

SAGES AMA update 11/2025

Our AMA delegation thanks SAGES staff Julie Miller who provides ongoing steadfast support.

Since our last board meeting in March your SAGES AMA delegation stays strong with 2 delegates (Paresh & myself), 2 alternate delegates (Kellie McFarlin & Jarvis Walters) and new observer (Sierra Grasso). Ross Goldberg represents ACS, however we still claim him as our own. We've been busy moving the needle on SAGES initiatives.

At the AMA bi-annual meetings in June in Chicago and last week (11/14-18) in Washington DC:

SAGES co-authored/supported several resolutions & provided testimony advocating for:
SAGES focused resolutions:

1. Support of the rural, community and private practice models to ensure a balanced & sustained employment marketplace in the United States (June & November, 2025) (CMS report 3)
2. Appropriate use of surgical resident case logs in public publications & how that may be perceived regarding technical competency (November 2025) (Res 004)
3. Reasonable workplace accommodations for residents and fellows during pregnancy (November 2025) (Res 309)
4. Enhancing Healthcare system preparedness to address Veteran-Specific Health Disparities (November 2025) (Res 935)
5. An annual educational program at the AMA regarding the impact of obesity in America. (June 2025) (policy)

Highlighted Nationally urgent resolutions:

1. Health Savings Account (HSA) reform citing these as complimentary too and NOT a replacement for ACA premium tax credits (November 2025) (CMS reports 1-3)
2. Pathways to US permanent residency for H-1B Visa physicians (November 2025) (Res 213)

3. Support of Medicare reform bills HR 879 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/879> and S 1640 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/1640> (November 2025)

These AMA policy positions are used by Congress and other legislative entities to craft laws regulating these topics. Final policy language is being written currently & can be accessed here: [Business of the AMA House of Delegates Interim Meeting | American Medical Association](#)

CMS Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz was a guest last Sunday and spoke of empowering physicians in health policy. Regardless of sentiment towards him, we maintained our line of communication with the current administration which is imperative for health policy advances over the next several years.

The #1 overall priority of the AMA remains Fixing Medicare... and it will be so until it is fixed. For now AMA VP of Advocacy Todd Askew included in his report that although specialists (like us) are facing a 2026 2.5% Medicare “efficiency” cut due to reduced times to complete complex surgeries, this is offset by a 3.26% increase in a conversion factor. Since RVU tables for 2026 are pending in 2-3 weeks we’ll be able to determine more precisely how we’ll be impacted thereafter. Stay tuned & keep in touch with your chief financial officers.

We’ll be monitoring the Medicare electronic pre-auth in 6 states with AI (WISER program) starting in 2026 closely over the next year. AI will become increasingly present in healthcare & we must embrace it proactively.

Regarding Medicaid- no one is “cut off” but the re-enrollment process is designed to be so burdensome that many will be overwhelmed & fall off resulting in millions of uninsured patients.

In your board packets I included the 2025 AMA Advocacy report which highlights how dire the situation is and our efforts to right the ship, which relies heavily on surgical leadership. I'm proud to say that the AMA is led by surgeons. Our President Bobby Mukkamala is an ENT in Flint MI, President elect Willy Underwood is a urologist in Buffalo NY, the House Speaker, Lisa Egbert is an OB/Gyn in Dayton OH, and our Vice Speaker John Armstrong is a trauma surgeon in Tampa FL. Several of those are in private practice.

After years of minimal conversation about Medicare reform 5 congressional bills have been introduced within the past 2 years including HR 879 and S 1640 noted above and these:

[HR 2474 https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/1640](https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/1640)

[HR 10073 https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/10073](https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/10073)

HR 6371 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/6371>

The efforts impact ALL SAGES members regardless of employment status & the current status of Medicare is NOT sustainable.

American voters have little concern about doctors getting paid. However they DO care about having access to doctors.

On occasion, your SAGES delegates serve as the face of the entire AMA on outreach online promotions. We persevere with guarded optimism.

All SAGES members can support your delegation's efforts to Fix Medicare and help sustain health care delivery.

You can take action right now and it takes just a few seconds:

Sign the petition holding the insurance companies who pledged in July to ease the burden of prior authorization to actually do so! They're dragging their feet & need to be called out for it:

[Petition | Fix Prior Auth](#)

A second thing we can all do right now is click on this link:

<https://fixmedicarenow.org/take-action?vvsrc=/Campaigns/120960/Respond> and sign the templated letter to your congressional delegation. A very brief personal note such as "Ongoing Medicare cuts are devastating healthcare in my community." Is fine.

The actual number of letters received is the most important metric your representatives have regarding the magnitude of this problem so post the PDF with this link:

https://fixmedicarenow.org/sites/default/files/202401/FixMedicareNow_ReceptionAreaFlier_January2024.pdf, in your exam rooms so that patients can also join the fight to fix Medicare.

Please maintain your AMA membership, support the PAC and encourage others to join. This is relevant since the AMA is THE voice of medicine in this country and our membership determines our delegation size and our representation in CPT and RUC committees.