What’s happening in 2018?
Top AMA advocacy issues

PROTECTING ACCESS TO COVERAGE

Why it’s important: Patients without health insurance coverage live sicker and die younger; however, passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has reduced the number of uninsured Americans by almost half. Medicaid is a vital safety net program that helps ensure the most vulnerable patients are able to access needed health care services.

What we’re doing about it:
• Advocating to retain gains made by the ACA in coverage and preserving patient protections like the ban on pre-existing condition exclusions
• Working to stabilize the individual insurance market and improve the affordability of premiums and copayments
• Maintaining the strength of safety net programs like Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
• Advocating to policymakers on state and federal levels to adequately fund Medicaid and ensure physician payment rates are sufficient to ensure meaningful access to care
• Promoting Medicaid expansion to cover the uninsured
• Providing patient and physician advocates with the latest information and opportunities to take action in defense of their care

Get involved/learn more:
ama-assn.org/delivering-care/expanding-health-insurance-coverage-choice
ama-assn.org/practice-management/strengthening-medicaid
patientsbeforepolitics.org

MEDICARE PHYSICIAN PAYMENT REFORM

Why it’s important: Medicare and other insurers are making significant changes in physician payment systems, many of which hold promise to provide better support for coordinated, high-value care.

What we’re doing about it:
• Advocating for payment system changes that support improvements in care rather than simply add new administrative burdens
• Working to simplify administrative requirements in payment models to improve professional satisfaction
• Expanding payment model options for physicians in all specialties
• Developing simple, straightforward educational material to help physicians succeed under new payment models

Get involved/learn more:
ama-assn.org/medicare-payment
TELEMEDICINE
Why it’s important: Digital health technology is changing the way physicians practice medicine and is improving public health.

What we’re doing about it:
• Modernizing state medical practice acts to lay the groundwork for adoption of telemedicine
• Promoting model legislation to ensure physicians are paid for the care they provide via telemedicine
• Facilitating license portability through support of the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact

Get involved/learn more: ama-assn.org/delivering-care/telemedicine-mobile-apps

INSURER ISSUES
Why it’s important: With increasing concentration in markets, payers continue to create short-sighted policies that do not consider the overall well-being of patients, undercut physicians' ability to practice medicine and create waste in the system.

What we’re doing about it:
• Creating state legislative campaigns to address insurer practices and working with medical associations to enact new rules
• Advocating that regulators support and enforce strong policy
• Engaging with stakeholders outside of medicine to build broad coalitions to more effectively advocate for our objectives and counter payers' objectives when they don’t benefit patients

Get involved/learn more: ama-assn.org/advocacy-resource-center

ENDING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Why it’s important: To end the opioid epidemic, patients need increased access to multidisciplinary pain care, as well as treatment for substance use disorders.

What we’re doing about it:
• Advocating to policymakers and payers to end prior authorization for medication-assisted treatment
• Working with payers to remove barriers to multidisciplinary pain care
• Providing physicians with specialty-specific educational resources on safe opioid prescribing and treatment
• Advocating for expanding access and coverage for treatment of substance use disorder

Get involved/learn more: end-opioid-epidemic.org

DRUG PRICING TRANSPARENCY

Why it’s important: The cost of prescription medication increases year after year due to an opaque system that prioritizes company profits over patient health. This system creates unnecessary barriers, puts treatment out of reach and worsens public health.

What we’re doing about it:
• Encouraging patients and physicians to share their stories about the impact of drug pricing
• Urging state medical associations to advance AMA model legislation to increase transparency on payers, pharmacy benefit managers and pharmaceutical manufacturers

Get involved/learn more: truthinrx.org
PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

Why it’s important: Prior authorization (PA) is often inefficient and lacks transparency. This costs physician practices time and money—and may also have negative consequences for patient outcomes when treatment is delayed.

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<th>Care Delays Associated With PA</th>
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<td>9%</td>
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90% report care delays

What we’re doing about it:
- Pushing state legislation to address prior authorization and step therapy
- Advocating to national policymaking organizations (e.g., NCOIL, NAIC) for regulation of utilization management programs and entities
- Working to eliminate prior authorization requirements in alternative payment models involving financial risk for physicians
- Increasing awareness of the issue on our grassroots websites for patients and physicians

Get involved/learn more:
ama-assn.org/prior-auth | patientsactionnetwork.org
physiciansgrassrootsnetwork.org

REGULATORY RELIEF

Why it’s important: Physicians spend two hours completing administrative tasks for every hour spent with their patients. This reduces patient access to care, causes physician burnout, decreases professional satisfaction, and increases costs to the system.

What we’re doing about it:
- Working to eliminate, streamline, align and simplify the many federal rules and regulations imposed on physicians
- Improving the usability of electronic health records, making practice data available to physicians and holding vendors accountable for their products
- Creating clear and concise educational resources for physicians to improve their understanding of issues relevant to their practice, such as cybersecurity

Get involved/learn more:
ama-assn.org/delivering-care/cybersecurity

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Why it’s important: Patient health and well-being are threatened when health care practitioners are allowed to practice beyond their education, training or experience.

What we’re doing about it:
- Harnessing the power of organized medicine through the Scope of Practice Partnership
- Developing innovative advocacy tools and resources to deploy in state legislatures
- Compiling research on non-physician education, training and quality of care
- Giving grants to state medical associations to support scope of practice advocacy efforts

Get involved/learn more:
ama-assn.org/about/scope-practice