



STATE ADVOCACY SUMMIT

2026 AGENDA

Jan. 8–10

Terranea Resort

Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.



**ACCESS MEETING
RESOURCES**

#StateAdvocacySummit



SHARE YOUR VOICE AT THE AMA STATE ADVOCACY SUMMIT!

Let your network know what you're learning, who you're meeting, and how you're helping shape the future of medicine. Post your favorite moments using **#StateAdvocacySummit** and tag the AMA:

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THU
JAN 8

5–6 p.m.

CONNECTION AND CONVERSATION

6–6:15 p.m.

CEO WELCOME

Presenter

John Whyte, MD, MPH

CEO and Executive Vice President, American Medical Association

6:15–7:30 p.m.

HARNESSING CHANGE: INNOVATION, AI AND THE FUTURE OF PATIENT CARE

Speaker



David Fajgenbaum, MD, MBA, MSc
Co-founder and President, Every Cure

Physician-scientist, bestselling author and co-founder of Every Cure, Dr. Fajgenbaum brings his unique perspective—as both a ground-breaking researcher and a patient advocate—to this important meeting and moment in time. His keynote will challenge

attendees to think boldly about what is possible when innovation is paired with advocacy, and when leaders across medicine, government, and technology come together to accelerate change.

Drawing on his own experience surviving a life-threatening disease through medical innovation and relentless collaboration, Dr. Fajgenbaum will explore how the convergence of scientific discovery, artificial intelligence and cross-sector partnerships is reshaping the future of patient care. With a focus on the opportunities—and responsibilities—of AI-driven breakthroughs, he will highlight how state and national leaders can help unlock cures, improve access and drive meaningful improvements in health outcomes for patients everywhere.

Question & answer session to follow

Cocktail reception immediately following

7:30–8:30 a.m.

NETWORKING BREAKFAST

8:30–8:45 a.m.

WELCOME AND MEETING KICK OFF

Speaker and lead moderator

David H. Aizuss, MD

Chair, Board of Trustees, AMA

8:45–9:30 a.m.

STATE POLICY AND POLITICS: A VIEW FROM THE STATEHOUSES

Speaker

Stacy Householder

Vice President, Leadership and International Programs,
National Conference of State Legislatures

This opening session will set the stage for this year's AMA State Advocacy Summit with a high-level look at the political and policy landscape in state legislatures nationwide.

Question & answer session to follow

9:30–10:30 a.m.

AI AND STATE POLICYMAKERS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEANINGFUL PROGRESS

Moderator

John Whyte, MD, MPH

CEO and Executive Vice President, AMA

Panelists

- **Jared Augenstein**
Senior Managing Director, Manatt Health
- **Michelle Mello, JD, PhD**
Professor of Law, Stanford Law School and Professor of Health Policy, Department of Health Policy, Stanford University School of Medicine
- **Mark Sendak, MD**
Co-founder and CEO, Vega Health

AI is the future of health care and is rapidly integrating into physicians' daily lives. From ambient scribes to transforming radiology and advancing precision medicine, every specialty and aspect of medicine is impacted by AI. The promise is immense in helping physicians provide high-quality care and alleviating some of their everyday burdens. In 2025 we saw continued interest among state lawmakers who are focused on ensuring that AI systems are safe, reliable, and effective. During this session we will discuss state action on AI, why it matters, and what we can expect in 2026.

Question & answer session to follow

10:30–10:45 a.m.

NETWORKING BREAK

10:45–11:30 a.m.

STATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL ACT—PART 1: MARKETPLACES

Moderator

Ellen Montz, PhD

Managing Director, Manatt Health

Panelists

- **Jessica Altman, MPP**
Executive Director, Covered California
- **Pat Kelly**
Executive Director, Your Health Idaho
- **Lucy Culp**
Executive Director, State Government Affairs,
Blood Cancer United

Marketplaces are facing a perfect storm of challenging policies that threaten to undermine the affordability of and enrollment in marketplace plans. The enactment of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act and the finalization of the 2026 marketplace integrity rule will threaten the long-term success of the marketplaces. During this session we will discuss some of the most impactful policy changes and, more importantly, the role of states and advocates in mitigating the impact of these changes and in protecting access to affordable coverage.

Question & answer session to follow

11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

STATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL ACT—PART 2: MEDICAID

Moderator

Ellen Montz, PhD

Managing Director, Manatt Health

Panelists

- **Drew Wilson, JD**
Medicaid Director, Delaware Department of Health and Social Services
- **Stacie Weeks, JD, MPH**
Director, Nevada Health Authority

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act introduces sweeping changes to Medicaid that will reshape coverage, financing and program design across the country. As states move to implement these provisions, physicians and medical associations will play a critical role in ensuring that patient access to care remains strong, and program changes are carried out effectively. This session will

examine how states are responding to the new requirements, the practical implications for Medicaid programs, and the challenges and opportunities these changes present for physician advocates. Participants will gain insight into emerging state strategies, areas where physician advocacy is most needed, and ways to engage with policymakers to protect and strengthen care for Medicaid patients.

