

# GET INVOLVED

## 2024 Advocacy Agenda

### ***Make your voice heard in Washington...***

Know South Dakota's members of Congress.

#### **Sen. Mike Rounds**

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716 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510  
[www.rounds.senate.gov](http://www.rounds.senate.gov)

#### **Sen. John Thune**

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[www.thune.senate.gov](http://www.thune.senate.gov)

#### **Rep. Dusty Johnson**

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1714 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515  
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### ***...and in Pierre***

Know your state senators and representatives.

Phone: 605.773.3251  
South Dakota legislator listing available at [sdlegislature.gov](http://sdlegislature.gov)

Write to:  
The Honorable (name)  
500 E. Capitol Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501-5070

Email:  
[firstname.lastname@sdlegislature.gov](mailto:firstname.lastname@sdlegislature.gov)

### **Ensure Access to High-Quality Health Care – Preserve the Patient-Physician Relationship**

The relationship between a patient and a physician is based on trust, and this relationship gives rise to physicians' ethical responsibility to place their patients' welfare above the physician's own self-interest or obligations to others, to use sound medical judgment on their patient's behalf, and to advocate for their patient's welfare. The SDSMA supports physician and patient autonomy in the provision of evidence-based medical services, which includes reproductive health care. The SDSMA maintains that these are personal health and medical decisions to be made by a qualified physician and patient and will oppose attempts to infringe upon the physician-patient relationship.

### **Ensure Access to High-Quality Health Care – Enforce Scope of Practice**

To protect South Dakota patients and ensure that patients receive the best medical care from the people best trained to deliver that care, the SDSMA will oppose any efforts to allow non-physicians to practice medicine beyond the scope of their education and training.

### **Ensure Access to High-Quality Health Care – Medical Education**

South Dakota is facing a shortage of physicians as more than one in four South Dakota residents live in what has been classified as a "primary care shortage area." Given the fact that patients prefer a physician for their primary care, the SDSMA strongly supports increased funding for medical student and graduate medical education.

### **Ensure Access to High-Quality Care – Telemedicine**

Rural health care is a critical issue to the people of South Dakota, and access to high quality and affordable health care is essential in improving public health. Interactive telemedicine services provide real-time, face-to-face interaction between patient and provider, and have been used as an alternative to traditional in-person health care delivery for some time. And in certain circumstances, telemedicine can be used to deliver such care as the diagnosis, consultation, treatment, education, care management and self-management to patients. Therefore, the SDSMA will advocate for the passage of legislation to ensure payment and payment parity for services provided via telemedicine.

### **Improve Public Health – Access to Mental Health Services**

Untreated issues related to poor mental health is one of the primary causes of self-medication and addiction. The SDSMA will advocate for improved access and third-party coverage of psychosocial support and services for those with mental illness.

### **Improve Public Health – Prevention**

The SDSMA believes in promoting healthy lifestyles, eliminating health disparities, and improving awareness of public health issues such as the harmful effects of tobacco use and secondhand smoke, e-cigarette use, obesity, drug and alcohol abuse, violence prevention, and suicide prevention. The SDSMA supports funding, education, and state requirements for vaccines and opposes exemptions related to vaccines and immunization requirements.

## **Improve Public Health – Coverage**

As work on reforming health care continues, the SDSMA believes the following are important:

- Ensure that Medicaid, CHIP, and other safety net programs are adequately funded.
- Ensure that individuals currently covered do not become uninsured and take steps toward coverage and access for all South Dakotans.
- Maintain key insurance market reforms, such as pre-existing conditions, guaranteed issue, and parental coverage for young adults.
- Stabilize and strengthen the individual insurance market.
- Support the advancement of delivery reforms and physician-led payment models to achieve better outcomes, higher quality, and lower spending trends.

## **Improve Public Health – Prevention of Firearm Injury and Death**

Death and injury from firearms has reached a point in the United States where it is a public health crisis, particularly among the young. In South Dakota the crisis primarily involves suicides, which account for 89% of all firearm deaths in the state.

To address this crisis and reduce suicides, the SDSMA will:

- Support legislation to enact extreme risk protection orders.
- Support legislation to add a waiting period for firearms purchase.
- Support legislation that provides comprehensive mental health services to the citizens of South Dakota.

## **Improve Public Health – Responsible Access to Medical Cannabis**

Patient health and safety is of the utmost importance to the SDSMA, and the association remains concerned that cannabis is a highly addictive drug of which evidence-based scientific research has documented many negative consequences with both short and long-term use.

The SDSMA supports an evidence-based approach to the evaluation of qualifying debilitating medical conditions for patient eligibility for medical cannabis.

## **Lower the Cost of Health Care Delivery – Prior Authorizations**

Prior authorization is a cost-control process requiring health care providers to qualify for payment by obtaining approval from health insurers before performing a service.

The SDSMA believes that prior authorization is overused and existing processes present significant administrative and clinical concerns.

Physicians want nothing more than to provide the most clinically appropriate care for their patients. Utilization management programs must therefore have a clinically accurate foundation for provider adherence to be feasible and to ensure that patients don't receive delayed or incomplete health care, thereby resulting in more serious health issues.

The SDSMA opposes cost-containment provisions that do not have proper medical justification and do little more than create administrative burdens that cause dangerous delays in patient care.

## **Lower the Cost of Health Care Delivery – Reform Medical Liability**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates the cost of defensive medicine to be between \$70 and \$126 billion per year. These costs mean higher health insurance premiums and higher medical costs for all. It is important to understand that every dollar that goes toward medical liability and defensive medicine is a dollar that does not go to patient care. South Dakota has a \$500,000 cap on non-economic damages in medical liability cases. The SDSMA supports federal medical liability reforms and will defend our state's liability cap.

**Want to learn more? Contact the SDSMA at 605.336.1965 or visit [www.sdsma.org](http://www.sdsma.org)**

**SOUTH DAKOTA**  
**STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**  
*Values. Ethics. Advocacy.*