

**Address to the AMA House of Delegates  
Annual Meeting 2022**

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**The AMA at 175: A Legacy in Progress**

Mister Speaker, members of the board, delegates, and colleagues ...

Happy Birthday! It's our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and our gift to ourselves is being together once again.

Though we've navigated challenges since 2020, we should also recognize how fortunate we are.

Imagine this same pandemic just 30 years ago ... no mRNA platforms for vaccines...uncertain pathways to development of anti-virals... no Zoom or Teams platforms ... weak internet communications and primitive cell phones ... no Doordash or Instacart...

As difficult as this has been, society was fortunate to have so many ways to mitigate the impact of this pandemic.

It's amazing to think back to where medicine was 175 years ago. In 1847 there were no standards for medical education; quackery was rampant.

The AMA responded by creating those educational standards as well as the Code of Medical Ethics ... tools that have served us well during the greatest public health crisis in a century.

Physician-led studies revealed how a simple pronation of patients with COVID could ease the need for ventilators.

And physicians played a critical role in pushing back against the quackery and misinformation swirling around the pandemic; instead, we promoted science and best evidence available.

Simply put, the AMA's staying power over 175 years is remarkable!

Consider that the Dow Jones Industrial Average no longer has a single business from the original Dow Jones group.

And yet the Dow Jones was founded half a century after the AMA.

Remarkable staying power.

That longevity is due to the nature of our work: *promoting the art and science of*

*medicine and the betterment of public health.*

And while the AMA has so contributed in three different centuries, health care has constantly evolved with new threats, new scientific breakthroughs, new treatments, and new technologies.

Those advancements have greatly changed how we diagnose, treat, and care for our patients – but it's that last element, **caring**, that maybe has changed the least.

For health care remains intimate and personal ... the need for a physician's caring relationship with her patients is timeless.

And that's why the AMA fights to remove obstacles that get in the way of such care ...

... and why we lead the charge to prevent chronic disease...

... and why we drive the future of medicine through innovations in physician education  
...

... those are the three arcs of our strategic framework... a framework which has positioned the AMA as the physician's powerful ally in patient care.

Protecting the sanctity of the patient-physician relationship has underpinned our most high-profile public health achievements ...

... from our actions against tobacco, to our work supporting childhood vaccinations, or seatbelts in automobiles, or opposing discrimination against those affected by AIDS, or improving patient access to care, or strengthening funding for childhood health and a robust safety net.

We're proud of this work, and our legacy suggests the AMA can tackle the challenges of tomorrow as well.

To maintain our relevance in the future, we simply need to ensure that our work of today is worthy of our legacy.

A generation from now, what will folks say were our most enduring contributions in improving the health of our nation?

Dr. Gerald Harmon laid out five areas of focus in The Recovery Plan for America's Physicians. A plan that is responsive to the heavy toll on physicians while confronting the pandemic.

- Support telehealth
- Reform Medicare payment
- Stop Scope Creep

- Fix prior authorization; and
- Reduce physician burnout

Our actions also extend beyond advocacy for these elements of the Recovery Plan.

They extend to our initiatives that empower patients, particularly those from historically marginalized communities, to manage chronic illnesses – from diabetes prevention and care, to guidance on self-measured blood pressure control.

They extend to the AMA Ed Hub, our digital education platform now featuring content from multiple specialty societies and universities.

They extend to forward-looking projects like the emerging “In Full Health” initiative, which engages industry to advance equity in health care innovation. It encourages digital solutions that address the needs of marginalized communities, while also ensuring that new tools don’t unintentionally embed bias.

Actions extend to our ever-expanding portfolio of corporate spin-offs from our Silicon Valley corporate development enterprise. Health2047 launched its ninth company this year, RecoverX ... a venture which pairs AI and evidence-based medicine to provide optimized decision support tools.

And they extend to our people ... the creative spark and expertise behind all our work.

Within our management ranks we have just welcomed new leaders in five critical roles.

Following a distinguished career at Johns Hopkins as Weisfeldt Professor and Director of the Osler training program, Dr. Sanjay Desai now leads the AMA’s work transforming medical education.

Joining us as our new Editor-in-chief of JAMA is Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, an expert on cardiovascular disease, structure of clinical studies, and health equity. She is past Chair of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics as well as founding Director of the Center for Vulnerable Populations at the University of California, San Francisco. She also served as past Chair of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

Dr. Freddy Chen will lead our Health, Science and Ethics unit and joins us from the University of Washington where he was Professor and Vice-Chair in the Department of Family Medicine, and previously served as a Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Fellow, as well as having roles at HRSA and serving as a Kerr-White Scholar for Primary Care Research at the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality.

Lori Prestesater is our new senior vice president for Health Solutions, where she has led our sales and marketing efforts since 2018. Lori is a past executive vice president and chief revenue officer at AxisPoint Health and had served in several senior executive positions at McKesson.

And lastly, Andra Heller, the AMA's new general counsel, who brings more than 20 years' experience navigating complex issues in health care and health data analytics. Andra was most recently Associate General Counsel for IBM, as well as General Counsel for IBM Watson Health.

These are five nationally recognized exceptional leaders who chose the AMA because of who we are ... who we speak for ... our opportunities to influence science and clinical practice ... and what we aspire to do in building our legacy for the next 175 years.

And by the way, another 175 years takes us to the end of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century – year 2197, which I know is difficult to wrap our head around. Even the early Star Trek Enterprise was to have taken place in the mid, not late, 22<sup>nd</sup> Century – imagine that.

Nobody knows what our health system will be in another 50 years, let alone another 175.

But I think we know that:

- If physicians are not freed and better supported to spend time with patients
- If we do not deal more effectively with the surge of chronic disease ...
- And if we do not precisely educate physicians for the realities of the coming century ...

... If we fail in those efforts, there isn't any model for health care that can work. That's why I call these pre-competitive needs – elements that are needed for any health system to be functional and competitive.

Physicians need this transformation, and they need the AMA to lead it.

Our patients expect that of us.

Our strategic framework is rooted in the policies of this House. Several policies form the fabric of each of the three strategic arcs, as well as the cross-cutting accelerators of advocacy, innovation, and equity.

That framework for long-term transformation, is a needed compliment to the pressing work of now, such as in the AMA Recovery Plan for America's Physicians.

And it's the diversity of ideas, expertise and experience held within this body ... and the honest, civil and open debate it inspires ... that is the wellspring nurturing our future.

Best of luck for a successful meeting. It's wonderful, and I have to say moving, to see all of you here together once again.

Thank you.

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