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

- Eight physician advocacy wins that set the stage for 2019
- 2020 Electoral College ratings
- What do Members of Congress really do?
- New Congress, New Contacts

Eight physician advocacy wins that set the stage for 2019
Given the turbulence in Washington, it's easy to overlook the many policy wins scored on behalf of patients and physicians at the national and state levels. In her opening address to the AMA State Advocacy Summit, AMA President Barbara L. McAneny, MD, detailed how physician advocacy has made a difference on gun violence, regulatory relief, physician payment and more, while offering a look ahead to the Association's ambitious 2019 policy goals.

The AMA secured more than 85 victories in advocating for patients and physicians in the areas of state regulation and legislation.

Here are eight areas in which physicians scored key advocacy wins in 2018, and what the AMA's targets are for this year.

Ending the opioid epidemic. One of the key wins in 2018 was to improve access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) coverage for opioid-use disorder in Pennsylvania—where prior authorization will be eliminated for MAT. *What's ahead in 2019:* Advocate more funding for multidisciplinary pain care and treatment for substance-use disorders, as well as increased enforcement of mental health and substance-use disorder parity laws.

Preventing gun violence. The big 2018 win was the successful advocacy for a federal ban on bump stocks and the AMA's partnership with AFFIRM, a physician-led nonprofit dedicated to gun violence research. *What's ahead in 2019:* The AMA will urge federal and state policymakers to fund research on gun violence prevention, and to strengthen background checks and other measures that can prevent deaths and injuries from firearms.

Drug pricing transparency and competition. 2018's key win came in the form of federal legislation signed into law, and numerous state bills, that will prohibit gag clauses and allow pharmacists to share lower-cost medication options with patients. *What's ahead in*

2019: Continue TruthinRx.org campaign with heightened grassroots mobilization efforts and pursue drug-pricing legislation that reflects AMA advocacy objectives.

Enhancing access to care. The big wins in 2018 were to help secure funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program for 10 years and expand Medicaid in four states. *What's ahead in 2019:* Continue to promote Medicaid expansion and advocate for policies that stabilize the individual insurance market.

Limiting prior authorization. 2018's key victory was to create a consensus statement to "right-size" prior authorization that was agreed to by multiple industry stakeholders. The AMA also launched a new grassroots advocacy website—FixPriorAuth.org. *What's ahead in 2019:* Work to reduce both the overall volume of prior-authorization requirements and the number of physicians subjected to such requirements

Fighting abusive insurer practices. In 2018, the big win was to persuade Anthem to reverse its planned modifier 25 policy, which would have led to $100 million in physician payment reductions. The AMA also opposed efforts by Anthem to retroactively deny coverage of emergency department care. *What's ahead in 2019:* Advocate directly with health insurers to stop policies that adversely affect patients and physicians.

Improving physician payment. The AMA scored a big 2018 win in leading a coalition to prevent the E/M code collapse, and also secured multiple changes to improve Medicare physician payment policies—for example, the Quality Payment Program (QPP). *What's ahead in 2019:* Advocate with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and Congress for continued improvements to the QPP.

