



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

- Join us for a VIP exclusive webinar: New Congress, New Majorities & New Power Dynamics
- Building Relationships with the New Congress
- Big provisions in \$1.7 trillion omnibus: What doctors should know
- AMPAC Candidate Workshop returns in-person March 31 – April 2

VIP exclusive webinar: New Congress, New Majorities & New Power Dynamics

When Republicans won a House majority for the 118th Congress in November, it followed historical trends for midterm elections (namely, that the party not in control of the White House gains seats during such elections). Many individual races however, particularly in the Senate, bucked these historical tendencies.

[Join us February 1 at 8 pm ET for our exclusive VIP webinar: "New Congress, New Majorities, & New Power Dynamics"](#)

This new House majority will be slim for the Republicans, while in the Senate Democrats will enjoy their first outright majority in eight years. Coupled with yet another "change election" in 2022, the selection of Kevin McCarthy (R-CA-20) as House Speaker and Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY-8) as House Minority Leader should result in additional changes in the power dynamics on Capitol Hill.

Which lawmakers could gain influence with the narrow House and Senate majorities? What legislators might not have the sway they once enjoyed? What developments have occurred with such narrow majorities in the past? And most importantly, what might this all mean for the AMA's policy priorities?

Advocacy expert David Lusk of Key Advocacy will join AMA staff to tackle these questions and discuss the changing landscape of Congress and what the near-term impacts might be for health care policy. [Register now](#) to get access to this exclusive webinar.

Building Relationships with the New Congress

With every new Congress there are new opportunities and challenges for advocates. Our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) came up with these THREE TIPS for building relationships with the new Congress:

Tip #1: Reach out to the House district office before the Washington office. The Washington office of a new Member of Congress has two responsibilities: legislative and representational. The district staff have a singular focus: build relationships with constituents. Advocates are much more likely to get a receptive response from a district-based district director than a harried DC-based legislative director.

Tip #2: Find out something about the freshman no one else knows. Before meeting with a new lawmaker do a little extra research on whether you or your advocates may have a connection to the lawmaker. For example, when Representative Susan Wild was a freshman in 2019, we learned from the Allentown's "Morning Call," that she grew up in a military family, had a personal connection to unions, and attended George Washington University Law School – all facts that could provide a connection to advocates in your network.

Tip #3: Get-to-Know-You Meetings are Smart with New Members. CMF has learned that senior Members of Congress get annoyed with groups that just schedule "check in" meetings with veteran lawmakers. In stark contrast, freshman lawmakers and their teams WANT to get to know new groups. If you plan a March or April meeting with five to ten constituents in the district office to discuss an issue connected to the state, you'll be doing that congressional office a favor.

Big provisions in \$1.7 trillion omnibus: What doctors should know

In enacting the 4,000-plus page, end-of-the-year spending package, Washington politicians [failed to stop the entirety of scheduled Medicare pay cuts](#), which will come at a financially precarious time for physician practices left reeling in the COVID-19 pandemic's third year.

Because of that, physicians will face a 2% cut in Medicare payment in 2023, and 2024 will bring at least a 1.25% cut. Nevertheless, the \$1.7 trillion bill signed by President Joe Biden does include a number of important AMA-supported provisions that physicians should know about.

Among other things, the omnibus bill extends:

- [Telehealth payment and regulatory flexibilities for two years](#). Supporting telehealth is an essential component of the [AMA Recovery Plan for America's Physicians](#).
- The [alternative payment model bonus at 3.5%](#) and delaying the scheduled increase in the revenue threshold.
- The [Medicare Acute Hospital Care at Home waiver](#) for two years.
- The increased Medicaid match rate for Puerto Rico for another five years.

The new law also adds:

- An exception to the Stark law to allow hospitals and other entities to provide evidence-based programs to boost physician resiliency and mental health and prevent suicide among physicians.
- A permanent option for states to provide [Medicaid coverage for 12 months postpartum](#).

- 200 more graduate medical education positions, 100 of which will be in psychiatry or psychiatric subspecialties—a small, but essential step to [address physician shortages](#).
- A requirement for Medicare Part B coverage of compression garments to treat lymphedema.

The spending package also incorporates central provisions of the:

- “[Retirement Parity for Student Loans Act](#),” which allows [employers to make matching retirement-plan contributions](#) for physicians and other workers as if their student-loan payments were salary reduction contributions.
- “[MAT Act](#)” to permanently repeal X-waiver requirements for the prescribing of buprenorphine for opioid-use disorder. Learn what’s at stake in [ending the overdose epidemic](#).
- “[NOPAIN Act](#),” which directs the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to provide separate payment for nonopioid treatments used to manage pain in the hospital outpatient departments and ambulatory surgery center settings.
- “[NIH Clinical Trial Diversity Act](#),” which sets out requirements to increase the diversity of clinical trial participants and foster participation in clinical trials.
- “[Public Health Prevents Pandemics Act](#)” to boost pandemic preparedness.

The failure to stop all of the Medicare physician payment cuts represents a deliberate decision by Congress to move away from the precedent set in 2021 of providing relief from budget-neutrality cuts.

Because of this, Congress has an increased responsibility to make important reforms to the Medicare physician payment system to ensure regular updates that reflect increases in the cost of providing care, like those included in payment systems for all other Medicare providers.

This year, the AMA will continue challenging Congress to work on systemic reforms and [make Medicare work better for you and your patients](#).

Visit AMA Advocacy in Action to find out what’s at stake in [reforming Medicare payment](#) and other advocacy priorities the AMA is actively working on.

AMPAC Candidate Workshop returns in person March 31 – April 2

Ever wonder how Doctors get elected to Congress or your state legislature? Considering a run for office for yourself? The AMPAC Candidate Workshop will teach you how to run a winning political campaign, just like we taught many of your AMA colleagues over the years.

After two years of hosting the program virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the AMPAC Candidate Workshop is returning in-person March 31 – April 2 at the AMA offices in Washington, DC – [registration now OPEN!](#)

The Candidate Workshop is designed to help you make the leap from the exam room to the campaign trail and give you the skills and strategic approach you will need to make a run for public office.

At the Candidate Workshop, Republican and Democratic political veterans work together to give you expert advice about being a successful candidate and how to run a winning campaign. You will learn: the importance of a disciplined campaign plan and message; the secrets of effective fundraising; what kinds of advertising may be right for your campaign; how to work with the media; as well as how to build your campaign team and a successful grassroots organization.

Please note the following:

- The Candidate Workshop is open to AMA physician members, member spouses, residents, medical students and state medical society staff.
- Registration fee is \$250 for AMA Member/\$1000 for non-AMA members. This fee is waived for AMA residents and students; however, space is limited and the AMPAC Board will review and select four participants from the pool of qualified resident and student applicants.
- Faculty, materials, and all meals during the meeting are covered by the AMA. Participants are responsible for their registration fee, travel to/from Washington, DC and hotel accommodations (AMA will provide you with a list of nearby hotels within walking distance of the AMA offices).
- Participants will be required to bring a laptop or Wi-Fi enabled tablet with them.
- All participants will be required to attest to being fully vaccination with at least one booster for the COVID-19 virus.

[Registration for the 2023 AMPAC Candidate Workshop is now OPEN.](#) Space is limited and the deadline to register is March 17, 2023.

For more information please contact: Politicaleducation@ama-assn.org



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