



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.

AAFP Responds to ACIP Changes



Why it matters: A series of [recent decisions](#) made by the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) have damaged public confidence and placed public health in danger.

The AAFP has spoken out about individual moves made by the Secretary over the past five months. We are speaking out to denounce the collective harm being caused by recent decisions associated with vaccine policy, and we call on Congress to intervene before irreparable damage is done.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the National Vaccine Injury Prevention Program (NVICP) hold tremendous [weight and relevance](#). Infectious diseases are constantly evolving opponents, and vaccines are among the best, most cost-effective tools for constantly adapting and responding to the latest public health threats.

ACIP, which reviews the latest vaccination data, votes on recommendations and produces public transparency via a live video stream, is a prime example of engaging a thoughtful, transparent and well-organized scientific community.

These bodies also create an invaluable touch point within the scientific community. Work groups and discussions help cultivate relationships, promote agility and develop the collaborative, data-driven problem solving required to respond efficiently to a public health crisis.

What we're working on:

- At the American Medical Association House of Delegates meeting, the AAFP [spearheaded](#) a resolution with more than 30 medical organizations to defend the integrity of vaccine policy and urged the House of Medicine to act against interference that threatens the established, evidence-based processes that keep patients safe.
- The AAFP, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Physicians and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists [wrote a letter](#) to Congress urging committees to hold oversight hearings with the HHS secretary to investigate actions and take legislative action to ensure ACIP remains a body committed to advancing evidence-based vaccine recommendations.
- The [AAFP joined](#) the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and other health care organizations to urge payers and insurers to ensure COVID-19 vaccines remain accessible to pregnant people without cost or barriers to access.
- The AAFP issued a [press statement](#) in response to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) secretary's removal of all 17 ACIP members. This dangerous move erodes decades of established processes, discards the expertise of the medical and scientific community and delays getting lifesaving vaccines to patients. We also [urged](#) Secretary Kennedy to restore a transparent, evidence-based approach that upholds scientific integrity of our nation's vaccine policy process and keeps patients healthy.
- In May, the AAFP released a [statement](#) in response to the intended changes to the recommended immunization schedule for children and adults. We reaffirmed that vaccines play a crucial role in protecting vulnerable groups against disease, especially children and pregnant patients and their caregivers. These changes would also undermine access, affect insurance coverage and impede progress made toward improving public health.
- We [endorsed legislation](#) that would codify the roles and responsibilities of ACIP and the NVICP. H.R. 3701, the Family Vaccine Protection Act, would codify ACIP's objectives, scope of activities, advice and guidance for unlicensed vaccines, considerations for recommendation development, withdrawal of recommendations, meetings, membership, recordkeeping and funding—providing new guardrails to ensure that the science-based process for recommending vaccines is protected.

- The AAFP and other leading physician organizations [sent a letter](#) to HHS urging the agency to use ACIP's expertise and recommendations and to reinstate the previous evidence-based recommendations for the COVID-19 vaccine that were established in consultation with ACIP. We also urge HHS to follow the transparent, science-driven process that allows input from ACIP and the public who will be affected by this decision.

Leading Physician Groups Urge Senate to Protect Medicaid, PSLF, Reform Payment



Why it matters: Family physicians are deeply concerned with several provisions in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1), which now moves to the Senate. The AAFP remains engaged as the legislative process proceeds and continues to advocate to protect the financial integrity of federal programs while preserving patients' access to care and strengthening physician practices.

What we're working on:

- In a [joint statement](#), the AAFP, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Psychiatric Association and the American Osteopathic Association called on lawmakers to address several concerning provisions in the package, particularly those affecting Medicaid coverage and financing, Medicare physician payment and medical student loan debt.
- The AAFP [sent a letter](#) to the Senate in response to the House-passed budget reconciliation package. Highlights include:
 - Opposition to many of the Medicaid provisions as written, which would impose work-reporting requirements, increase eligibility checks, limit state financing options and penalize states using their own funds to cover undocumented individuals.

