teaching local grade school students how to prevent the spread of influenza.”*

Day of event

- Prepare a media-friendly event:
 - Always have copies of your press release on hand for reporters who attend.
 - If you expect television cameras, set up a specific area for them with electrical outlets, a multiple input box (a.k.a., “mult box”) and a clear line of sight.

Immediately after the event

- Revise the previously created press release with finalized information regarding the event, including relevant quotes from participants and planners regarding the event’s purpose, success and potential impact. Send this follow-up release to all media outlets on your media list.

After the event

- Your designated media contact should follow up appropriately with interested media.

The AMA-MSS has a Facebook page where you can promote your event before and after. Check out some [social media tips and best practices](#).

PRESS RELEASE (Template)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

«DATE»

Contact: «NAME, TITLE, PHONE, EMAIL»

LOCAL MEDICAL STUDENTS AND AMA MEMBERS FROM «SCHOOL» HOST «EVENT»

Local medical students and student members of the American Medical Association from «SCHOOL» hosted «EVENT TITLE» to «REASON FOR HOLDING EVENT».

«One or two sentences with event specifics.»

As future physicians, medical students have a unique platform from which they «finish this sentence with an argument about why medical students have a unique view about the issue».

«One or two paragraphs giving background on the issue. Remember that reporters may not know everything about what you are doing or why you are doing it; use these paragraphs to convey the *importance* and *relevancy* of your event. Showing relevance is extremely important in getting interest in the story and having it published.»

«If you can find a quote about the background of the issue *from a reliable source*, such as a medical school dean or a leader of organized medicine, include that here.»

«If this is primarily an AMA-MSS event, include the following paragraph.»

With more than 54,000 members, the AMA Medical Student Section (MSS) is the largest and most influential organization of medical students in the country. The AMA-MSS is dedicated to representing medical students, improving medical education, developing leadership and promoting activism for the health of America. Visit ama-assn.org/go/mss for more information on the AMA-MSS.

PRESS RELEASE (Example)
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 12, 2015

New AMA, CDC Initiative Aims to “Prevent Diabetes STAT”

Leading voices in health care launch urgent effort to reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes, one of nation’s most debilitating chronic diseases

Chicago – With more than 86 million Americans living with prediabetes and nearly 90 percent of them unaware of it, the American Medical Association (AMA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today announced that they have joined forces to take urgent action to [Prevent Diabetes STAT](#) and are urging others to join in this critical effort.

Prevent Diabetes STAT: Screen, Test, Act - Today™, is a multi-year initiative that expands on the robust work each organization has already begun to reach more Americans with prediabetes and stop the progression to type 2 diabetes, one of the nation’s most debilitating chronic diseases. Through this initiative, the AMA and CDC are sounding an alarm and shining a light on prediabetes as a critical and serious medical condition.

“It’s time that the nation comes together to take immediate action to help prevent diabetes before it starts,” said AMA President Robert M. Wah, M.D. “Type 2 diabetes is one of our nation’s leading causes of suffering and death—with one out of three people at risk of developing the disease in their lifetime. To address and reverse this alarming national trend, America needs frontline physicians and other health care professionals as well as key stakeholders such as employers, insurers, and community organizations to mobilize and create stronger linkages between the care delivery system, our communities, and the patients we serve.”

“The time to act is now. We need a national, concerted effort to prevent additional cases of type 2 diabetes in our nation – and we need it now,” said Ann Albright, Ph.D., R.D., director of [CDC’s Division of Diabetes Translation](#). “We have the scientific evidence and we’ve built the infrastructure to do something about it, but far too few people know they have prediabetes and that they can take action to prevent or delay developing type 2 diabetes.”

People with prediabetes have higher-than-normal blood glucose levels but not high enough yet to be considered type 2 diabetes. Research shows that 15 percent to 30 percent of overweight

people with prediabetes will develop type 2 diabetes within five years unless they lose weight through healthy eating and increased physical activity.

