



From Patients to Policy: *Physician Leadership in a Changing Profession*

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The weight physicians carry

Expanding administrative bureaucracy and paperwork

Increasing hostility

Attacks on science and misinformation campaigns

Government interference into patient-physician autonomy

Surging chronic disease

Economic pressures and uncertainty

Lack of trust in medical institutions

Concerning levels of professional burnout

Questions about AI and emerging health technology

Building a better health system





AMA's strategy for a better health system

- Ensure patient access to care
- Remove administrative burdens
- Fair compensation to support independent practice
- Evolve medical education and training
- Prioritize physician well-being
- Improve technology design and clinical integration

AMA's top advocacy priorities

- Reforming Medicare payments
- Tackling Prior Authorization
- Stopping Scope Creep
- Reducing burnout and improving physician well-being
- Advancing digital health, including telehealth



Building a stronger
physician workforce
and health system



Recent wins show impact of advocacy

- Newly passed, bipartisan federal government funding package includes package of health care proposals with policies championed by the AMA
- Eight major advocacy wins include key progress on:
 - Telehealth
 - Burnout
 - Prescription-drug pricing
 - Diabetes Prevention
 - Maternal Health



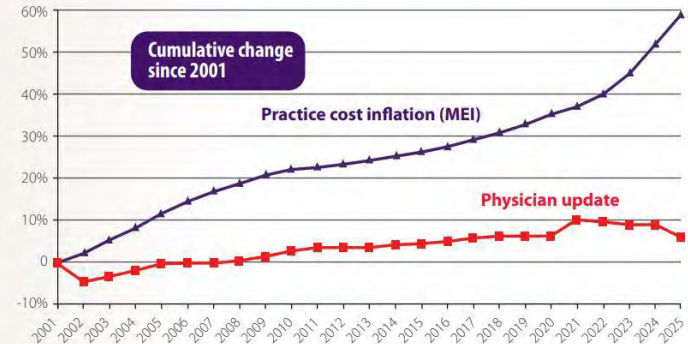
We need a rational Medicare payment system

- Physician Medicare payment has declined **33%** since 2001.
- Reform must provide financial stability, annual inflation-based payment updates.

Medicare physician payment continues to fall further behind practice cost inflation.

Medicare updates compared to inflation in practice costs (2001–2025)

Adjusted for inflation in practice costs, Medicare physician payment **declined 33%** from 2001 to 2025.



Sources: Federal Register, Medicare Trustees' Reports, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Congressional Budget Office.

Updated Jan. 2025

We need to fix Medicare physician payment **NOW.**



FIX MEDICARE NOW



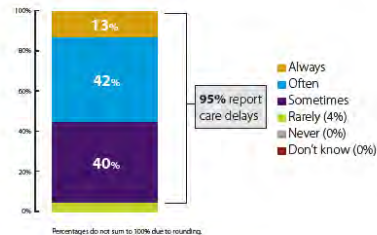
Prior auth harms patients, physicians

- Physicians spend **2 hours on administrative work for every hour of patient care.**
- 95% of physicians surveyed report that prior auth leads to delay in care.
- 79% say delays have led patients to **abandon treatment.**
- More than 1 in 4 say prior auth delays have led to **serious adverse event** for their patients.

Patient impact

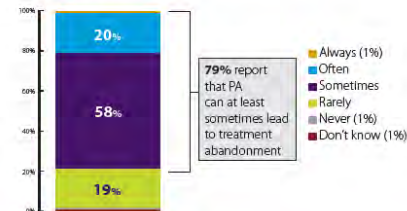
Care delays associated with PA

Q: For those patients whose treatment requires PA, how often does this process delay access to necessary care?



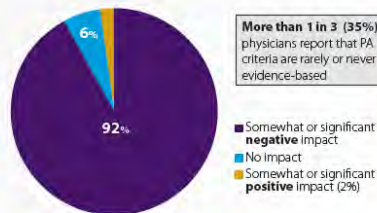
Treatment abandonment due to PA

Q: How often do issues related to the PA process lead to patients abandoning their recommended course of treatment?



Impact of PA on clinical outcomes

Q: For those patients whose treatment requires PA, what is your perception of the overall Impact of this process on patient clinical outcomes?



More than 1 in 4 physicians (26%) report that PA has led to a **serious adverse event** for a patient in their care.

20%

of physicians report that PA has led to a patient's hospitalization

22%

of physicians report that PA has led to a life-threatening event or required intervention to prevent permanent impairment or damage

8%

of physicians report that PA has led to a patient's disability/permanent bodily damage, congenital anomaly/birth defect or death

Momentum building toward true prior auth reforms

- 23 states enacted PA reforms in 2025
- At least 20 PA bills being considered in 2026
- Growing federal recognition (CMS WISeR model)
- NCOIL, NAIC moving toward reforms



Join us: FixPriorAuth.org

AMA continues push for federal PA legislation

Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act

- Reintroduced with lower CBO cost estimate.
- Expands on prior auth reforms by CMS.

Reducing Medically Unnecessary Delays in Care Act

- Would ensure PA treatment decisions would be made by specialty board-certified physicians for some plans.

The Patient Access to Autoimmune Treatments Act

- Reforms associated with autoimmune and blood disorders

Solving physician and staffing shortages

AMA advocacy supports bipartisan bills to help solve workforce shortages:

- Conrad 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act to bolster workforce in rural and underserved communities.
- Physician Shortage GME Cap Flex Act to expand residency training programs.
- Retirement Parity for Student Loans Act.
- Expanded role of IMGs and addressing H1-B fee issue





Leading medicine's digital future

The AMA Center for Digital Health and AI

The four pillars of the AMA Center:

- **Policy and regulatory leadership** so physicians shape the benchmarks for safe and effective AI use.
- **Clinical workflow Integration** to enhance the patient and clinical experiences.
- **Education & training** to equip physicians with the knowledge and tools to put AI into practice.
- **Collaboration** across tech, government and health care to drive innovation.



Learn more





The Future of Medicine is connected – not fragmented

**Help us create
a better health
care future**

JOIN US!





Physicians' powerful ally in patient care