

2021 MEDICAL STUDENT ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

Welcome medical students,

Thank you for registering for the American Medical Association's 2021 AMA Medical Student Advocacy Conference! I know this year's conference looks quite a bit different compared to our usual in-person meeting, but I promise you that our 2021 conference will be full of engaging sessions, powerhouse speakers, and opportunities for you to lobby for crucial issues to health care and public health. You have taken the leap to show up and advocate on behalf of yourself, your student colleagues, your patients and the communities you serve—that in itself is an accomplishment.

COVID-19 has highlighted critical areas of improvement that are needed to ensure our nation develops an equitable, effective and robust public health and health care infrastructure. You all, my colleagues, are truly the future of medicine, health policy and health care innovation. Now, more than ever, physician and medical student representation in the policymaking process is critical to ensuring that our patients have access to affordable, quality health care.

Here is a list of our important conference resources:

- **Agenda:** Refer to the downloadable agenda for insight into the conference programming throughout March 4-5.
- **Advocacy 101 tips and action kit:** This guide from our AMA Medical Student Section Committee on Legislation and Advocacy will provide you with some helpful advocacy tips that will get you started on being an effective advocate and could be used throughout your advocacy journey.
- **Issue briefs:** Make sure to read up on the issues we will be advocating for on the Hill so you can be prepared for your visits on Friday, March 5, and never be afraid to ask a question! We will be tackling big issues this year including access to medical marijuana research, regulations around telehealth and combatting maternal mortality.
 - **Refer to the virtual leave behind.** It's exactly what it sounds like—it will contain the asks you will leave with your senators, representatives or their staff after dropping your health policy and advocacy knowledge.
- **Virtual Hill visit schedule:** Each one of you will receive your own individual virtual Capitol Hill visit schedules with the timing of your meetings with congressional staffers and how to access your meeting link.

In addition to the active role you will take during virtual Capitol Hill visits, I want to strongly express the importance of participating in our programming sessions on Thursday, which will include presentations, congressional addresses and pre-recorded educational events with leading experts on fundamental policy issues and processes. The lobbying training and issue education sessions are necessary to attend in order to train you, the students, who will be representing our great house of medicine!

In the words of the remarkable Nelson Mandela, “A fundamental concern for others in our individual and community lives would go a long way in making the world the better place we so passionately dreamt of. ... Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.”

The American Medical Association would love to celebrate your experiences and advocacy efforts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram using the hashtag [#MedStudentsAdvocate!](#) Be sure to tag the AMA on Twitter using [@amamedstudents](#) and [@amermedicalassn](#) and on Instagram using [@amermedicalassn](#). Check out the [social media resource](#) for tips to share your experience.

Now, let’s go out and be that great generation, the physician leaders of tomorrow, who will champion advocacy for our field of medicine, our patients and our communities. Together, the collective strength of our voices can move mountains and shape public policy for generations to come. Welcome to the 2021 AMA Medical Student Advocacy Conference. I look forward to celebrating all that you accomplish. If you need anything throughout the conference, my contact information is listed below in case there are any questions or concerns, or if you just want to discuss the conference.

Warmest regards,

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