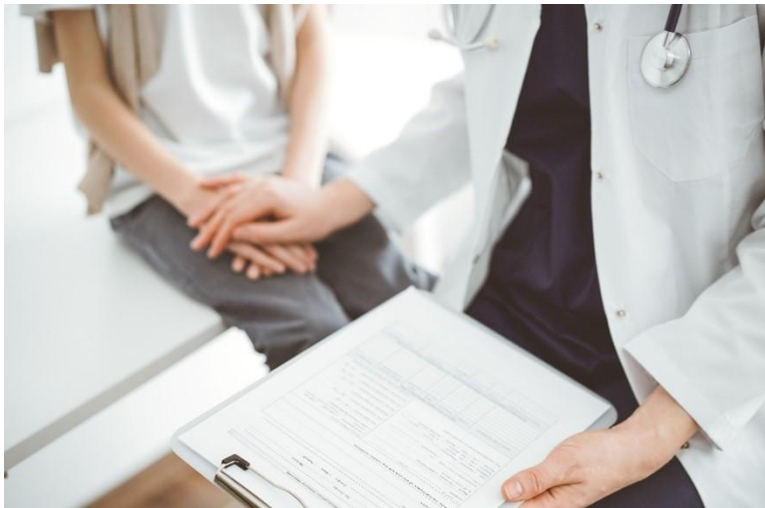
- Concern with provisions that further threaten access to coverage via Medicare and ACA Marketplace plans, which will only exacerbate the burden of uncompensated care on the system.
- Encourage Congress to incorporate the ACA's advanced premium tax credits (APTCs), given they expire at the end of the year.
- Oppose caps on federal student loans and the exclusion of medical residents from the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program.
- Concern about proposals to limit cost updates to the Thrifty Food Plan, which could undercut SNAP recipients' ability to afford a healthy diet.

Physician Leaders Emphasize Need for Medicare Payment Reform

In a new op-ed in [Medscape](#), R. Shawn Martin, EVP and CEO of the American Academy of Family Physicians, and Patricia L. Turner, Executive Director and CEO of the American College of Surgeons, shared how safeguarding access to care for those who rely on Medicare should be non-negotiable.

Bipartisan solutions do exist, and both organizations have advocated relentlessly for policies that account for rising costs, including an annual inflationary update to Medicare payment and reforms to requirements for budget neutrality. Enacting these reforms would do more than stabilize physician practices; they would protect access to care for Medicare beneficiaries across the country.

AAFP Comments on 2026 Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment Systems (IPPS) Proposed Rule



The AAFP submitted comments in response to the 2026 Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment Systems (IPPS) proposed rule. This would update Medicare payments for hospitals and long-term care facilities and improve some quality standards.

The [letter](#), from the AAFP and the Council of Academic Family Medicine (CAFM), supports these efforts, which are especially important for protecting rural hospitals through programs such as the Medicare-Dependent Hospital program. The letter also urges the Centers for

Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to move forward with new technology rules that would help hospitals share data more easily. Finally, it highlights how discharge plans should make sure that patients are connected with their primary care clinician, to support better care and smoother transitions after hospital stays.

AAFP Shares Health Technology Recommendations With CMS/ASTP

The AAFP wrote a [letter](#) to CMS and the Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy/National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ASTP/ONC) on how digital health tools, data sharing and health technology can better support Medicare patients.

The letter outlines recommendations for how CMS and ASTP/ONC can facilitate the effective and responsible adoption of technology — particularly in support of value-based care settings — which can empower patients and physicians to work together to make the best decisions possible for everyone's health without increasing administrative burden on family physicians.

AAFP Submits Comments to DOJ, FTC on Competition



The AAFP responded to a request for information (RFI) from the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission seeking input on policies that reduce competition in health care markets. In addition to eliminating regulations that create unnecessary barriers to competition, the DOJ's RFI also expressed interest in working with Congress to address anticompetitive statutes.

[The AAFP's response](#) detailed laws and regulations that drive consolidation and make independent practice less sustainable. Recommendations include reforms to the payment system, eliminating administrative burden and banning the use of restrictive noncompete clauses in employment contracts.

What We're Reading

- The AAFP's statement on Senate reconciliation was featured in [Medical Economics](#) and outlines our commitment to protecting Medicaid, protecting student loan forgiveness programs and reforming Medicare physician payment.
- In an op-ed published in the [Washington Times](#), AAFP President Jen Brull, MD, FAAFP, highlighted how loan forgiveness programs directly influence the choice to enter family medicine.
- Dr. Brull appeared on the [Mayo Clinic's Health Matters podcast](#) to discuss the importance of addressing mental health in a primary care setting.
- Medicaid isn't a handout; it's a lifeline. This is the message that family physician leaders in Alaska, Maine and Missouri shared with senators ahead of budget reconciliation. Read more in the [Anchorage Daily News](#), the [Bangor Daily News](#) and the [Kansas City Star](#).