As an immediate result of this partnership, the AMA and CDC have co-developed a [toolkit](#) to serve as a guide for physicians and other health care providers on the best methods to screen and refer high-risk patients to diabetes prevention programs in their communities. The toolkit along with additional information on how physicians and other key stakeholders can *Prevent Diabetes STAT* is available [online](#). There is also an online screening tool for patients at www.preventdiabetesstat.org to help them determine their risk for type 2 diabetes.

“This initiative is also about empowering patients to take control of their health,” said Dr. Wah. “It starts with knowing your risk factors.”

Over the past two years, both the CDC and the AMA have been laying the groundwork for this national effort. In 2012, the CDC launched its [National Diabetes Prevention Program \(National DPP\)](#) based on [research](#) led by the National Institutes of Health, which showed that high-risk individuals who participated in lifestyle change programs, like those recognized by the CDC, saw a significant reduction in the incidence of type 2 diabetes. Today, there are more than 500 of these programs across the country, including online options.

The AMA launched its [Improving Health Outcomes initiative](#) in 2013 aimed at preventing both type 2 diabetes and heart disease. That work includes a partnership with the YMCA of the USA to increase the number of physicians who screen patients for prediabetes and refer them to diabetes prevention programs offered by local YMCAs that are part of the CDC’s recognition program. This joint effort included 11 physician practice pilot sites in four states, where care teams helped to inform the development of the AMA and CDC’s toolkit. In the coming months, the AMA will be identifying states in which to strengthen the linkages between the clinical care setting and communities to reduce the incidence of diabetes.

“Our health care system simply cannot sustain the continued increases in the number of people developing diabetes,” said Dr. Albright. “Screening, testing and referring people at risk for type 2 diabetes to evidence-based lifestyle change programs are critical to preventing or delaying new cases of type 2 diabetes.”

“Long-term, we are confident that this important and necessary work will improve health outcomes and reduce the staggering burden associated with the public health epidemic of type 2 diabetes,” said Dr. Wah.

Follow our social movement to *Prevent Diabetes STAT* on Twitter at [#PreventDiabetesSTAT](#).

<Medical school>

AMA student section

Join us!

<Event title>

<Date>

<Time>

<Location>

<Additional information>

Join your fellow medical students and learn why more than 54,000 are members of the **American Medical Association!**



National Service Project: Event examples

Type of event: Healthy eating and prediabetes support group

Description

One-in-three U.S. adults has prediabetes, a condition in which blood sugar is higher than normal but not yet in the diabetic range. Those with prediabetes are at greatly increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. One-in-three adults could have diabetes by 2050 if current trends continue. The goal of the healthy eating and diabetes support group is to empower people and families dealing with diabetes to make changes in their lives through community-led, family-oriented support groups and workshops that promote healthy lifestyles, provide accurate information, create *institutional change* and connect members to local resources.

Medical students will establish accountability partners with members to help set personal goals, build confidence to succeed in managing diabetes, and provide accurate information on home remedies and alternative interventions. Volunteers will have the chance to learn more about diabetes, discuss healthy lifestyle changes and help attendees set personal goals during guest speaker sessions. They will also have the opportunity to make a dish to share at the cooking demonstration sessions where they get to present a recipe that is healthy, easy and affordable to cook.

The “Healthy eating and prediabetes support group” will be a unique health outreach and community service opportunity for American Medical Association members who want direct patient experience in an open, community setting. It will also seek to determine and examine the barriers that exist in accessing quality care and management and finding ways to motivate sustainable habits of health.

Target audience

Minority populated areas/neighborhoods

Venue

Church or community center

* Consider partnering with a church or community center in areas with a predominantly minority population. This program could be offered every other weekend for six months.

Tip: medical students can use informational materials on healthy diet, physical activity, and lifestyle change programs available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the AMA to guide support group participants in making the changes necessary to lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, including information about joining local CDC-recognized diabetes programs.

You can also use the sites of your clerkships to convene support group meetings for patients and families interested in learning more about diabetes prevention.

