

AMA policies and resources to support medical students

Issue:

This issue brief serves as a quick reference guide to a selection of current key policies and additional resources that may be useful to medical students when advocating or seeking support at their own institutions to optimize their learning experience. AMA has a variety of policies and resources on topics such as debt and financial wellness; safety, health and well-being; leave policies; support for underrepresented students; access to quality training; and leadership development opportunities.

Background:

AMA's [PolicyFinder](#) hosts active AMA policy on a wide range of topics, including medical student rights and responsibilities. However, this comprehensive database (which at the time of this writing contains over 4,600 searchable policies) can be overwhelming for those who don't know where to begin. Below is a listing of AMA policies on several key priority areas pertaining to medical students. While not exhaustive, these policies reflect a broad range of issues medical students face on their journey to becoming a physician.

AMA Policies in Support of Medical Students:

Debt and financial wellness:

- [Principles of and Actions to Address Medical Education Costs and Student Debt H-305.925](#) affirms that: "The costs of medical education should never be a barrier to the pursuit of a career in medicine nor to the decision to practice in a given specialty." This policy details AMA's robust advocacy work and stances in this space.
- Other AMA policies discuss fairness for MD and DO students regarding financial aid eligibility, mitigating the cost of applying to medical school, and fee parity, as well as transparency for international medical graduates (IMGs) regarding tuition prepayment while encouraging other options:
 - [Modifying Financial Assistance Eligibility Criteria for Medical School Applicants D-305.950](#)
 - [Equal Fees for Osteopathic and Allopathic Medical Students H-295.876](#)
 - [Advance Tuition Payment Requirements for International Students Enrolled in US Medical Schools H-255.968](#)

Protecting medical student safety:

- [Teacher-Learner Relationship in Medical Education H-295.955](#) emphasizes that "The teacher-learner relationship should be based on mutual trust, respect, and responsibility," and provides a code of behavior that, in part, serves to protect learner safety.
- A selection of other safety-related policies includes appropriate handling of hazardous agents, consent and confidentiality in psychological testing, and immediate access to post-exposure prophylaxis:
 - [Protecting Medical Trainees from Hazardous Exposure H-295.939](#)
 - [Psychological Testing Without Informed Consent H-295.996](#)
 - [HIV Postexposure Prophylaxis for Medical Students During Electives Abroad D-295.970](#)

Health and well-being:

- AMA has policy promoting parity between mental and physical health and supporting the health of medical students, including in the following:
 - [Access to Confidential Health Services for Medical Students and Physicians H-295.858](#)
 - [Insurance Coverage for Medical Students and Resident Physicians H-295.942](#)
 - [Increased Education and Access to Fertility Resources for U.S. Medical Students H-295.846](#)
 - [Physician and Medical Student Burnout D-310.968](#)

Recommendations for leave policies:

- [Support for Institutional Policies for Personal Days for Undergraduate Medical Students H-295.850](#) encourages schools to “create a mechanism by which at least some portion of such days [excused absences] can be used without requiring explanation” and describes what leave-related information should be defined in medical school policy.
- Other leave-related policies include recommendations regarding parental and grief-related leave:
 - [Parental Leave and Planning Resources for Medical Students D-295.308](#)
 - [Compassionate Leave for Physicians, Medical Students, Medical Trainees, and Physician Residents and Fellows H-405.947](#)

Supporting underrepresented medical students:

- [Supporting Women and Underrepresenting Minorities in Overcoming Barriers to Positions of Medical Leadership and Competitive Specialties D-200.975](#) maintains funding and “concrete and standing mechanisms for increasing participation for medical students within our AMA-MSS from medical schools with classically low national meeting attendance” for first generation college graduates and/or students from disadvantaged groups or areas.
- Other AMA policy supporting trainees who may be underrepresented in medicine includes opposition to reduction of resources for these groups and support for trainees with disabilities:
 - [Medical Education for Members in Underserved Minority Populations H-350.969](#)
 - [Evaluate Barriers to Medical Education for Trainees with Disabilities D-90.990](#)
 - [Advocacy for Physicians and Medical Students with Disabilities D-615.977](#)

Access to quality training:

- Access to quality training is important for medical learners regardless of outside factors. For instance, [Preserving Access to Reproductive Health Services D-5.999](#) notes that “Our AMA will advocate for legal protections for medical students and physicians who cross state lines to receive education in or deliver reproductive health services, including contraception and abortion.”
- Other policies related to medical student access to quality training include minimizing educational disruptions in the event of closures, reductions, or mergers, and appropriate access to patient health records as part of training:
 - [Protection of Medical Students in the Event of Medical School Closure or Reduction in Enrollment H-295.908](#)
 - [Promoting Transparency in Medical Education and Access to Training H-295.860](#)
 - [Medical Student Access to Electronic Health Records H-315.969](#)

Leadership and decision-making:

- [Medical Student Involvement and Validation of the Standardized Video Interview Implementation D-310.949](#) advocates “for medical students and residents to be recognized as equal stakeholders in any changes to the residency application process.”
- Other policies related to promoting leadership and decision-making opportunities for medical students, within the house of medicine and wider society, include:
 - [Greater Involvement of Medical Students in Federation Organizations G-620.050](#)
 - [Medical Student, Resident/Fellow, and Physician Voting in Federal, State and Local Elections D-65.982](#)

Other AMA Resources:

In addition to the above policies, the AMA has many resources available to medical students. For example:

- The AMA Foundation’s [Physicians of Tomorrow Scholarship](#) invests in medical students who embody the values of leadership, academic excellence, and a commitment to advancing health equity.
- AMA membership offers several [discounts and benefits](#) to medical students.
- The AMA [Medical Student Leadership Learning Series](#) offers practical education to help medical students lead effectively.
- AMA organizations offer [more than 1,000 potential leadership opportunities](#) to medical students.
- The AMA hosts the [Medical Student Advocacy Conference](#), offering advocacy training, access to legislators, opportunities to network with peers, and a platform to raise student voices and enact changes in public health policy.
- AMA [Council Report Finder](#), [PolicyFinder](#), [Litigation Center Case Summary Finder](#), and [Federal and State Correspondence Finder](#) can be searched for information and actions related to students.
- The AMA [Medical Student Section](#) strives to be medical students’ voice within the AMA for improving medical education and advocating for the future of medicine.
- The AMA [Council on Medical Education](#) studies and evaluates all aspects of the medical education continuum and recommends policies for medical and allied health education. One of the 12 [Council positions](#) is designated for a medical student.
- All other AMA [Councils](#) also have a designated seat for a medical student, as does the AMA [Board of Trustees](#).