



Welcome to this month's edition of the AMA's Very Influential Physician (VIP) Insider. Read on for details about these topics:

- AMA launches website to combat growing issues with prior authorization
- Update Senate power rankings heading into August recess
- Scheduling - when should advocates request a site visit by a member of Congress?
- August recess is in full swing – are you making the most of it?
- AMPAC 2018 Campaign School registration now open – your campaign starts here!

New AMA website urges grassroots advocacy on prior authorization reform

The AMA recently launched FixPriorAuth.org, a new website dedicated to spurring grassroots advocacy for prior authorization reform. The website targets physician and patient audiences, with online experiences that detail prior authorization burdens from both perspectives. The physician and patient tracks end with a common "[share your story](#)" call to action, and the AMA will be leveraging the collected anecdotes in its prior authorization advocacy.

The website's [story gallery](#) offers a powerful overview of the patient and physician experiences gathered to date and will be continually updated with newly submitted examples of how prior authorization impacts both patient care and practice workloads. The website also includes a [resources section](#) that links to news stories and various AMA educational and advocacy tools on this issue.

Follow the Physicians Grassroots Network's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages to stay up to date on the campaign to #FixPriorAuth.

Top five Senate seats most likely to flip in November

By @ZACHARY_COHEN @KYLETRYGSTAD of the [National Journal](#)

With most primaries completed, a Supreme Court nomination on the table, and fewer than 100 days to go before the midterm elections, Republicans remain favored to hang on to or even grow their Senate majority.

Establishment forces have successfully recruited competent nominees to face well-funded Democratic incumbents in states Donald Trump carried just two years ago. But with generic polling and special elections indicating a shift in the national mood back toward the minority party, there's a small chance Democrats can flip two seats and reelect all of

their vulnerable incumbents.

The chamber's two leaders, Republican Mitch McConnell and Democrat Chuck Schumer, their multimillion-dollar super PACs, and the national party committees all appear aligned on where Senate control will be decided. Those are reflected in our latest ranking of the most vulnerable seats, listed in order of most likely to flip.

Notably missing are three Midwestern states that Trump carried—Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan—though they remain on the radar.

1. Nevada—Dean Heller (R) (Previous ranking: 1)

Heller is by far the most vulnerable Republican senator, but national headwinds, a Democratic-leaning state, and an opponent with a short voting record to pick apart also make him more endangered than any of his Democratic colleagues running in red states. That was reflected in a Reno Gazette-Journal poll released Tuesday that showed him at 41 percent and leading Rep. Jacky Rosen by just a point. His first TV ad, launched last week, focused on the ultimate bipartisan issue, veterans, which a supportive, McConnell-aligned outside group is simultaneously on the air discussing. Meanwhile, Rosen's first negative ad, released in mid-July, hit Heller for flip-flopping on his support for repealing Obamacare. Rosen outraised Heller in the second quarter by more than \$1 million, though the senator still led in cash on hand.

2. North Dakota—Heidi Heitkamp (D) (4)

Heitkamp, seeking her second term, has perhaps the most well-defined image of any senator up for reelection. Her early fundraising advantage has allowed her to go up early on the state's cheap TV markets highlighting her independence. But the Democrat is down in early public polling, thanks to Republican Rep. Kevin Cramer's statewide name ID and the partisan lean of a state that voted for Trump by 36 points. Cramer and the National Republican Senatorial Committee have both aired TV ads tying Heitkamp to national Democrats like Hillary Clinton and Schumer in hopes of continuing the state's rightward trend.

3. Indiana—Joe Donnelly (D) (2)

Six years after defeating controversial GOP nominee Richard Mourdock, Donnelly faces a more viable nominee in Mike Braun. The distributing-company founder largely self-funded his primary bid, in which he upset two members of Congress, and entered the general election with a slight lead in a May poll. Donnelly released early ads displaying his bipartisanship in a state where Republicans swept statewide contests in 2016. Both sides already accuse the other candidate of outsourcing, presaging a nasty fall contest.