Type of event: Health coaches

Description

An eight-week program in which medical students and residents will teach high school students how to coach someone with: diabetes, prediabetes, concern about getting diabetes, concerns about being overweight or a desire to know more about staying healthy. A group of 20 high school students will be selected from a local high school. Medical students and residents will lead afterschool sessions to teach the selected students to coach a family member or friend on the topics listed above.

Target audience

Diabetic adolescents and their families

Venue

Local high school

Tip: You can also incorporate motivational interviewing into the event by using informational materials on healthy diet, physical activity and lifestyle change programs available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Medical Association.

Type of event: Halloween for diabetic kids

Description

Most kids love Halloween. However, it's a different story for families with diabetic children. For them, the spookiness of the holiday is less associated with ghosts and goblins and more with candy treats. The local section will be putting together and passing out *candy-free* Halloween surprises to children with type 1 diabetes in the diabetics clinic. There will also be games, face painting and a costume competition. Through this project, we will also be educating medical students about the special needs of diabetic children and helping them see some of the potential substitutions that can be made to accommodate for these patients without sacrificing the fun.

This project puts advocacy in action through education and hands-on patient outreach. Collaboration with other student groups and the fun holiday theme will attract both student volunteers eager to get involved and media attention, leading to great publicity for the involved organizations.

Target audience

Diabetic children and their families

Venue

Local diabetic clinic/hospital

Type of event: Healthy Halloween carnival

Description

This event is a Halloween carnival for patients of the local children's hospital. Many of these patients will be confined to the hospital and unable to enjoy the Halloween festivities that many of us enjoyed as children. While the event is held for the pediatric patients, the doctors, nurses and other hospital staff are encouraged to participate. The lobby of the hospital will be transformed with Halloween decorations and holiday-themed carnival games. There will be many booths filled with crafts, games, competitions and prizes supervised by students. Halloween is often centered on candy, so promote healthier alternatives by providing fruits, vegetables, drinks and snacks that have more nutritional value for the children.

This event allows students to interact with both patients and physicians in a nonclinical setting. Members of the local section are involved in the planning, decorating and participation prior to and during the carnival. Nonmembers are also encouraged to participate as this is promoted as a school-wide event. Many students often think of the American Medical Association as solely a political organization and are unaware of its vast reach into community work—this event will hopefully shed light on the many strengths of the organization.

Target audience

Diabetic children restricted to a hospital.

Venue

Children's hospital

Type of event: Community health screening

Description

Provide community health screenings to the community—taking blood pressure, glucose checks, vision checks, and checking weight and BMI. Plan on working with local primary care physicians who can help by providing their expertise and assistance. A good goal is to screen about 100 community members for a variety of primary care issues.

Target audience

Individuals over the age of 60

Venue

This event could be held at independent living communities or other community centers that serve an elderly population. A local grocery store or mall may also be a good location.

Type of event: Geriatric outreach

Description

The geriatric outreach program aims to promote healthy behaviors and lifestyles in aging populations to decrease the impact of chronic disease processes. Several different *stations* are organized with medical student and physician volunteers. When participants enter the room, they are encouraged to visit each station and talk with each set of medical students/physicians. Each station covers a specific subject pertinent to the population at hand, including diabetes and cardiovascular health. Other ideas include memory games and nutrition.

Target audience

Individuals over the age of 60

Venue

This event could be held at independent living communities or other community centers that serve an elderly population.

Recruitment: Event examples

Type of event: AMA—from student to physician

Description

One of the distinguishing factors about the AMA is that you can join as a medical student, stay active as a resident, and continue your involvement all the way through your career as a physician. The sectioned structure of the AMA thus provides many unique opportunities for students in the AMA-MSS. At the event there will be local members of the AMA Resident and Fellow Section (RFS) and the AMA Young Physicians Section (YPS) to speak about their involvement in the AMA. Specifically, the invited members will talk about how the AMA has tied into their career growth—from the earliest stages as a medical student to the transition into residency and the future as an established attending. Dinner will be served. The AMA-RFS and AMA-YPS members are local members who are also involved in the county and state societies. Student will be encouraged to take on active roles at county and state levels.

