

AAFP News: *AFP* Edition

Policy and Health Issues in the News

AAFP Joins Partnership to Empower Physician-Led Care

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) is part of a new coalition called the Partnership to Empower Physician-Led Care, which is dedicated to supporting value-based care to reduce costs, improve quality, empower patients and physicians, and increase Americans' access to care through a competitive health care professional market. As such, the coalition stands with independent physician practices that are pursuing value-based care, as well as the organizations that support them. AAFP President Michael Munger, MD, said the coalition will work to ensure that all stakeholders understand the importance of independent practices to the health care system and the value those practices bring to improving quality and lowering the cost of care. He pointed out that independent physicians comprise nearly one-half of the total U.S. physician workforce but "the significant role they play in leading the movement to value-based care is overlooked." Munger said AAFP members—especially those who practice in privately owned clinics—will start seeing results in the form of enhanced opportunities to participate in value-based payment arrangements and expanded abilities to offer health care to their patients through alternative payment models. For more information, go to <https://www.aafp.org/news/practice-professional-issues/20180522pepc.html>.

Family Physicians Speak to Legislators About Fixing Health Care System

More than 225 family physicians gathered for the 2018 Family Medicine Advocacy Summit to learn how to work with legislators to improve their practices and their patients' lives. The summit gave physicians the opportunity to get advice on effective lobbying directly from members of Congress and their staff members, as well as from other government officials, policy experts, and professional lobbyists. The physicians then teamed up with colleagues from their states to take their messages into more than 250 meetings with legislators. Robert Hall, JD, the AAFP Director of Government Relations, told attendees that the stories that would be most helpful for advancing family medicine are those that touch on maternal mortality, rural graduate medical education, the need for a standard primary care benefit in high-deductible health plans, the opioid crisis, stabilizing the insurance market, and ways to support primary care in value-based payment models. Family physicians also asked legislators to support a draft bill that Sen. Cory Gardner, R-Colo., plans to introduce:

the Rural Physician Workforce Production Act, which aims to put more physicians in the areas that most need them. For more information, go to <https://www.aafp.org/news/government-medicine/20180530fmas.html>.

HealthLandscape Introduces Population Health Profiler

HealthLandscape, an innovation the AAFP acquired in 2014, has released its new free Community Vital Signs Population Health Profiler tool, which allows family physicians to learn about the social determinants of health in their patients' communities. The tool lets users create detailed zip code tabulation area-level maps of their service area and key community measures, including the distribution of age, ethnicity, social deprivation, inequities, access to health care, and chronic conditions. Detailed reports are available for 30 key measures in the areas of age and sex, race and ethnicity, inequities such as income inequality and linguistic isolation, social determinants of health, chronic conditions such as diabetes mellitus and obesity, and access to care. Users can also attend free webinars and take a self-guided walkthrough of the tool. For more information, go to <https://www.aafp.org/news/health-of-the-public/20180529pophealthprofiler.html>.

AAFP Joins Medical Groups Calling for Less Nicotine in Cigarettes

The AAFP has joined more than 40 public health and medical associations in support of a proposed update to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) cigarette product standards. In a letter to FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, MD, the AAFP and other associations said that a reduction to nonaddictive or minimally addictive levels would lead to "massive public health benefits," including the prevention of more young persons from smoking. In its advance notice of proposed rulemaking on the issue, the FDA said 5 million adult smokers could quit smoking within one year of implementation of the proposed new standards, and 33 million additional persons will have avoided becoming regular smokers by the end of the century. The groups called on the FDA to apply the updated nicotine standard to other combustible tobacco products. For more information, go to <https://www.aafp.org/news/government-medicine/20180525nicotinelevels.html>.

—AAFP and AAFP NEWS STAFF

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