



Welcome to Family Medicine Advocacy Rounds — the American Academy of Family Physicians' monthly tip sheet to educate, engage and update you on the latest policy issues affecting family physicians and their patients.

### **Family Physicians Visit Capitol Hill to Improve Investment in Primary Care**



**Why it matters:** Yesterday, the AAFP's Board of Directors met with lawmakers and their staffs on Capitol Hill to advocate for policy to improve access to care and elevate family medicine, including protecting and strengthening the Medicaid program, bolstering the primary care workforce and reforming Medicare payment for physicians.

Family physicians uniquely understand the complexities of delivering health care to patients across the lifespan. These visits allowed AAFP Board members to share with policymakers personal stories about how health care affects their patients' lives.

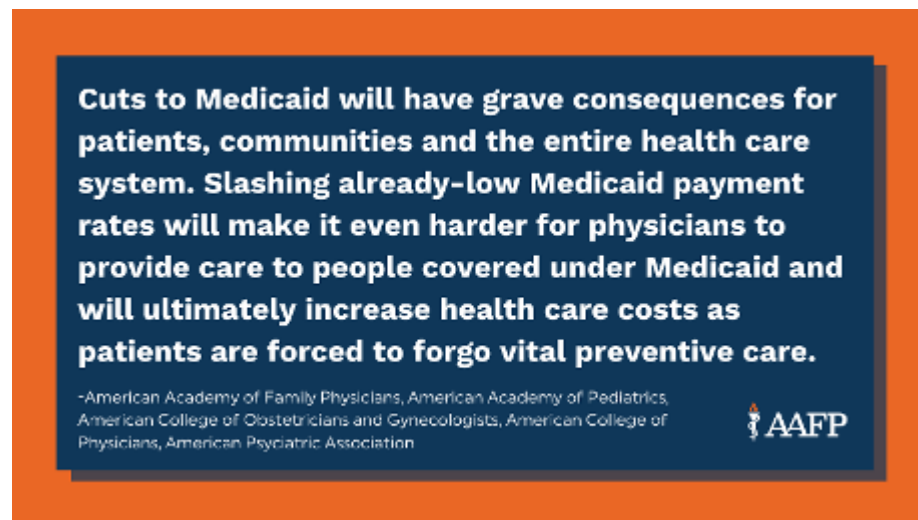
#### ***What we're working on:***

- The Medicaid program is a lifeline for patients seeking health care — encompassing primary care visits; labor and delivery, maternal and pediatric health services; behavioral

health care; and preventive care that saves lives. The AAFP is urging Congress to prioritize program changes that enhance Medicaid beneficiaries' access to continuous, comprehensive primary care, instead of pursuing punitive reforms.

- We need more doctors, and we need them practicing in communities that lack adequate access to care. Our Board of Directors asked Congress for permanent authorization of the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program, rather than patchwork of reauthorizations that creates instability and uncertainty.
- Family physicians provide high-quality, comprehensive care to patients, but the current payment system severely undervalues the work they do. Without congressional action, the AAFP is concerned that the Medicare payment cuts that went into effect on Jan. 1, 2025, will further erode patients' access to primary care.
  - Members also talked to Congress about much-needed reforms to budget neutrality requirements, which undermine positive policy changes and hamstringing CMS' ability to appropriately pay for all the services patients need.

### **The AAFP Urges Congress to Protect Medicaid Program**



**Why it matters:** For decades, the Medicaid program has provided health care coverage for millions of people — including children and parents, seniors, low-income adults, pregnant patients and individuals with disabilities — in communities large and small, urban and rural.

### ***What we're working on:***

- The AAFP joined the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians and the American Psychiatric Association in [urging Congress to oppose legislation that would implement cuts to Medicaid](#).
- The AAFP is calling on lawmakers to pursue policies that would enhance Medicaid beneficiaries' access to continuous, comprehensive, longitudinal primary care, which evidence has consistently shown can yield long-term cost savings while improving

outcomes.

