



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

- Register for AMA's Fix Medicare Now August recess webinar
- Virtual or in-person meetings – which are better for certain advocacy goals?
- Tell Congress to fix prior auth by support the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act
- Democratic open House seats: A slight shift to the middle

Register for AMA's Fix Medicare Now August recess webinar

The American Medical Association's top federal priority remains reforming Medicare's broken physician payment system. Congress will soon be entering their August recess period, a time that provides physician advocates with opportunities to connect with their federal lawmakers back home. Join the AMA for an informative virtual webinar where we will review the current state of federal legislation and ways in which physician advocates can engage Congress during the month of August and beyond.

[Join us August 1 at 8 pm ET for our "Fix Medicare Now August Recess Campaign" webinar.](#)

During this webinar, Jason Marino, AMA Director of Congressional Affairs, will provide an update on the current state of Medicare legislation and what lies ahead for the remainder of the 118th Congress. Advocacy expert David Lusk of Key Advocacy will join us to discuss August recess advocacy best practices to prepare advocates for in-district legislative meetings, hosting members of Congress at site visits, and engaging with legislators online.

[Register now!](#) Space is limited, so please be sure to register early.

Virtual or in-person meetings - what are better for certain advocacy goals?

This month's feature will continue our distribution of our partner the Congressional Management Foundation's latest survey of Congress on virtual meetings. Virtual meetings between constituents and Members and Congress and staff are now a regular part of advocacy strategies. Yet, they cannot replace in-person meetings. In this latest survey CMF explored strengths and weaknesses for each of these formats.

One question they explored was this:

When comparing your constituent meetings that are held in-person to those that are held virtually/online, which format do you think is better at achieving the following?

Connecting with more constituents?

- 46% of congressional staff said in-person meetings were better
- 40% said virtual meetings were better

Understanding the issues?

- 40% of congressional staff said in-person meetings were better
- 8% said virtual meetings were better

Building relationships with constituents?

- 86% of congressional staff said in-person meetings were better
- 2% said virtual meetings were better

In the open-ended question and answer section of the survey there was consistent angst expressed by congressional staff regarding the quality of meetings. One House legislative director said this:

"It is very discouraging when I am on a virtual meeting and I can tell that participants are working on something else and not paying attention. It feels very disrespectful because you wouldn't do that in person so it shouldn't happen virtually."

In this and other survey answers, congressional staff expressed a preference for in-person meetings for high-quality interactions. Yet staff also appreciated that virtual meetings can be shorter and more frequent, allowing citizen-advocates to build upon relationships initiated in-person. Virtual meetings are a powerful new tool in a citizen-advocate's toolkit. But if grassroots directors do not make the investment to train advocates on how best to execute

them, you could be doing more harm to your cause than good.

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

Tell Congress to fix prior auth by supporting the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act

There are only a handful of legislative days left on the calendar before the upcoming August recess and time is of the essence to make sure Congress works to fix the cumbersome and outdated prior authorization system that continues to hamper physicians and patients alike.

[Contact your Representative and Senators today](#) and ask them to support the "Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act of 2024" (S. 4532/H.R. 8702)!

As you know, a bipartisan group of Senators and Representatives recently reintroduced the "Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act of 2024" (S. 4532/H.R. 8702). Legislation that, if enacted, would reduce the administrative burden placed on physicians by streamlining and standardizing electronic prior authorization processes within the Medicare Advantage program and limit unnecessary delays in patient care by mandating greater transparency and oversight of utilization management techniques used by health insurers.

More specifically, the legislation would:

- Require the Office of National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONCHIT) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to submit a report to Congress on the use of prior authorization in Medicare Advantage and what constitutes "real-time decisions" for "routinely approved services."
- Delegate explicit authority to CMS to implement this newly defined real-time prior authorization decision-making process for routinely approved services in Medicare Advantage.
- Delegate explicit authority to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to enforce the real-time prior authorization processes for routinely approved services and issue tighter timelines for health plans to make utilization management decisions, such as 24 hours for emergency services.
- Permit Medicare Advantage plans to institute gold-card policies.

- Mandate compliance with federally developed uniform electronic prior authorization technical standards, bar MA plans from utilizing faxes or proprietary payer portals, and institute robust transparency requirements pertaining to utilization management policies deployed by health insurers.

Prior authorization is not only an administrative nightmare; it's a barrier to providing timely, patient-centered care and new reports out of Capitol Hill indicate that momentum is growing to tackle the unnecessary burden that is prior authorization!

Now is the time to act - [please contact your Representative and Senators today](#) and ask them to support the "Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act of 2024" (S. 4532/H.R. 8702)!

Democratic open House seats: A slight shift to the middle

By Erin Covey of the Cook Political Report

Today, there are historically higher-than-average 48 open House seats, nearly evenly divided between the parties: 25 are held by Democrats, 23 by Republicans. And Republicans have decidedly more upside here: seven open Democratic seats are at risk of falling to the GOP (rated as Lean Democrat or more vulnerable, including three redrawn seats in North Carolina), whereas only two redrawn GOP seats (the 2nd District in Alabama and the 6th District in Louisiana) are poised to flip to Democratic control.

Overall, the more moderate wing of the Democratic party has been a bit more successful than the progressive flank of the party in open seat primaries for solid Democratic seats. Though a few competitive primaries are still ahead, Democratic voters have picked their nominees for 14 solidly Democratic open seats. The majority of these Democrats were backed by the New Democrat Coalition, a caucus representing the more moderate, business-friendly side of the ideological spectrum.

Meanwhile, the Congressional Progressive Caucus is poised to gain at least four new members: three from the California delegation, plus Sarah McBride in Delaware (McBride has also been backed by the New Democrats.) Progressives could also gain new members in Westchester County Executive George Latimer, who despite ousting a prominent member of the Squad is reportedly considering joining the progressive caucus, and Maxine Dexter, the likely successor to outgoing Democratic Rep. Earl Blumenauer who was also regarded as more centrist than her primary opponents.

Likely U.S. House Freshmen Democrats - 119th Congress

District	Likely Incoming Member	Caucus
AL-01	Shomari Figures	New Dems
AZ-03	TBD	
CA-12	Lateefah Simon	CPC
CA-16	TBD	
CA-29	Luz Rivas	CPC
CA-30	Laura Friedman	CPC
CA-31	Gil Cisneros	New Dems
DE-AL	<i>Sarah McBride</i>	New
LA-06	<i>Cleo Fields</i>	unclear
MD-02	Johnny Olszewski	New Dems
MD-03	Sarah Elfreth	New Dems
MD-06	April Delaney	New Dems
MN-03	Kelly Morrison	New Dems
NH-02	TBD	
NJ-03	Herb Conaway	unclear
NJ-10	<i>LaMonica McIver</i>	CPC
NY-16	George Latimer	unclear
NY-26	Tim Kennedy	New Dems
OR-03	Maxine Dexter	unclear
TX-32	Julie Johnson	New Dems
VA-10	Suhas Subramanyam	unclear
WA-06	TBD	

Italicized names are frontrunners in their primaries

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 Democratic National Convention	20 Democratic National Convention	21 Democratic National Convention	22 Democratic National Convention	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

AMA Events	Senate in Session	House in Session	Both Chambers in Session
	State Work Periods	District Work Periods	Both Work Periods

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.





[AMA Advocacy](#)



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