

CONGRESSIONAL PRIMARY CARE CAUCUS

RECOMMENDATION

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives should join the Congressional Primary Care Caucus.

Background

The AAFP believes that this bipartisan caucus will make great strides in educating legislators, staff, and the public on primary care issues, experiences and concerns such as:

- Information Congress needs to know about what primary care is and the value it creates.
- Strategies to build the primary care physician workforce and to maintain an appropriate balance between primary care and subspecialty care physicians.
- Program and policy changes the government can make to increase primary care access and training, especially in underserved communities.
- Reforms needed to the Graduate Medical Education (GME) program to support the education and training of primary care physicians.
- Policy changes to improve telehealth services in the primary care setting.
- Steps for the government to harmonize quality improvement efforts among different payers.

In 2016 during the 114th Congress, Reps. David Rouzer (R-NC) and Joe Courtney (D-CT) launched the [Congressional Primary Care Caucus \(http://www.aafp.org/advocacy/track/primary-care-caucus.html\)](http://www.aafp.org/advocacy/track/primary-care-caucus.html). In announcing the formation of the caucus, the co-chairs said that they would "focus on educating members of Congress and the public about the value and importance of a comprehensive, coordinated and connected primary care system."

In this Congress, the Primary Care Caucus is again dedicated to advancing public policy that establishes, promotes and preserves a well-trained, high-quality primary care workforce and delivery system as the foundation of our nation's health care system. The caucus focuses its efforts on the advancement of primary care that is comprehensive in the delivery of services; continuous in caring for patients over time; connected to other health and community services; equitable to all regardless of age, race or gender; and mindful of social conditions that may hinder access to primary care.

A large body of research proves that establishing a relationship with a primary care physician or other primary care provider is one of the most reliable determinants of better health outcomes. Yet the US health care system significantly undervalues primary care. For example, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, a Congressional advisory entity, recently reported that the current Medicare physician fee schedule undervalues primary care relative to specialty care, noting a difference of nearly \$300,000 in annual compensation between a family physician and a cardiologist. This bias for specialty medicine drives student interest and further skews the ratio of primary care physicians to specialists.

The Congressional Primary Care Caucus also focuses its attention on the growing relative shortage of primary care physicians and other providers and brings together legislators and staff who are interested in addressing policy proposals that could mitigate this shortage.

**Roster of the Congressional Primary Care Caucus
115th Congress (as of May 16, 2017)**

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Rod Blum (R-IA) | Luke Messer (R-IN) |
| Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) | Tim Murphy (R-PA) |
| David Cicilline (D-RI) | Dan Newhouse (R-WA) |
| Joe Courtney, Co-Chair (D-CT) | Chellie Pingree (D-ME) |
| Peter DeFazio (D-OR) | Mark Pocan (D-WI) |
| Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) | David Price (D-NC) |
| Elizabeth Esty (D-CT) | Keith Rothfus (R-PA) |
| Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) | David Rouzer, Co-Chair (R-NC) |
| Andy Harris (R-MD) | Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) |
| Alcee Hastings (D-FL) | Raul Ruiz (D-CA) |
| Denny Heck (D-WA) | Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) |
| Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA) | Steve Stivers (R-OH) |
| Bill Huizenga (R-MI) | Patrick Tiberi (R-OH) |
| Lynn Jenkins (R-KS) | Norma Torres (D-CA) |
| Walter B. Jones (R-NC) | Niki Tsongas (D-MA) |
| Joseph P. Kennedy (D-MA) | Tim Walberg (R-MI) |
| Derek Kilmer (D-WA) | Greg Walden (R-OR) |
| Steve King (R-IA) | Bruce Westerman (R-AR) |
| John Larson (D-CT) | Kevin Yoder (R-KS) |
| Dave Loebsack (D-IA) | |
| Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) | |
| Ben Ray Lujan (D-NV) | |
| Roger Marshall (R-KS) | |
| James P. McGovern (D-MA) | |