Target audience

Since this event applies to medical students at every stage in their education, the entire student body will be invited. Nonmembers will learn about the various ways they can begin to get involved, and they will also learn how vast the benefits of AMA membership are. Inactive members will discover that the benefits of AMA membership extend beyond the free flashcards and beyond medical school, and they will be motivated to reactivate their membership and continue their involvement as their careers progress. Because the speakers are involved locally, student members and nonmembers will learn about the county and state societies and be encouraged to increase their involvement at local levels.

Venue

On-campus

Type of event: Orientation week recruitment dinner

Description

This event should be held on the first night of orientation week for the incoming first-year medical students. Students will be served dinner and beverages at the county medical society, where they will have the opportunity to register for the AMA and medical society memberships. At this event the benefits of an AMA membership will be described to them by the section's AMA Medical Student Section Outreach Program (MSSOP) Recruiter, and they will be provided with promotional materials provided by the AMA if they become a member.

It is effective to hold this event before the school's orientation fair, in order to more positively impact recruitment.

Target audience

Incoming medical students (M1s) or students who are not aware of the AMA

Venue

On-campus or medical society

Type of event: “Learn more about your medical school” scavenger hunt

Description

A scavenger hunt will be organized for the incoming first-year medical students during their orientation week. The purpose of the event will be to: recruit new members, advertise the organization, and better assimilate the new student body with the medical school community. Each team must complete a variety of tasks in order to complete the hunt. All of the tasks must be completed within the campus and in a specific time frame. Some of the tasks include: (1) take a picture of your team with the dean; (2) in what year was the school founded?; (3) find an upper classman pursuing a DO/PhD or MD/PhD and have them answer questions about dual-degree programs; and (4) create other questions based on information about the AMA and the medical profession.

This event will allow the new students to become better acquainted with the medical school, but also encourage teamwork and effective communication. By including first-year medical students, faculty and upper classmen, it will create a collaborative event. This could be the first time they will be exposed to the AMA on-campus. A brief overview and background on the organization should be provided—be sure to allow students to ask questions.

Target audience

M1s and M2s (plan to hold this event during your school's orientation week program)

Venue

On-campus

Type of event: AMA specialty speed dating

Description

Based on a speed dating format, this AMA event is designed to engage pre-clinical students by providing a quick overview of many different specialties to keep in mind as they head into M3 rotations to begin honing in on their field of choice upon graduation. The event will also welcome M3s with rotation experience to make a final resolution on what fields to apply to as the ERAS application opens up just a few months from the event.

Approximately 30 attending physicians representing a wide range of specialties—from radiology to internal medicine to surgery—will be invited to meet with students in a rotating speed-dating structure. Students will have the opportunity to engage with physicians for five minutes at a time to gain a quick glimpse into each field, exchange business cards and get pertinent questions about each specialty answered.

Target audience

M1s and M2s (plan to hold this event during your school's orientation week program)

Venue

On-campus

Type of event: How to succeed in medical school

Description

Invite first- and second-year medical students to come together for a panel discussion or dinner to learn about the AMA and hear tips to follow in medical school from their peers. Plan on having the participants break into small groups so that individual students are able to talk with each other and learn tips and suggestions for mastering their first year.

Target audience

M1s and M2s

Venue

On-campus

Community service: Event examples

Type of event: [Doctors Back to School™](#)

Description

Like many physicians, you may be practicing medicine today because you knew someone who inspired you to follow that path. The goal of the program is to give children from underrepresented minority groups a better idea of what doctors do and to help them recognize that they too can become successful members of the profession. The AMA Minority Affairs Section has created the [Doctors Back to School Kit](#) with tips to help you get started.