- Specifically, we have endorsed two recently reintroduced bipartisan bills: the Medicaid Primary Care Improvement Act and the Kids' Access to Primary Care Act.
  - The Medicaid Primary Care Improvement Act would clarify that state Medicaid agencies may pay for direct primary care arrangements for enrollees. This practice model is an alternative to traditional fee-for-service and insurance billing that emphasizes the power of a continuous relationship between a patient and their family physician to improve outcomes and lower costs.
  - The Kids' Access to Primary Care Act would ensure that Medicaid payment rates for primary care services are at least equal to Medicare payment rates. This would have a significant impact on improving patient access to care, given that Medicaid now pays physicians on average two-thirds of what Medicare pays.

### **The AAFP Shares Recommendations for 2026 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule**

***Why it matters:*** As the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services begins its work to update annual physician payment policies, the AAFP is calling on the agency to include proposed changes that will help stabilize the primary care physician workforce and increase patient access to care.

#### ***What we're working on:***

- The AAFP [submitted recommendations](#) for consideration as CMS begins work on the 2026 Medicare physician fee schedule proposed rule.
  - Our major recommendations centered on changes to the supervision of primary care resident physicians.
  - We believe the existing requirements are largely outdated due to enhancements in graduate medical education, and reform will meaningfully improve Medicare beneficiaries' access to high-quality services and help to address the family physician workforce shortage.

### **AAFP Leader Testifies on Family Physicians' Role in Health and Wellness**



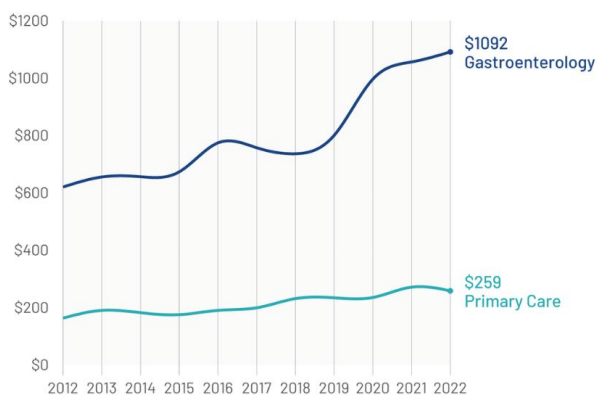
On February 12, AAFP President-elect Sarah Nosal, M.D., FAAFP, shared testimony before the [Senate Special Committee on Aging](#) on how family medicine supports health and wellness for patients across the lifespan. In her testimony, Nosal urged Congress to strengthen and protect the Medicaid program and advance policies to address food insecurity, unstable housing and other health-related social needs, which would improve health outcomes at the community, family and individual levels.

Read her full testimony [here](#).

### **Third Annual Primary Care Scorecard Explores Consequences of Lack of Investment**

#### **2025 Health of US Primary Care Scorecard The Cost of Neglect: How Chronic Underinvestment in Primary Care Is Failing US Patients**

Per Visit Revenue for  
Primary Care Is One-Fifth  
of Revenue for  
Procedure-Heavy  
Specialties (2012–2022)



**Milbank**  
Memorial Fund  
Using evidence to improve population health

**THE PHYSICIANS**  
**FOUNDATION**  
Empowering Physicians  
Improving Healthcare

As the nation faces a widespread surge in chronic diseases, the third Primary Care Scorecard highlights how systemic disinvestment in U.S. primary care poses a grave threat to the well-being of communities nationwide.

Developed by researchers at the American Academy of Family Physicians' Robert Graham Center with support from the Milbank Memorial Fund and the Physicians Foundation, [The Health of U.S. Primary Care: 2025 Scorecard](#) report and its state data dashboard track key metrics of primary care performance, providing a national and state-by-state overview since last year's report.