4. Missouri—Claire McCaskill (D) (3)

While McCaskill is the first known candidate target of Russian interference into the midterm elections, Republicans have focused on her husband's wealth in an effort to paint her as looking out for her own financial interests over those of her constituents. That general line of attack continued Monday in an ad from the Club for Growth, which tied past domestic-abuse allegations against McCaskill's husband to the senator's voting record. The incumbent is swamping state Attorney General Josh Hawley in fundraising,

but the Republican lean of the state ensures this will likely remain close until Election Day.

5. Arizona—Open (R—Jeff Flake retiring) (6) Republicans face multiple obstacles in their most vulnerable open seat, with a fractious primary and Democratic Rep. Kyrsten Sinema buoyed by a lead in general-election messaging, fundraising, and polls. Rep. Martha McSally, Washington Republicans' preferred standard-bearer, has a comfortable lead in polling over immigration hard-liners Joe Arpaio and Kelli Ward but has shifted to the right ahead of the Aug. 28 primary. The state still favors Republicans, who were able to deliver for Trump and Rep. Debbie Lesko in a special election this year, albeit by relatively narrow margins.

Scheduling - when should advocates request a site visit by a member of Congress?

August recess is upon us – a time when most members of Congress spend the month back in their districts holding events and tours with their constituents. Our partners at The Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) wanted to know the optimal timing for requesting a site visit (touring factory, visiting child care center, etc.) by a member of Congress. They asked House District Directors the following question.

"For each of the following activities (site visits), how many weeks in advance should the request be made for the Member to personally participate?"

What they learned: Advocates should request site visits three to six weeks in advance of their event. Of the congressional staff who responded to this question, 38% said requests should be made within three to four weeks and 34% said within five to six weeks. Site visits are an important advocacy tool, but it pays to plan ahead. Advocates who are serious about getting their members of Congress to attend a site visit should submit the invitation AT LEAST three weeks prior to the event. If possible, submit them earlier (up to six weeks in advance).

Source: Partnership for a More Perfect Union, Copyright Congressional Management Foundation, <http://CongressFoundation.org>. Used with permission.

Recess is here – how you can make an impact this August

August recess is in full swing and with so many important issues at stake, there is still time to schedule a district meeting or attend a town hall with your elected officials. Simply visit our [congressional directory](#) to find the district office contact information for your legislators.

Take advantage of the remaining recess to advocate on the issues important to medicine. Please visit our [advocacy site](#) for more information on the hot-button issues facing the profession today.

And don't forget to take photos when you meet with your legislators! Please email the photo, names of participants and a brief description to political.affairs@ama-assn.org, and we'll post them in a future issue of the VIP Insider and share them through our Physicians' Grassroots Network social media channels on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



Members of the Pennsylvania Medical Society (PAMED) meet with Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-08) to discuss important issues facing medicine.



Members of Rhode Island Medical Society (RIMS) attend event for Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D). From left to right: Bradley Collins, MD RIMS President, Sen. Whitehouse (D-RI), Peter Karczmar, MD RIMPAC Treasurer, Vice-Chair Public Laws Committee, RIMS Past President, Thomas Bledsoe, MD RIMS Councilor-at-large, former RI-ACP Governor

The campaign trail starts here

Open to AMA members, their spouses, medical students, residents and state medical association staff who want to become more involved in campaigning process, the [2018 AMPAC Campaign School](#) will be taking place Dec. 6-9 at the AMA offices in Washington,

D.C.

The Campaign School is designed to provide participants with the skills and strategic approach they need to run a successful political campaign. During the two-and-a-half day in-person portion of the program, under the direction of AMA political experts, participants will be broken into campaign staff teams to run a simulated congressional campaign using what they have learned during group sessions on strategy, vote targeting, social media, advertising and more.

Faculty, materials and all meals during the meeting are covered by the AMA. Participants are responsible for the registration fee and hotel accommodations at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. The deadline to register is Sept. 21. For more information or to apply visit: ampaonline.org/apply or contact politicaleducation@ama-assn.org.



[AMA Advocacy](#)



[AMPAC](#)

Connect with the Physicians Grassroots Network :  