Target audience

Children from underrepresented minority groups

Venue

Local school or community organization

Type of event: Pediatric health fair

Description

There are many things you can do to organize a health fair to address the specific needs of children. Make sure your topics are age-appropriate for the population you are targeting and try to make stations as interactive as possible to keep the kids engaged. Some ideas for stations at a pediatric health fair are:

- **Healthy hand hygiene**—using a product that glows under a black light gives students a great visual to show the importance of proper hand washing
- **Safety** information on correct car seat, seat belt and bicycle helmet use
- **Risky behavior avoidance**—education on the harmful effects of smoking, alcohol abuse and not using sunscreen; “Tar Wars” is a national program with a curriculum filled with ideas on interactive ways to discuss tobacco use with children: aafp.org/patient-care/public-health/tobacco-cessation/tar-wars.html
- **Asthma awareness**—discussing triggers, demonstrating how to use an inhaler
- **Nutrition**—healthy meal and snack examples; visual demo comparing the amount of sugar in juices, sodas, chocolate milk, water; or build-your-own plate for healthy portions (MyPlate)
- **Exercise booth**—keep things fun with dancing, yoga, outside activities
- **How to become a doctor**—have a booth where kids who are interested in a career in medicine can speak with real live medical students and learn what it takes (interests, training, skills) to become a doctor

Target audience

Children, can be tailored to a variety of age groups

Venue

Local school, afterschool program or community organization

Type of event: Adolescent outreach**Description**

Outreach to adolescents can have a particularly profound impact. This project should focus on education about health topics that are specific to adolescents, guidance on how to apply to college or insight into what it is like to be a doctor. Possible projects include the following:

Smoking cessation/alcohol avoidance

- Educate teenagers on the dangers of smoking and alcohol use
- Provide contact information for local smoking cessation resources as well as places that teens can get help with alcohol addiction
- Present several methods of smoking cessation that include: smoking cessation counseling, smoking cessation support via text messaging (teen.smokefree.gov/) and medications (emphasize that their doctor can be an important resource to help them quit and that a combination approach is more effective)
- Give examples of the dangers of smoking and alcohol use (cancer, stroke, liver disease, etc.); discuss how the onset of these diseases is often much earlier in smokers/drinkers than in other individuals
- Provide education about the pros and cons of electronic cigarette use

Dangers of texting while driving

- Educate students on the risk and dangers involved with the use of handheld devices while driving; define improper use of technology and give examples
- Open a discussion: quiz students on what they think is the acceptable and unacceptable use of technology on the road
- Invite health staff from local trauma centers or persons from the community who can give first-hand examples of incidences where texting and driving has led to undesirable outcomes
- Relay strategies for avoiding handheld technology use while driving; help students come up with plans for avoiding this behavior

Target audience

Teenagers/adolescents in your local community

Venue

Local high school or other facilities that are easily accessible to adolescents

Type of event: Youth nutrition and exercise programming

Description

Childhood obesity continues to be a serious public health concern in the United States. By collaborating with elementary and middle schools, medical students can teach local children the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle while they are young. Lead a health lesson every other week, focusing on a different aspect of health. Consider expanding the curriculum across several classes or across several schools in your region and give a *Healthiest Class Award* to add a competitive element.

Here are some ideas and tips for lesson topics:

- **Exercise and fitness**
 - If you decide to employ “Counting Our Steps” competition, pass out pedometers
 - Consider having the lesson outside to encourage active learning
- **Nutrition for a healthy, balanced diet**
 - Use My Plate as a guide (myplate.gov)
 - Consider including a how-to-make-a-healthy-breakfast workshop
- **Sports physicals** with the involvement of local physicians/medical personnel—i.e., heart, lung and eye exams (be sure to have physical evaluation sheets the physicians can sign as well as different sized blood pressure cuffs if you’ll be talking to older/bigger kids)
- **Street-smart habits**
 - Educate students how to exercise safely—e.g., wearing helmets, using sidewalks, urban environment considerations, etc. (This type of awareness-building is especially important in urban communities.)
 - Collaborating with public health and safety officials (gym trainers, police officers, community guards, etc.) can shed light on this complex topic
- **Field day**
 - Collaborate with a local gym or sports team to show children how to put what they learned in the classroom into practice in real life

Target audience

Children in the community—collaboration with a local elementary or middle school (Consider hosting an event after school so parents and caregivers can attend too.)

