

Address to the AMA House of Delegates
Annual Meeting 2026

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Physician Leadership for a New Era

Madam Speaker, members of the Board, esteemed delegates, colleagues, and friends ...

Over the past year — my first as CEO of the AMA — I've spent a great deal of time reflecting on where this profession has been ... where it stands today ... and where we must go next.

What has become increasingly clear is that medicine is entering a new era.

The forces reshaping health care are accelerating.

Technology is changing how care is delivered.

Trust in science and institutions is being tested.

Patients are overwhelmed by information ... and seeking guidance they can rely on.

And in moments like this, physician leadership matters more than ever.

Because if we do not help shape the future of medicine, others will shape it for us.

These are the stakes.

And it is why the work of this House — and the work of the AMA — carries such urgency right now.

Throughout its history, the AMA has led by defining what better medicine should look like.

A system grounded in **science**.

In **ethics**.

In **innovation**.

And above all, in **trust**.

That responsibility now belongs to us.

Not simply because medicine is changing — but because we can still shape what it becomes.

At the Interim Meeting, I spoke about a future where physicians do not respond to the forces transforming health care — but help define them.

Where physicians are **architects** of medicine's future.

Tonight, I want to talk about how we are building toward that vision.

Over the past year, the AMA has acted with greater urgency, greater clarity, and a stronger sense of purpose.

When institutions backed away from science or jeopardized patient safety, the AMA stood up.

We opposed changes to the vaccine schedule that put children at serious risk.

We called out Health and Human Services for weakening the leadership of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and undermining essential evidence-based preventive care.

We pushed for greater accountability in AI as adoption continues to move faster than the safeguards needed to protect patients.

We fought AI deepfakes and false medical claims that spread misinformation online.

And here's the thing — AI deepfakes — which steal your identity — do not just manipulate images.

They manipulate trust — in a time when trust is more fragile than ever.

The AMA also stood up in the courts — working with state medical societies to fight automatic downcoding and out-of-network penalties that unfairly punish physicians and harm patients.

We **must** protect physicians' ability to choose how, where, and in what setting they practice — independently, within health systems, in academic medicine, in rural communities, or through new and emerging models.

As our Chair, Dr. David Aizuss, made clear at the AMA's National Advocacy Conference, when insurers impose reckless policies that undermine physicians and jeopardize patient care, we will not stand down.

We are ready for this fight — and if necessary — we will see them in court!

But leadership is not just standing up to bad policy.

It is building what comes next.

We fight for a system centered around the needs of patients ... grounded in evidence ... and strengthened by innovation that delivers better care and better outcomes.

This requires a new strategic vision for the AMA — one grounded in a simple idea:

We must be the leading and most trusted partner for physicians as they navigate the future of medicine – stewards of patient care and the profession.

So, what does that mean in practice?

First, we lead by elevating the physician voice — your voice — on the issues that matter most.

Today, information is everywhere.

But trusted information is not.

Patients are overwhelmed by misinformation, conflicting advice, and online voices that too often prioritize attention over evidence.

In this environment, physicians remain one of the most trusted sources of health information in American life.

That trust matters.

And it carries enormous responsibility.

That is why we launched the [Health vs. Hype podcast](#) to bring credible physician voices back to the center of public conversation. In just three months, it has become one of the top health podcasts. People are searching for health information --- and our AMA is providing it.

It is why we continue to expand our [Your Care Is At Our Core](#) campaign, now active in 28 states, reminding patients that physicians put **their** needs first.

And it is why we are preparing to launch a new national campaign – *Have You asked your Doctor?* – focused on rebuilding trust in medicine, science, and physician expertise at a moment when all three are being tested.

Second, we lead by helping physicians build strong, sustainable careers across the full arc of professional life.

We recently launched the Career Advancement Collective to help physicians acquire the skills needed to run a business, build a thriving practice, learn leadership skills, and drive medicine's transformation.

We have expanded our education and training opportunities so physicians can develop the leadership skills necessary to navigate a rapidly changing health care environment.

The demands on physicians are evolving.

