



Commission on Federal and State Policy 2022 Annual Report

Commission on Federal and State Policy

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Purpose & Scope of Work

We the resident and student member to the Commission on Federal and State Policy (CFSP) have been honored to serve in this position. We partake in the workings of the CFSP throughout the year, which mostly involves attending the Winter and Summer Cluster meetings and the Family Medicine Advocacy Summit in Washington, DC. We also get to participate in the general meetings of the CFSP, where we go over issues in the world of Family Medicine, such as telemedicine access, primary care funding, and changes to the residency program structure. We hope we have represented our student and resident constituents well during our tenure, and we will take the experiences we have gained to continue to advocate for family physicians and our patients.

Activities & Achievements

Winter Cluster

This year's Winter Cluster met virtually on March 3rd, 2022 due to the continued pressure of the COVID-19 Pandemic. During our cluster, the CFSP met to review reports on legislation from our staff, as well as listened to legislative updates from our staff before breaking to listen to AAFP representatives update all the commissions simultaneously about the upcoming proposed changes to the Family Medicine residency structure. After coming back to the commission meeting, we discussed a wide variety of topics such as rural health, health equity, behavioral health integration, and an update on COVID-19.

The main takeaway from the cluster meeting was learning how much AAFP staff works behind the scenes in Washington, DC and at the state level. The long-term work of the AAFP is the connections that our leaders and staff make with legislators and their offices, which has made AAFP a highly respected organization on capitol hill. Our AAFP also provides their input on wide reaching legislation, like the Build Back Better plan, which unfortunately did not pass congress.

Summer Cluster and FMAS

For the Summer Cluster Meeting, the CFSP decided to meet the day after the Family Medicine Advocacy Summit (FMAS), since most of our members would want to attend the event. The FMAS is a yearly event where AAFP leadership and members meet in Washington D.C. to discuss major issues facing family medicine throughout the US and state by state. This year, the event took place in May 2022, and was preceded by the State Legislative Update where panelists from many states held panels pertaining to major issues facing their states; giving us updates on major progress or push back on said issues.

This year, the AAFP identified three key issues that we took with us to Capitol Hill to speak with legislators and their staffers:

- 1. Behavioral Health Integration:** AAFP advocates for a collaborative care model between physicians and behavioral health clinicians within the medical home. This means, having behavioral health services within a family physician's clinic so that it reduces stigma for patients and increases ease of access for patients. AAFP asked for legislation to establish a Medicare addon code that would increase payment to physicians who provide integrated behavioral health care in order to make it a sustainable care model.
- 2. Telehealth Expansion:** As we've seen since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth is a model of healthcare delivery that is easier for our patients and expands access significantly. AAFP asked legislators to make the COVID-19 emergency telehealth flexibilities to become permanent policy, because without it, millions of

medicare beneficiaries would lose access to telehealth and telehealth would be significantly limited in its distribution.

- 3. Medicaid Parity:** Medicaid/Medicare payment parity has been a mission of AAFP for years, and we returned to DC to once again ask Congress to increase reimbursement rates for Medicaid across the nation. On average, the Medicaid payment rate is 66% of Medicare's, and goes as low as 33% depending on the state. Physicians are not financially able to maintain their practices while seeing Medicaid patients due to the poor reimbursement. If congress were to increase the payment rate for Medicaid, it would reduce barriers to care for some of our nation's most at need patients.

Resident Reflection, Lessons Learned, and the Value of Serving on CFSP

This was my second year serving as the resident member on the Commission on Federal and State Policy. I must say that it was an honor to be able to continue to serve again. I hope to one day enter the field of politics as a physician and partaking in this group as a part of the American Academy of Family Physicians is something that I will remember for a long time.

First off there were many initiatives that we had this year. A few of those were addressing the pay disparity between Medicaid and Medicare, telehealth and ensuring that it stays in place long after the pandemic, and lastly addressing behavioral health and ensuring that this is more integrated into primary care as primary care physicians deliver a lot of mental health care for our patient. Other things that were addressed include scope of practice in regards to nurse practitioners and physician assistants. It was very moving to me to see that AAFP believes so strongly in having a multidisciplinary approach to patient care with a physician being the lead.

Most uplifting to me was the AAFP's stance on the current uproar around abortion. As a family medicine resident, and in a year, attending, I must say that I am proud to call myself a member of the AAFP.

I would like to close with this. Medicine is no longer solely about being clinically competent. In this day and age, we must also use our voices as physician advocates outside of the clinic to ensure that all of our patients have equal and equitable healthcare.

Student Reflection, Lessons Learned, and the Value of Serving on CFSP

It has been my absolute pleasure to serve as the student member to the Commission on Federal and State Policy this past year. This position was my first experience in the AAFP, and I honestly don't believe I could've picked a better introduction to this wonderful organization. All of the members in the CFSP were very kind and welcoming to someone without a lot of experience in organized medicine, like myself.

During my term, at the Winter Cluster we discussed the upcoming possible changes to the Family Medicine Residency structure. It was very interesting to be on the ground floor of this discussion, since the call had AAFP members who'd been in practice for ten, twenty, and even over thirty years, and also student commission members.

During our Family Medicine Advocacy Summit, I had the opportunity to meet with my representatives and senator's staffers about important issues affecting our state. Since Mississippi is so rural, telehealth is an issue of utmost importance to our patients. We also discussed increased Medicaid/Medicare parity, which Mississippi leads our nation in being one of the highest parity states. Gaining knowledge of these issues through our Advocacy Summit, and bringing the medical students perspective to these meetings was a blessing, and truly made the work we do in our commission feel all the more real.

I highly encourage any student who's interested to join an AAFP commission, and though I may be biased, I feel the CFSP is one of the best commissions to learn how the AAFP works. The people I've met through the commission are some of the most kind and genuine people, despite being leaders in the AAFP and in their local state societies. Anyone who has the opportunity to join this commission, will gain mentors, friends, and experiences that cannot be traded for the world.

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.