



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

- AMPAC hosts 2019 Candidate Workshop in Washington, DC
- Highlights from the 2019 National Advocacy Conference
- Webinar: Effective ways to follow up after meeting with a Member of Congress
- Charlie Cook: Why the Senate is the big story in 2020

AMPAC hosts 2019 Candidate Workshop in Washington, DC

Have you ever wondered what it takes to run for political office? If you answered yes, you're not alone. Recently, participants from across the country came to the AMA offices in Washington, DC to learn what it takes to be a successful candidate for public office.

Attendees of the two-day Candidate Workshop were taught the ins and outs of running a winning political campaign. The agenda included a bevy of bi-partisan political veterans who spoke from years of experience on topics such as the secret of effective fundraising, the importance of developing a disciplined campaign plan and message, how to handle the inevitable crises that emerge for every campaign and the impact being a candidate can have on your family and your practice.

The Candidate Workshop is just one of the political education programs that AMPAC provides for physicians, spouses and state medical society staff who have ever entertained running for public office. For more information on these programs please visit AMPACOnline.org.



Participants of the 2019 AMPAC Candidate Workshop

Highlights from the 2019 National Advocacy Conference

From AMA President Barbara L. McAneny, MD

Thank you to those who joined us at this year's National Advocacy Conference (NAC). NAC is the centerpiece of our federal advocacy calendar each year and an important event that helps convene physicians and legislators around important health care policy challenges.

Attendees got to hear from influential government officials like the Honorable Alex M. Azar II, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Admiral Brett P. Giroir, MD, assistant secretary for health, HHS, as well as private sector entrepreneurs like [Indu Subaiya](#), the co-founder and co-CEO of Health 2.0.

Secretary Azar discussed ways in which his efforts to reform the American health care system align with AMA policy, touching on the strategies employed to combat the opioid epidemic, advance delivery reform and bring greater transparency to the drug pricing

process.

"The first principle of our vision for value-based health care is about empowering patients—but we are fully aware this cannot be done without empowering physicians, too." Azar said. "So, I want you all to imagine a system where patients are finally in the driver's seat, free to work with physicians who have been empowered as navigators of the best options for their patient, rather than navigators of a sea of paperwork."

Adm. Giroir highlighted the progress made in combating the opioid epidemic, citing that between 2015 and 2017 the number of individuals who misused pain relievers decreased from 12.5 million to 11.1 million and the number of individuals with pain reliever use disorder dropped from 2 million to 1.7 million, while acknowledging that more work needs to be done. He also called for renewed vigor in the fight to end AIDS in America and highlighted states that have achieved success on these important public health challenges.

Health care remains a top priority for legislators on both sides of the aisle and we physicians have a professional responsibility to fight to change laws that are limiting access to care or affecting patient outcomes. AMA Executive Vice President and CEO James L. Madara, MD, moderated a panel of AMA leaders featuring President-elect Patrice Harris, MD, MA, Chair of the Board of Trustees Jack Resneck, MD, and me, asking us to share perspectives on how to speak to legislators about the AMA's advocacy priorities in the year ahead.

As part of the NAC, the AMA also presented its Dr. Nathan Davis Awards for Outstanding Government Service to [eight honorees](#), including a pioneer in cancer immunotherapy and public health champions who have been battling the opioid crisis on the federal, state and municipal levels.

Outside the convention hall, the focus of this conference every year is the hundreds of hill visits that allow physicians to meet with lawmakers and share our personal stories about how existing laws are affecting our patients and our practices. It's critical that members of Congress hear from those of us on the front lines about key issues impacting our patients and the health care system, including the rise of [gun violence](#), surprise billing, the opioid epidemic, and rising drug prices. And we appreciate the physicians who take time away from their practices to make their voices heard.

I hope that you will join us next year for the 2020 National Advocacy Conference, Feb. 10-12, again at the Grand Hyatt in Washington, DC.

All the resources from the meeting, including the slide presentation from the capitol hill briefing, Adm. Giroir's presentation on opioids and the speech given by secretary Azar can be [found on the NAC website](#).

March Webinar: How to effectively follow up after meeting with a Member of Congress

Congressional offices meet with constituents more than 25 times each day. Yet CMF research finds that most constituents forget to do the follow up that keeps their concerns top of mind with the Members of Congress and staff they meet. While meetings are important, strong relationships and trust are built over time through ongoing constituent engagement and consistent follow up.

