



American Medical Association Medical Student Section 2021 Annual Report

AAFP STUDENT DELEGATES TO THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION- MEDICAL STUDENT SECTION (AMA-MSS)

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Overview

As AAFP Representatives to the American Medical Association, we participated as voting Delegates in both the American Medical Association Medical Student Section (AMA-MSS) and in the American Medical Association House of Delegates (AMA HOD). The AMA-MSS is one of several “sections” that compose the overall AMA and is tasked with providing the medical student perspective to AMA policy discussions. The AMA-MSS represents over 200 allopathic and osteopathic medical schools nationwide and consists of over 60,000 members. The AMA-MSS prides itself on its dedication to social justice, health equity, and inclusion, and its advocacy efforts are geared toward improving U.S. public health and medical education. The section boldly leans into controversial issues, and members routinely speak up for AMA-MSS policies within the AMA HOD. As the AMA’s policy-making body, the AMA HOD functions similarly to the AAFP Congress of Delegates. The HOD is composed of state medical associations, sections like the AMA-MSS, and specialty societies including our AAFP.

As AAFP Delegates, our purpose is to represent AAFP policy stances and the specialty of Family Medicine more generally at the two annual organization-wide meetings of the AMA: Annual Meeting in June in Chicago and Interim Meeting in November (rotating location). This year looked quite different due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of traveling to San Diego in November 2020 and Chicago in June 2021 to work with our AAFP colleagues in person, we logged in to Zoom, Lumi, and Webex. Nevertheless, our experience in this role was thought-provoking, formative, and uplifting. In this report, we discuss our actions within the AMA and AAFP Delegation over the past year, future directions for our delegate positions, and key takeaways from a year in AAFP student leadership.

Actions

We centered our key actions on AMA-MSS policy priorities that we could support with existing AAFP policy and championed primary care interests through the lens of general health promotion for patients of all backgrounds. Immediately prior to the virtual AMA-MSS Interim meeting in November 2020, we established the first ever “Primary Care Caucus” to discuss resolutions relevant to primary care and garner ideas on ways to best support our fellow AMA-MSS members. Through such discussions, we learned how to most effectively leverage our positions to advocate for priorities central to both primary care and medical student passions, basing our feedback and support on AAFP policies. These collaborative efforts motivated our testimonies on behalf of the AAFP during MSS and HOD meetings in both November 2020 and June 2021, where we testified

to support various resolutions in the spirit of preventive medicine and health equity. The topics of these resolutions included adolescent health, nutrition, immigrant health, gender-affirming care, and workforce diversity, which are issues that must be addressed by family physicians to promote optimal health for the communities we serve. It was both terrifying and thrilling to turn on our laptop webcams and deliver testimony into the Zoom void, knowing that hundreds of physicians and medical students we couldn't see were watching us speak and listening to our words.

While navigating our roles as liaisons between the AAFP and AMA-MSS, we also sought to become familiar with the AAFP's policy-making process to learn how else we might meaningfully contribute to the future of Family Medicine. In April 2021, we had the wonderful opportunity to engage in a virtual learning session with AAFP leadership and staff members, who taught us practical lessons in the realm of advocacy to carry with us in our futures as incoming Family Medicine residents and beyond.

Future Directions

Our predecessors met with us at the beginning of our term to orient us to the position and provide advice, a helpful practice that we plan to continue for our successors. There is much to learn in terms of parliamentary procedure, AMA process, AAFP and AMA timelines, and AAFP policy nuance, so we will ideally schedule this meeting shortly after students are selected. We also encourage our successors to get involved in the AMA-MSS resolution-writing process a couple of months before the two national AMA meetings. This would enable representatives to collaborate with other AMA-MSS members in resolution-writing, suggest changes to draft policy resolutions, and provide formal AAFP comment on the AMA-MSS Virtual Reference Committee.

The idea for our twice-held virtual Primary Care Caucus originated with our predecessors, who saw the potential in focused collaboration among AMA-MSS members dedicated to improving the health of our patients and communities through primary care. By forming the caucus, we hope that we helped maintain our AAFP's position as the leading organization on primary care issues in the AMA. We would be thrilled to see our future delegates host an in-person Primary Care Caucus at AMA meetings with AAFP-funded refreshments to maximize attendance. We encourage future delegates to not only work toward establishing this as a recurring event, but also to work within a formal Primary Care Caucus throughout the year on resolution-writing and testimony-drafting. Primary Care Caucus invitees may include any interested individual MSS member as well as the other designated AMA-MSS representatives from "The Group of Six," America's Frontline Physicians, comprised of the AAFP and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), American College of Physicians (ACP), American Osteopathic Association (AOA), and American Psychiatric Association (APA). Lastly, we encourage future AAFP delegates to continue and expand involvement with the other specialty societies in the AMA outside of the primary care specialties, to strengthen mutually beneficial relationships.

Closing Remarks

It was truly an honor for us to represent the AAFP among our peers and to represent Family Medicine among national leaders at the AMA HOD. In unprecedented pandemic times where most of our days became virtual, it was an incredibly uplifting experience to connect to the larger purpose of the AAFP through our screens and collaborate with current and future AAFP physician leaders across time zones. We learned invaluable lessons from mentorship with AAFP physicians and staff members, and we look forward to putting this new knowledge to use in our continued advocacy for Family Medicine and for our future patients. To all the inspiring AAFP changemakers who welcomed, taught, and encouraged us, thank you. We can't wait to thank you in person someday!

Note: This report was prepared by the resident or student representative(s) listed and includes their account(s) of the business conducted during their term. This is not an official record of business proceedings from the AAFP or any other entity. To find out more about the business of the AAFP, its congresses, commissions, and current policies visit aafp.org.