It is no longer enough to be clinically excellent — though that remains essential.

Physicians must also be interpreters of information.

Leaders of teams.

Navigators of technology.

Trusted voices in increasingly complex environments.

And they need support not just at the beginning of their careers, but throughout their professional lives.

Third, we lead by advancing physician well-being and reducing the burdens that can compromise patient care.

Despite progress, burnout remains high across medicine.

Administrative complexity can overwhelm.

And physicians continue to practice in a fragmented system that too often feels transactional and bureaucratic.

So we have helped lead the charge to reform prior authorization.

To align Medicare payments with the true costs of running a practice.

We tripled our investment to protect scope of practice.

And we launched a major new Advocacy Accelerator grant program to drive change in your home states.

Across the board, we have strengthened our advocacy by showing up earlier ... by speaking more clearly and more forcefully ... and by always keeping the focus where it belongs.

Because in this environment, it is not enough to be right.

We have to be **heard**.

We have to **ACT**.

And we have to be **trusted**.

Fourth, we champion physician leadership in health care technology.

That means leading how AI is used — not reacting to it.

It means elevating physicians not simply as users of technology, but as stewards of its design, implementation, and deployment.

We continue to build out the [AMA Center for Digital Health and AI](#) that we launched last year — producing studies, research, and practical guidance to ensure physician expertise helps shape AI's future.

And finally, we lead by strengthening public health and expanding access to care grounded in evidence.

Patients need clarity — especially in a time of distrust.
They want to know where they can turn.

That is why we are engaging directly with the public in new ways.

On social media.
In podcasts.
In leading publications.

And in national conversations shaping public opinion.

It is why we joined the [Vaccine Integrity Project](#) — ensuring that evidence, not politics, drives vaccine policy.

And it is why we are changing how we recognize leadership in our profession.

And I am very excited that next year, we will launch a new AMA awards program — one that reflects the scale and significance of those shaping medicine's future.

We will honor physicians for their impact on technology, public health, scientific advancement, communication, and innovation that improves the lives of patients.

If others will not recognize contributions to public health, **we will**.

If others will not honor advancements in science, **we will**.

And we might even bring a little glitz to it! Just a little.

The past year has tested all of us — and our profession.

But it has also clarified our purpose.

We have positioned the AMA for medicine's future.

With a clearer direction.

A stronger voice.

And a deeper commitment to helping physicians navigate a future that will be more complex — and more consequential — than ever before.

It is an incredible honor for me to do this work alongside all of you.

And if I may take a moment of personal privilege —

I want to express my gratitude to this House for welcoming me into your family, and to the AMA Board of Trustees for entrusting me with this responsibility.

I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge my partners in crime ...

[Dr. Bobby Mukkamala](#) and [Dr. David Aizuss](#).

From my first day, David said his goal was to help me succeed. And I have felt that. And Bobby has texted me every day ... yes, every day ... with ideas on how we can make AMA stronger.

I could not have asked for two better leaders to help me during this transition.

Their wisdom, counsel, friendship, and steady partnership have helped guide this organization through an important chapter.

They have been extraordinary partners to me during this first year.

And the AMA is stronger because of their leadership, integrity, and commitment to this profession.

I thank them both deeply.

Many of you met my children at the Interim Meeting. They aren't here in person today — and that allows me to tell a story.

Luke, my oldest, and I share a playlist on Spotify. It's because he wanted the ad-free version.

And we listen to the playlist together in the car on the days I drive him to the bus stop or a sports activity.

And there's a song he introduced me to called "the nights" by Avicii.

And some of you might have recognized that's the song I walked up to when the speaker introduced me.

There's a line in the song I really like –

“one day you'll leave this world behind ... so live a life you will remember.”

Advocacy is, in many ways, about exactly that.

The physicians in this House are building a legacy – not for ourselves but for our patients our profession, and the next generation.

The policies we shape, the science we defend, the care we fight to improve – these actions outlast us.

Those who come after us will inherit the healthcare system we choose to build today.

That is why the work over the next few days matters.

Thank you.

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