



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

- Senate introduces bipartisan legislation to make telehealth services permanent – take action!
- Webinar: Creating Effective Stories to Share with Congress
- Senate Power Rankings: The more things change...
- Save the Date – AMPAC Virtual Campaign School coming in January 2021!

Senate introduces bipartisan legislation to telehealth services permanent – take action!

As Congress remains deadlocked on additional COVID-19 relief legislation our country's health care system continues to struggle under the massive strain the pandemic continues to exert on it.

During this time telehealth services have emerged as a critical tool to provide care to patients while supporting physical distancing efforts and reducing the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases by avoiding unnecessary outpatient visits.

Earlier this year, Congress acted to temporarily expand access to Medicare covered telehealth services to all Medicare beneficiaries by authorizing HHS to waive outdated statutory restrictions on where telehealth services may be provided. Before this action, Medicare was only allowed to pay for telehealth services provided to Medicare beneficiaries in rural areas at an originating site health care facility.

Unless Congress acts before the end of the COVID Public Health Emergency, millions of Medicare beneficiaries outside of rural areas will lose access to Medicare telehealth benefits, and rural Medicare beneficiaries will once again be required to drive to a health care facility to receive them.

Recently, bipartisan legislation was introduced in the Senate to make the expanded access to telehealth services permanent. The Telehealth Modernization Act of 2020 (S. 4375) would lift the rural-only restriction and add any site where a patient is located as a potential originating site. This would ensure all Medicare beneficiaries may receive covered Medicare telehealth benefits, including at home and via mobile technologies as appropriate.

The evidence is in – The success of telehealth technology adoption during the COVID-19 public health emergency has made it abundantly clear that Medicare covered telehealth benefits should be available to ALL Medicare patients regardless of where they live or how they access broadband services!

Please [contact your senators](#) and ask them to support The Telehealth Modernization Act of 2020 (S. 4375) today!

Creating Effective Stories to Share with Congress: How to Move the Hearts, Minds, and VOTES of Lawmakers

Join our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation on October 8, 2020 at 1:00 PM (Eastern) for its next Citizen-Advocate webinar.

[Register here!](#)

Program Description: People have trouble remembering facts, but they never forget a good story. Effective advocacy appeals to the heart, the head, and political health of the legislator. Learn how to organize and present your stories exercising the tactics actors use. This program is based on exclusive and private surveys of congressional staff conducted by CMF and is available only to members of CMF's Partnership for a More Perfect Union.

This webinar will cover the following topics:

- The value of telling stories to lawmakers
- Key elements that advocates should include in the stories they tell lawmakers
- How to prepare and rehearse your story in advance

This webinar will be conducted by CMF's Brad Fitch, President & CEO and Seth Turner, Director of Citizen Engagement.

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

Senate Power Rankings: The more things change...

By the National Journal's Madelaine Pisani, Leah Askarinam and Josh Kraushaar

With 48 days until Election Day—or, as it should be known in 2020, the end of the voting period and the beginning of the counting period—undecided voters are beginning to take sides and candidates are getting ready to take their biggest swings on messaging.

Across the Senate landscape, the relative competitiveness of each battleground race has not changed much over the summer. In fact, the top nine are in the same position as they were in our May rankings. Republicans remain on defense, while Democrats are focused on securing a net gain of three seats—including compensating for a likely loss in Alabama—to win the majority.

While both parties are spending tens of millions in these battleground states, much of the outcome will depend on the presidential dynamic. Lower-tier races, including Kansas, Texas, and Alaska, are creating a Whac-A-Mole situation for Republicans, drawing resources and attention from the main battlegrounds. But Kris Kobach is no longer a roadblock in the Kansas race, and while Democrat Barbara Bollier shouldn't be counted out, South Carolina could be a bigger problem for Republicans.

The sheer breadth of the map this year means uncertainty is high. Couple that with the atypical nature of pandemic campaigning—sparse in-person engagement, conflicting economic and public-health interests, muddled information about how to vote—which creates an unprecedented fight for control of the upper chamber, one that could last well into January.

