

AMA Adopts New Policies on Final Day of Voting at Interim Meeting

CHICAGO - Nov. 13, 2012 - The American Medical Association (AMA), the nation's largest and most influential physician organization, voted during its policy-making meeting to adopt the following new items to its health care agenda:

Streamlining Prescription Refill Schedules

The CDC estimates that half of American adults suffer from a chronic disease, which often requires treatment with multiple medications. A recent report showed that an increasing number of medications and the logistics of retrieving prescriptions from a pharmacy are associated with decreased medication adherence. Today, the AMA adopted policy encouraging relevant organizations to develop a plan to implement prescription refill schedule strategies so that patients requiring multiple prescription medications may reduce travel barriers to get their medications.

“Patients with chronic conditions often need multiple prescription medications to effectively manage their conditions, but some may not be able to easily go to the pharmacy multiple times in a month to pick up their various medications,” said AMA Board Member Monica C. Wehby, M.D. “By finding ways coordinate a patient’s medication refill schedules, we can make it easier for patients to successfully stick with their medication regimen.”

Supporting Medicaid Expansion

The Supreme Court’s decision on the Affordable Care Act determined that it is optional for states to expand Medicaid eligibility to 133 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). New policy adopted calls on the nation’s largest physician organization, at the invitation of state medical societies to advocate at the state level to expand Medicaid eligibility to 133 percent FPL. The new policy also calls on the AMA to advocate for an increase in Medicaid payments to physicians and improvements and innovations in Medicaid that will reduce administrative burdens and deliver healthcare services more efficiently, even as coverage is expanded.

“Medicaid provides a safety net for our most vulnerable patients and allows them to access the health care they need,” said AMA Board Member Carl A. Sirio, M.D. “By expanding Medicaid eligibility at the state level, we can reduce the number of uninsured Americans who live sicker and die younger.”

Principles To Guide Health Care Teams

Given the impact of health care budgetary constraints at the state and federal levels, the imminent coverage of up to 30 million more Americans starting in 2014 and existing and predicted shortages of physicians and nurses, support for physician-led team-based care is building. New AMA policy adopted today outlines a set of principles to guide physician leaders of health care teams. Those principles can be viewed by visiting <http://www.ama-assn.org/resources/doc/hod/ama-policies-principles-for-health-care-teams.pdf>.

“The future of health care delivery is patient-centered and will require a team approach, and physicians and health care professionals need to be prepared to efficiently work together to provide quality patient care,” said Dr. Sirio. “The principles offered by this new policy can guide physician leaders of health care teams, helping to optimize patient-centered, coordinated, high-quality care.”

###