



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

- Clock is ticking on reversing Medicare physician payment cuts
- AMPAC Candidate Workshop returns in-person March 22-24
- How House retirements compare historically
- Register for upcoming CMF webinar: Advocacy with Congress in a Post-Pandemic World

Clock is ticking on reversing Medicare physician payment cuts

As you probably know, because of Congressional inaction at the end of the year, a new round of devastating Medicare physician payment cuts went into effect on Jan. 1. This 3.37% reduction comes after three years of consecutive cuts to Medicare services.

[Enough is enough—Congress must act now to reverse these devastating cuts.](#) If this latest cut is left in place, physician Medicare payments will have been reduced by almost 10% in four years. This is simply unsustainable for our nation's physicians and the patients they serve.

The clock is ticking and, to make matters worse, Congress only has until Jan. 19 to avert a partial government shutdown and fund programs for the coming year.

The [AMA urgently asks you to contact your members of Congress today](#) and demand they reverse these cuts as part of the upcoming 2024 appropriations package. If not, the effects will be exacerbated in rural and underserved areas, which continue to face significant healthcare access challenges.

Medicare physicians and other clinicians do not receive inflationary updates in the Medicare program, which is partially why eliminating these cuts is so crucial.

Congress only has until Jan. 19 to act, avoid a partial government shutdown and fund programs for the coming year. Further inaction is not an option - please contact your members of Congress today and urge them to support including language in the upcoming 2024 appropriations package that would fully reverse these devastating cuts.

AMPAC Candidate Workshop returns in-person March 22-24

AMPAC is excited to announce that the 2024 AMPAC Candidate Workshop will be held in-person, March 22-24 at the AMA offices in Washington, DC – [registration now OPEN!](#)

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. 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.

Attendees include physicians, spouses of physicians, residents and medical students and state medical society staff interested in becoming more involved in politics.

Please note the following:

1. The Candidate Workshop is open to AMA physician members, member spouses, residents, medical students and state medical society staff.
2. Registration fee is \$250 for AMA Members/spouses and \$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.
3. 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).
4. Participants will be required to bring a laptop or Wi-Fi enabled tablet with them.

[Registration for the 2024 AMPAC Candidate Workshop is now OPEN](#). Space is limited and the **deadline to register is March 1, 2024**.

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

How House retirements compare historically

By Kyle Kondik and Carah Ong Whaley from [Sabato's Crystal Ball](#)

Four more House retirements over the past several days pushed the number of incumbents running this year down to the post-World War II average, and there is of course more time for other House incumbents to retire.

Four Republicans—Reps. Doug Lamborn (R, CO-5), Greg Pence (R, IN-6), Larry Bucshon (R, IN-8), and Blaine Luetkemeyer (R, MO-3)—joined the growing number of House members heading for the exits recently. Their retirement announcements mean that, as of now, 22 Democratic House members and 16 Republicans are not running for reelection, according to the [House of Representatives Press Gallery](#).

That leaves, at maximum, 397 House incumbents running for another term this year—that assumes no more House retirements (which is not a safe assumption) and that the new members eventually elected in special elections to a few remaining vacant seats decide to run for reelection to full terms.

According to [Vital Statistics on Congress](#) as well as our own calculations, an average of 397 incumbents have run for reelection to the House each two-year cycle since 1946—the same number of incumbents who appear to be running again at the moment. The number of incumbents running again may be slightly different than the number of open seats, as sometimes two members will run against each other in the same district because of redistricting. There's at least one such instance this cycle, as a court-imposed new map in Alabama pushed Republican Reps. Jerry Carl and Barry Moore to run against one another in AL-1, leaving the redrawn AL-2 as an open seat (and Likely Democratic pickup) thanks to the new lines. It is possible that looming new maps in Louisiana and New York could create similar situations—or lead to additional retirements.

That a little under 400 House members on average seek reelection each cycle in a 435-member chamber just underscores the reality that despite high incumbent reelection rates, there actually is a fair amount of turnover in the House from each cycle. Another statistic that shows this trend is that following Bucshon's retirement, at most just 10 of the 66 Republicans who flipped Democratic-held districts in the GOP's 2010 wave will be in the House come 2025.

Bucshon, one of the recent retirees, represents the so-called "Bloody 8th," a one-time competitive district in southwest Indiana that has become a Republican bastion as Democrats have lost ground among the working-class white voters who dominate that district. The district was home to a high-profile controversy in the 1984 election, in which the Democratic-controlled House eventually determined Democratic incumbent Frank McCloskey won by just four votes, effectively overruling state authorities to howls of protest from Republicans who believed that Democrats stole the seat (for more on the 1984 race and its lingering repercussions, see this [great piece](#) from *Politico Magazine's* Michael Kruse). The current IN-8 gave nearly two-thirds of its votes to Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election and remains Safe Republican in our ratings.

Trump won 62% of the vote in the retiring Blaine Luetkemeyer's MO-3, which extends from central Missouri to the St. Louis exurbs, and he got 65% in the retiring Greg Pence's IN-6, which contains a southern chunk of Democratic Indianapolis's Marion County and extends east to the Ohio border, taking in many red counties along the way. These districts are also much too Republican to elect Democrats. Pence, the brother of former Vice President Mike Pence (R), is the fourth Indiana Republican not seeking reelection to the House this year: In addition to Pence and Bucshon, Rep. Jim Banks (R, IN-3) is running for Senate and Rep. Victoria Spartz (R, IN-5) is retiring, although she has sometimes waffled on that decision.

Alone among the four newly-open Republican seats, the district held by Doug Lamborn, CO-5, does merit a bit of a look as a district that could potentially be competitive in a general election. We're actually going to move it from Safe Republican to Likely Republican in our ratings, even though Democrats would need to have a whole lot to go right to seriously contest it.

Colorado Springs, described by the Almanac of American Politics as "one of America's most

Republican metropolitan areas," makes up the core of CO-5, which has consistently elected Republican House members since its creation after the 1970 census. The fast-growing city and surrounding areas are home to the Air Force Academy and otherwise features a huge military presence. Lamborn had some primary trouble over the years, but was always renominated since replacing the retiring Joel Hefley in 2006 (Lamborn beat Hefley's preferred successor, outflanking the former Hefley aide to the right). The growth of Colorado Spring's El Paso County, in addition to an added House seat in Colorado, meant that CO-5 could be drawn to just cover almost all of El Paso County, dropping a few rural counties that had previously been in the district.

[Continue reading](#)

CMF: Advocacy with Congress in a Post-Pandemic World

We've heard this a million times: the pandemic changed everything. Yet, how did remote work, virtual meetings, and the pandemic change advocacy with Congress? Our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) will reveal their latest congressional staff survey on January 22 at 2pm EST – [register here](#)

In late 2023, CMF conducted a new survey of congressional staff working in the policy and communications arenas. They explored:

- Do congressional staff prefer virtual to in-person meetings with constituents?
- What are congressional staff logistical preferences for virtual meetings (eg., number of participants, platform/software used, advance notice/request for meeting)?
- What constituent strategies work best in virtual meetings, compared to in-person meetings?

Please join the presenter, Bradford Fitch, President and CEO of CMF to hear how advocacy has changed, and how it has not, as a result of the pandemic.

[Register here](#)

Be sure to follow all the AMA's Physician Grassroots Network social media accounts for all the latest news on physician advocacy and what you can do to make sure your voice is heard on Capitol Hill.





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