[Register here](#) to join our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) for this important webinar on March 21, 2019 at 12:00 PM EDT

Participants will learn the following:

- Effective methods for following up after meetings
- How frequently congressional offices experience effective constituent follow up
- Tips for turning a good meeting into a strong relationship with Members of Congress and their staff

This webinar is offered as an exclusive member benefit of the VIP program!

If you have any questions regarding this presentation, please contact Jaime Werner at CMF at JWerner@CongressFoundation.org.

Why the Senate Is the Big 2020 Story

By The National Journal's Charlie Cook [@CHARLIECOOKDC](#)

Just about everyone interested in American politics these days is focused on what Special Counsel Robert Mueller is expected to do in the coming weeks, along with the unfolding presidential contest.

To the extent there is any remaining political bandwidth, it's mostly on the U.S. House, where Republicans would need a gain of only 18 seats to recapture a majority (that number might move to 19 depending on the outcome of a special election for North Carolina's 9th District expected later this year). In terms of changes in net House seats, 18 is not a particularly big number, but usually a change of that magnitude occurs in a midterm, not a presidential-election year.

In six of the past 10 presidential-election years, the net change in the House was in the single digits. In the other four, it ranged from as few as 10 seats (1992) to as many as 34 (1980). Interestingly, it isn't always the side prevailing in the presidential race that gains House seats. In 1988, Democrats actually scored a net gain of two House seats. Four years later, Republicans gained 10 House seats. In both of the recent presidential elections with split Electoral College and popular-vote outcomes, the party winning the popular vote had modest House gains—Democrats gained two seats in 2000 and six in 2016.

Now what about 2020? At this early stage, President Trump looks more likely to lose than win reelection. So it is a decent bet that the GOP is less likely to score a net gain of 18

seats. Yet even if Democrats capture the White House while holding onto a House majority, just how much could they get done with Republicans still holding a majority in the Senate? For that reason, I think the Senate may end up being a big story before all is said and done.

Behind the scenes, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer is moving heaven and earth to put the Senate in play. Republicans have 53 seats to 47 for Democrats, meaning that Democrats need a net gain of three seats to be in a majority if they win the White House; if they don't, they would need to pick up four seats. Realistically, Democrats need to take at least four or five GOP-held seats, because by far the most vulnerable seat in the Senate up next year is the one held by Democrat Doug Jones in Alabama.

Jones was a strong candidate with a terrific campaign operation and plenty of money, but the odds of him drawing a Republican opponent as weak as former state Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore are very slim. GOP Rep. Bradley Byrne announced his candidacy last week, ensuring that there will be at least one credible Republican running. The good news for Democrats is that they have no other seats that look particularly endangered. Sen. Tina Smith of Minnesota is worth watching, but no others jump off the page.

No Republican Senate seats appear to be in extreme danger, but there are several that can be expected to see stiff challenges. The two open GOP seats—in Kansas and Tennessee—are not expected to be terribly problematic for them. Democrats are expected to mount top-tier bids against GOP Sens. Martha McSally of Arizona, Cory Gardner of Colorado, and Susan Collins of Maine, but Democrats winning all three while holding Jones in Alabama looks exceedingly unlikely. To have any kind of real shot at a majority, they need to put a few more GOP seats in play.

Most eyes are on Sens. David Perdue of Georgia and Thom Tillis of North Carolina, and sometimes the name of Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa will come up. You will hear a lot of noise about going after Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, but Kentucky is still a very Republican state, not the kind of Southern or border state that is getting better for Democrats. A Democrat might be able to get within striking range, but those last three or four points will be extremely difficult. Keep in mind that it is states with big suburban and college-educated populations where Democrats are moving the needle these days, not states with substantial rural and small-town, working-class white populations.

Part of the challenge for Democrats is that some of their recruiting targets seem more intent on running for president than for the Senate. Former Gov. John Hickenlooper would likely have made a first-class challenger against Gardner in Colorado, and Montana Gov. Steve Bullock could have made an interesting challenge to Sen. Steve Daines. Whether the Senate will truly come into play remains to be seen, but you can count on Schumer to try to bludgeon enough quality recruits—and then Democrats can just pray for a GOP meltdown to give them a realistic shot.