Venue

School classroom for lessons; medical school or any other large, community-accessible facility for weekend events, including a park or other safe outdoor environment (optional)

Educational: Event examples

Type of event: GME letter writing campaign

Description

An important focus of the AMA-MSS is the “[SaveGME](#)” campaign, which features a grassroots-level letter writing campaign springing from students of the nation’s medical schools. The letters (pre-drafted letters from the [SaveGME.org](#) website) will be from medical students detailing the economic numbers and its emotional appeal. The letters will be printed out so everyone associated with the medical school can sign, then the letters will be mailed to local members of Congress. Members of Congress have a voice on the House Ways and Means Committee, a committee that can affect change with the proposed \$11 billion GME funding cuts.

One of the biggest selling points of the AMA is its access and effectiveness as a legislative advocacy organization. Having a large campus-wide grassroots advocacy event specifically trained on saving the future career potential of medical students will demonstrate how the AMA, on both a local and national scale, gives a powerful voice to medical students, their issues and their future.

Target audience

Medical school campus and members of Congress

Venue

On-campus

Type of event: Step into Step 1

Description

This event will be a panel discussion where four to six M3s and M4s will reflect on their experience with Step 1 for the benefit of M1s and M2s. This is an event that is easy to organize and very much needed by our student body, and it is quite appropriate that the AMA deliver such an opportunity. This will provide a relevant event to medical students, thereby filling a void and attracting members to appreciate the many resources of the AMA.

Target Audience

First- and second-year medical students

Venue

On-campus

Type of event: Skills lab

Description

The *skills lab* will allow first- and second-year students to learn the skills of suturing, intubation, drawing blood, and starting an intravenous access line. In addition the students will see how a cricothyroidotomy is done. Reach out to area physicians who are experts to sign up to teach students these skills. This can be a great event for students to meet area physicians outside of the hospital and prepare them for their clinical rotations. At the beginning of the event, a section representative will briefly talk about the AMA and how to join.

Target Audience

First- and second-year medical students

Venue

On-campus

Type of event: Physician leaders panel

Description

The physician leaders panel is intended to expose fellow students and AMA-MSS members to influential physicians who have had a hand in shaping medical policy, and who have a continual track record of contributing to the betterment of the profession and patients. These physicians are invited to speak about how they arrived at their present position professionally, how other health care providers influenced them, and where they see the medical profession moving in the future. The panel presentation will be followed by an informal question-and-answer session.

The event will answer a very common question that students new to organized medicine have: When I get involved, how can I make a difference outside of the classroom? By having our invited panel speak about opportunities within the AMA that helped them get to where they are today, we want to plant the seeds of future involvement, tying it to the students' own professional development. Showing that students truly can have a voice during their training encourages individuals to join and make a difference.

Target audience

First- and second-year medical students

Venue

On-campus

Type of event: Health literacy education project

Description

The AMA Foundation has created a package of educational materials aimed at increasing provider awareness of health literacy and empowering both physicians and patients to address gaps in patient health literacy.

Health literacy is the ability to obtain process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions and follow instructions for treatment.

Low health literacy has been linked to poor health outcomes, such as higher rates of hospitalization and less frequent use of preventive services. Individuals with limited health literacy incur medical expenses that are up to four times greater than patients with adequate literacy skills, costing the health care system billions of dollars every year in unnecessary doctor visits and hospital stays.

Target audience

Fellow medical students, physicians and other practitioners, local community clinics

Venue

Health literacy education campaign could be held at medical school events, community health clinics or physicians' offices

Supplies

The following resources are available to student organizations. Organizations are eligible to apply for a grant of 20 or more AMA "Health literacy educational toolkits" and any number of additional resources. These resources will be shipped free of charge by the AMA Foundation.

For more information, see "[What are the resources and how do we use them?.](#)" a helpful document created by the AMA-MSS Committee on Global and Public Health. The committee has also created a [PowerPoint presentation](#) that can be adapted and used at educational events.

Please email mss@ama-assn.org to request kits.