

NEWS FROM THE AMA
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AMA ESTABLISHES NEW PRINCIPLES FOR ACCOUNTABLE CARE ORGANIZATIONS

CHICAGO – New principles for the development and operation of Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) became American Medical Association (AMA) policy this week at the organization’s semi-annual policy-making meeting. ACOs are an emerging model of patient care designed to provide high-quality patient care in an efficient manner.

The AMA’s [new principles](#) emphasize that ACOs must be physician-led, place patients’ interest first, ensure voluntary physician and patient participation and enable independent physicians to participate.

“The AMA is committed to ensuring physicians in all practice sizes can lead and participate successfully in new models that allow them to provide the best care to their patients,” Dr. Wilson said. “For this to happen, significant barriers must be addressed, including a lack of resources, existing antitrust rules and conflicting federal policies.

During a recent joint government agency meeting, AMA President Cecil B. Wilson, M.D. testified that there should be enough flexibility for physicians in all practice sizes to participate in ACOs. Although ACOs and other models of patient care were recently authorized in the new health reform law, existing antitrust and fraud rules can make becoming part of an ACO difficult for physicians, especially those in small practices. According to the latest AMA Physician Practice survey, 78 percent of office-based physicians in the United States work in practices with nine physicians or less. A majority of those are in either solo practices or practices of 2 to 4 physicians.

The AMA is developing resources for physicians to help them make informed participation decisions about ACOs. AMA members can find the tools they need to successfully participate and lead new initiatives, like accountable care organizations, on the AMA website at: www.ama-assn.org/go/paymentpathways.

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About the American Medical Association (AMA)

The American Medical Association helps doctors help patients by uniting physicians nationwide to work on the most important professional, public health and health policy issues. The nation’s largest physician organization plays a leading role in shaping the future of medicine. For more information on the AMA, please visit www.ama-assn.org.