Question & answer session to follow

12:15–1:45 p.m.

LUNCH AND LEARN: “YOUR CARE IS AT OUR CORE”—REBUILDING TRUST AND ADVANCING STATE ADVOCACY

Moderator

Kai Sternstein, JD

Vice President, Advocacy Resource Center, AMA

Panelists

- **Doug Usher, PhD**
Partner, Forbes Tate Partners
- **Meg Baglien**
Senior Vice President, Forbes Tate Partners
- **Kate Dorsey**
Director, State and Federal Government Affairs,
Michigan State Medical Society
- **Kate Alfano**
Director, Member Engagement, Colorado Medical Society
- **Annie Jung, MEd**
Executive Director, New Mexico Medical Society

Over lunch, hear the latest on the AMA Advocacy Resource Center’s “Your Care is at Our Core” campaign—a collaborative effort involving 30 state medical associations focused on revitalizing the reputation of physicians in the eyes of the public, legislators and policymakers. During this lunch-and-learn session, we will discuss how the campaign—which began as a pilot project with just three states participating—has grown, what we have learned since inception, and where we are going next.

#YourCareIsAtOurCore



Question & answer session to follow

1:45–2:45 p.m.

TRUST, INFLUENCE AND IMPACT: LEGISLATORS' PERSPECTIVES

Moderator

Willie Underwood III, MD, MSc, MPH

President-elect, AMA

Panelists

- **The Honorable Robin Titus, MD**
Senator, Nevada State Senate
- **The Honorable Josh Lowenthal**
Assemblymember, California State Assembly
- **The Honorable Alice Mann, MD**
Senator, Minnesota State Senate

What makes a physician’s voice stand out in the crowded state legislative arena? In this conversation, state legislators will share their perspective on how physicians can build trust, foster meaningful relationships and position themselves as indispensable partners in shaping state health care policy. Attendees will gain candid insights into what legislators value most, how to cultivate long-term influence, and how physicians can strengthen their impact on behalf of patients and the profession.

Question & answer session to follow

2:45–3:45 p.m.

STATE ADVOCACY FOR PHYSICIAN WELLNESS: WE’RE JUST GETTING STARTED

Moderator

Stefanie Simmons, MD

Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes’ Foundation

Panelists

- **Sonia Ramamoorthy, MD**
Director, Physician Wellness, University of California—
San Diego
- **Ellie Laughlin**
MS4, Rocky Vista University

More than 40 state medical boards and nearly 2,000 hospitals, health systems and other care facilities have adopted the recommendations of the AMA, American Osteopathic Association, Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes’ Foundation, Federation of State Medical Boards, Federation of State Physician Health Programs, National Association of Medical Staff Services, and many other leading organizations. This is up from less than 20 medical boards and 100 care facilities only a few years ago. But we are really only just getting started. This session will explore multiple avenues for how state advocacy can remove legislative, regulatory, and other barriers for medical students, residents, and practicing physicians to seek care for mental health concerns or substance use without fearing for their job or license. Speakers also will detail the national progress made to reform medical licensing and hospital and health system credentialing applications and provide specific information on how attendees can play a direct role in future progress.

Question & answer session to follow

FRI
JAN 9

3:45–4 p.m.

NETWORKING BREAK

4–5 p.m.

SOUNDING THE ALARM ON NURSE PRACTITIONER AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT SPECIALTY PRACTICE

Moderator

Rebekah Bernard, MD

Family Physician and Author of *Imposter Doctors: Patients at Risk*; Co-author of *Patients at Risk: The Rise of the Nurse Practitioner and Physician Assistant in Healthcare*; and Treasurer, Florida Medical Association Board of Governors

Panelists

- **Toluwalasé A. Ajayi, MD**
Pediatrician, Palliative Care Physician and Chair-elect, Board of Trustees, AMA
- **Jennifer Bryan, MD**
Family Medicine Physician and Immediate Past President, Mississippi State Medical Association
- **Rachel Kylo, MD**
Dermatologist and Chair, Young Physician Section, Missouri State Medical Association
- **Jennifer Hanscom**
CEO, Washington State Medical Association

Predominately trained to treat patients in primary care practice settings, nurse practitioners and physician assistants often present themselves as a solution to primary care shortages, especially in rural areas. Yet, new AMA research reveals that these non-physicians are both leaving primary care at high rates and, frequently, entering new specialties without additional training or certifications.

In this session, the AMA will share its latest data on specialty switching by nurse practitioners and physician assistants. Our panelists will unpack what these trends mean for the practice of medicine, including the risks posed when health care professionals without specialty training rapidly shift into new fields and what form state legislative responses might take to mitigate those risks.

Question & answer session to follow

5–7 p.m.