Here is *Hotline's* ranking of the seats most likely to flip, with the race's placement in our May ranking in parentheses.

1. Alabama—Sen. Doug Jones (D) (1)

For Jones to hold his seat, he needs the stars to align more than they have so far. He faced a uniquely flawed candidate in Roy Moore during the 2017 special election, but his current opponent, Tommy Tuberville, appears poised to clean up among Republican voters. Jones needed the Republican nominee to emerge more bruised than Tuberville did, despite a prolonged and contentious primary against Jeff Sessions. Though Jones had the cash advantage in the last round of fundraising reports, his close relationship with Joe Biden—and President Trump's alliance with

Tuberville—make it difficult to see an outcome where the Senate results are far off from the presidential results.

2. Colorado—Sen. Cory Gardner (R) (2)

Whether or not Republican ads on former Gov. John Hickenlooper's ethics violations are hurting his image in the state—an issue Republicans and Democrats are divided on—might not actually matter with Trump on the ballot. There is some consensus between the two parties that Gardner would have to overperform Trump by margins of at least around 5-10 points. That's a high bar, with Trump regularly trailing public polling by margins in the low double digits.

3. Arizona—Sen. Martha McSally (R) (3)

Outside groups are on air with a barrage of ads attacking Democrat Mark Kelly's business record in order to chip away at what was recently a relatively spotless image as a Navy pilot and astronaut. But even taking into account the new ads, Kelly remains more likely to overperform Biden than McSally is to overperform Trump. In other words, Trump needs to win Arizona comfortably in order to carry McSally over the finish line. The last time McSally led a Senate poll was a Gravis Marketing survey conducted for One America News Network on June 27. Since then, Kelly has led 27 polls. According to FiveThirtyEight's average, Biden is leading in Arizona, 49-44 percent.

4. North Carolina—Sen. Thom Tillis (R) (4)

North Carolina is a bellwether in the fight for control of the Senate, while also being a top presidential battleground. Strategists from both parties see Tillis's race against Cal Cunningham tracking closely with the presidential contest. But despite the influence the presidential race will have on the Senate outcome, neither candidate has drawn attention to the top of the ticket in their messaging, instead focusing on health care and Paycheck Protection Program loans. Outside groups are pouring money into the state and Tillis is starting to emerge from virtual campaigning with in-person appearances and events, while Cunningham's operation has remained largely virtual. Cunningham's debate performance didn't inspire confidence that he could outperform Biden, but Biden's performance in presidential debates might be more consequential for this race.

5. Maine—Sen. Susan Collins (R) (5)

Given the sheer number of ads playing in the state, it's hard to believe that there are still undecided voters in Maine. But Republicans and Democrats agree that they exist. Having seen months, if not years (since her vote to confirm Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court), of attacks on Susan Collins's independence, the race now comes down to whether state House Speaker Sara Gideon is an acceptable replacement. Republicans are attempting to tie together months of attack ads by driving home the message that Gideon is a "risky" choice. Democrats are attempting to cement trust in Gideon with a warning that a vote for Collins is a vote for Trump.

To see the whole list visit [National Journal](#)

Save the Date – AMPAC Virtual Campaign School coming in January 2021!

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the AMPAC Campaign School will be conducted virtually this year.

In order to provide all of the same high-quality programming the Campaign School is known for in a "virtual" format, this year's program will be conducted over two weekends – January 15-17 and 23-24.

Participants will be broken into online campaign "staff" teams, and apply what they learn in sessions on strategy, vote targeting, social media, paid advertising and public speaking. Insider tactics will be taught virtually by experts from both sides of the political spectrum. These professionals are the experts currently advising campaigns at every level around the country.

Be part of a campaign team from the comfort of your own home!

Stay tuned - registration opening soon.

For more information please contact politicaleducation@ama-assn.org or visit AMPACOnline.org