Pushing for regulatory relief. The big victory in 2018 came with Congress eliminating the requirement that the federal electronic health record program become more stringent over time. *What's ahead in 2019:* The AMA will work to eliminate, streamline, align and simplify the many federal rules and regulations imposed on physicians.
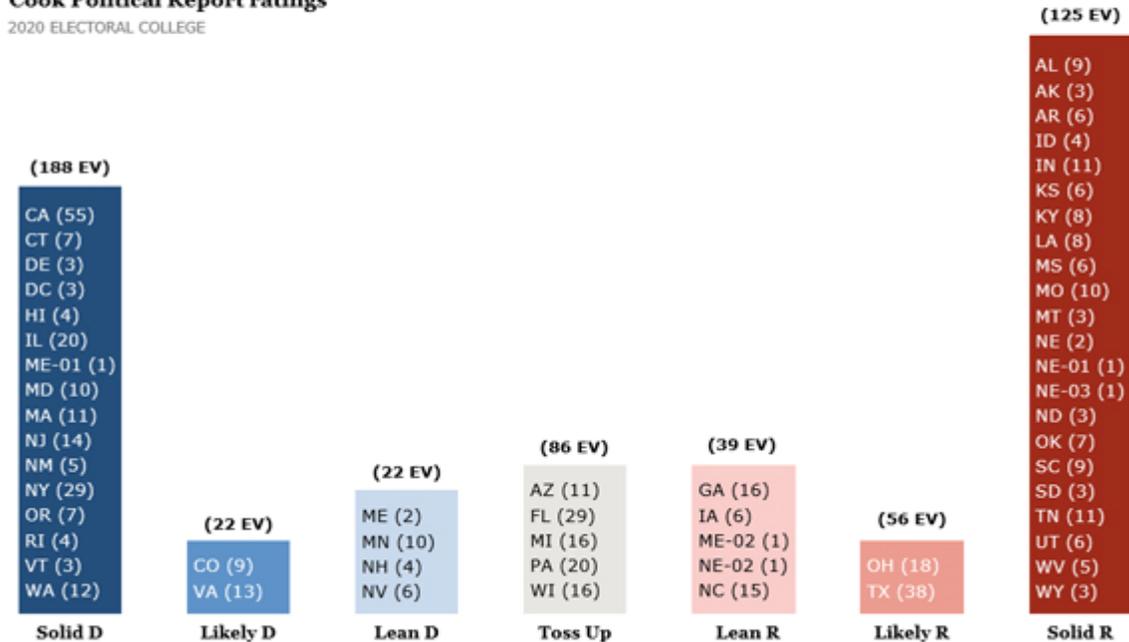
Cook Political Report releases its first set of 2020 Electoral College ratings
In 2016 then candidate Donald Trump secured the Presidency securing 306 electoral votes to Hilary Clinton's 232. While the 2020 Presidential field is still coming into focus, the Cook Political Report recently released their first set of Electoral College ratings outlined in the chart below. While many of these ratings remain a reflection 2016 there are some noticeable examples of states trending in both directions. Examples include once red Arizona and Georgia moving to "toss up" and "lean R" respectively. This highlights the demographic and voter shift in these states in recent years. On the other side you have once reliable blue states Michigan and Wisconsin rated as "toss ups." Donald Trump shocked many in 2016 by carrying these "blue wall" states as well as recently reliable Pennsylvania leading to his victory.

With the 2020 election still over a year and a half away, many of these ratings may shift in the coming months and we will provide you with up-to-date changes as the data becomes available.

The Cook Political Report has released its first set of 2020 Electoral College ratings

Cook Political Report ratings
2020 ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Solid D (188 EV)	Likely D (22 EV)	Lean D (22 EV)	Toss Up (86 EV)	Lean R (39 EV)	Likely R (56 EV)	Solid R (125 EV)
CA (55)	CO (9)	ME (2)	AZ (11)	GA (16)	OH (18)	AL (9)
CT (7)	VA (13)	MN (10)	FL (29)	IA (6)	TX (38)	AK (3)
DE (3)		NH (4)	MI (16)	ME-02 (1)		AR (6)
DC (3)		NV (6)	PA (20)	NE-02 (1)		ID (4)
HI (4)			WI (16)	NC (15)		IN (11)
IL (20)						KS (6)
ME-01 (1)						KY (8)
MD (10)						LA (8)
MA (11)						MS (6)
NJ (14)						MO (10)
NM (5)						MT (3)
NY (29)						NE (2)
OR (7)						NE-01 (1)
RI (4)						NE-03 (1)
VT (3)						ND (3)
WA (12)						OK (7)
						SC (9)
						SD (3)
						TN (11)
						UT (6)
						WV (5)
						WY (3)

Source: Cook Political Report.

Nicholas Wu | Slide last updated on: Jan. 18, 2019

What do members of Congress really do?
Our partners at the non-partisan Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) wanted to outline the actual responsibilities of a member of Congress. CMF developed a draft job description; then vetted it with former and current congressional staffers, who have more than a combined 140 years of congressional experience. The result was the Job Description for a Member of Congress, the first detailed description of the key responsibilities of a Member of Congress

We learned: Members of Congress must perform seven basic functions as follows:

- Representation
- Legislation
- Investigation/Oversight
- Management
- Politics
- Collaboration
- Leadership

While the skewed depiction of lawmakers that is presented by mainstream media and

Hollywood sells newspapers and movie tickets, citizens advocates improve their engagement with their legislators when they have a realistic understanding of what their Members of Congress really do.

Download the complete Job Description for a Member of Congress now. This is made available exclusively for VIP members only.

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

New Congress, New Contacts
The 116th Congress was sworn in last week ushering in one of the largest freshman classes in recent history. All told there are 101 new members of the House of Representatives and 10 new Senators that were elected to serve in the 116th Congress.

That's a lot of new faces walking the halls of Congress and we need your help - do you have a relationship with one of the new members of Congress? If so, we'd like to hear about it. If you support, voted for or have a personal relationship with any freshman legislator, please take a few moments and fill out this brief survey.

Already have a relationship with a non-freshman member of Congress? We want to hear from you too! Please click on the survey above and let us know. The information will help strengthen our grassroots network.

For more information please visit our VIP site at: physiciansgrassrootsnetwork.org/vip

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AMA Advocacy   AMPAC

Connect with the Physicians Grassroots Network :