This report highlights how underinvestment undermines the effectiveness of primary care delivery and, more importantly, jeopardizes the overall health of our communities. Of note, the scorecard found:

- Spending on primary care was less than 5% in 2022 and continued its decline across all payers.
- More than 30% of U.S. adults lacked a usual source of care in 2022 — the highest level in a decade of measurement.
- In 2022, the percentage of new physicians entering primary care dropped to 24.4%, its lowest rate in a decade.

### **New AAFP Study: Family Physicians and Primary Care Are Ready for AI but Have Some Concerns**

**“Family physicians are eager for tools that enhance care without compromising patient trust or adding undue complexity to their already complex practice environments.”**

-Steven E. Waldren, M.D.  
Chief Medical Informatics Officer at AAFP



**Why it matters:** Artificial intelligence (AI) is at a tipping point, with substantial opportunities for growth if concerns are addressed, according to a recent [survey](#) conducted by the AAFP and Rock Health. The study explored the adoption and perceptions of AI and digital health tools among family physicians and other primary care clinicians. The findings revealed a strong interest in AI, tempered by cautious optimism and concerns about its implementation.

***What we're working on:***

- The AAFP, in partnership with Rock Health, [released new research](#) that found:
  - Nearly 40% of family physicians and other primary care clinicians report experiencing burnout.
  - Seventy percent of family physicians and other primary care physicians believe AI will improve clinician wellbeing.
  - Clinicians are embracing AI in their personal lives—62% have experimented with generative AI outside of work, through consumer applications like virtual assistants (e.g., Alexa, ChatGPT, Google Assistant, Siri), which reinforces their growing familiarity with AI technologies.
  - Over 80% of family physicians and other primary care clinicians said they would like more training to use AI.



## **AAFP Weighs in on Graduate Medical Education Reform**



***Why it matters:*** The U.S. faces a critical family physician workforce shortage, compounded by misalignment of resources in medical education, which has led to disparate access to care for patients nationwide. The AAFP continues to encourage Congress to consider ways to reimagine our country's graduate medical education system so that it better supports and invests in primary care, including an expansion of training in community-based settings.

### ***What we're working on:***

- The AAFP sent a [response](#) to Sens. Cassidy, Cortez-Masto, Cornyn and Bennet on their proposed GME-reform legislation.
- We're pleased that they took many AAFP policy priorities into account, including utilizing new methodology to best determine slot distribution that is similar to AAFP's "impact factor," increasing transparency and data collection for GME programs, ensuring that primary care residencies are prioritized for the distribution of new GME slots and reinforcing the importance of Teaching Health Center GME programs.

### **What We're Reading**

- [Politico](#) reported on the AAFP and Rock Health's new survey about clinician's perceptions of artificial intelligence. More than 70 percent of respondents believe AI will reduce the time it takes to diagnose patients.
- Cynthia Chen-Joea, D.O., M.P.H., C.P.H., FFAFP, a Board member of the American Academy of Family Physicians, spoke to [Healio](#) about the maternal mortality crisis. "Family doctors play such a crucial role in providing treatment in the prenatal and the postpartum period," she said. "It's really, I think, our relationships and our connection with our patients that's really that key, powerful tool."
- [Medical Economics](#) highlighted AAFP's advocacy efforts to protect the Medicaid program. Proposed Medicaid cuts could severely affect patient access, particularly for vulnerable populations, by limiting enrollment, reducing benefits and lowering physician

reimbursements.

For the latest policy updates on family medicine, follow us at [@aafp\\_advocacy](https://twitter.com/aafp_advocacy).



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### **About American Academy of Family Physicians**

*Founded in 1947, the AAFP represents 130,000 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the largest medical society devoted solely to primary care. Family physicians conduct approximately one in five office visits — that's 192 million visits annually or 48 percent more than the next most visited medical specialty. Today, family physicians provide more care for America's underserved and rural populations than any other medical specialty. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care. To learn more about the specialty of family medicine and the AAFP's positions on issues and clinical care, visit [www.aafp.org](http://www.aafp.org). For information about health care, health conditions and wellness, please visit the AAFP's consumer website, [www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org)*