CELEBRATING THE NATION'S PHYSICIANS: A RECEPTION SPONSORED BY THE "YOUR CARE IS AT OUR CORE" CAMPAIGN

Hosted by the "Your Care is at Our Core" campaign, please plan to attend this reception celebrating physicians and your calling, sacrifice and commitment to patients. This special event is about gratitude and saying "thank you" to each one of you for all you do for your patients and your profession.

SAT
JAN 10

7:30–8:45 a.m.

NETWORKING BREAKFAST

8:45–9 a.m.

WELCOME BACK

Speaker and lead moderator

David H. Aizuss, MD

Chair, Board of Trustees, AMA

9–10 a.m.

THE NEW CORPORATE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE DOCTRINE

Moderator

Barak Richman, JD, PhD

Alexander Hamilton Professor of Business Law and Co-director, Health Law & Policy Program, George Washington University Law School

Panelists

- **The Honorable Ben Bowman**
House Majority Leader, Oregon House of Representatives
- **Maureen Hensley-Quinn**
Senior Program Director, National Academy for State Health Policy

Corporate practice of medicine (CPOM) laws have not withstood the test of time. Despite their intent to safeguard the practice of medicine from corporate influence, enforcement of CPOM laws has faltered with many long-standing provisions proving insufficient in a health care environment where investment by corporate entities is pervasive. To protect the integrity of medical practice and preserve physician independence, states are testing approaches to revitalize the CPOM doctrine—ones that close loopholes and regulate entities not conceptualized by common law or otherwise outdated legislation. This session will explore emerging state activity in this area and drill down on a trailblazing approach taken last year by the Oregon legislature.

Question & answer session to follow

10–10:45 a.m.

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR STATES TO ADVOCATE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER OR MENTAL ILLNESS

Moderator

Bobby Mukkamala, MD

President, AMA and Chair, AMA Substance Use and Pain Care Task Force

Panelists

- **Yngvild Olsen, MD, MPH**
National Advisor, Manatt Health, and former Director, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- **Lauren Finke, MPP**
Senior Director of Policy, The Kennedy Forum

This session will provide specific state legislative and other policy solutions designed to help individuals with a mental illness or substance use disorder. Speakers will identify how changes at the federal level impact physicians and individuals at the state level—ranging from federal grant opportunities and changes in telemedicine policy to accessing medications for opioid use disorder and overcoming continued barriers to accessing care for mental illness and substance use disorders. The discussion will also provide specific—and achievable—policy and clinical interventions to improve outcomes and save lives. This includes a demonstration of the Mental Health Parity Index (MHPI)—a first-of-its-kind data visualization tool that analyzes commercial insurance plans based on coverage and access to mental health and substance use services compared to physical health services using health plans' own data across three indicators: network composition, outpatient professional reimbursement, and inpatient acute reimbursement.

Question & answer session to follow

10:45–11 a.m.

NETWORKING BREAK

11–11:45 a.m.

STATE HEALTH INSURANCE REFORMS AND ERISA PREEMPTION: NEW OPPORTUNITIES?

Moderator

David H. Aizuss, MD

Chair, Board of Trustees, AMA

Speakers

- **Jennifer D. Oliva, JD**
Professor of Law and Val Nolan Faculty Fellow, Indiana University

- **Elizabeth Y. McCuskey, JD**
Professor, School of Public Health and School of Law, Boston University

ERISA preemption can be the bane of state health insurance reformers' existence as the law historically has limited states' efforts to regulate self-insured group health plans. In 2020 the U.S. Supreme Court decided *Rutledge v. PCMA*, holding that ERISA did not preempt an Arkansas pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) law that, in part, set rates at which PBMs had to pay pharmacies for drug acquisition costs and established an appeal process whereby pharmacies could appeal inadequate PBM payments. Since then, the Supreme Court has declined to take up other cases, including *PCMA v. Mulready*, that could help clarify policymakers' questions. In this informative session experts will provide clarity around ERISA preemption for state advocates, as well as identify opportunities that may exist.

Question & answer session to follow

11:45 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

PROTECTING ACCESS TO VACCINES: STATE POLICY TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

Introduced by

David H. Aizuss, MD

Chair, Board of Trustees, AMA

Speaker

- **Brent Ewig, MHS**
Chief Policy and Government Relations Officer, Association of Immunization Managers

Vaccines remain one of the most effective tools for safeguarding public health, yet recent shifts in federal guidance and policy have created new uncertainties about vaccine access. States are responding with a variety of strategies to preserve access to evidence-based immunizations and reinforce trust in vaccination as a core component of preventive care. This session will explore recent state approaches to support vaccination programs, highlight innovative approaches to ensuring patients' continued access to vaccines, and provide insights into the policy landscape that physicians and medical associations will have to navigate in the months ahead.

Question & answer session to follow

12:30 p.m.

MEETING ADJOURNED

