AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

NEW PHYSICIANS

you and the AAFP
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Overview of the AAFP

Welcome to the AAFP. This membership guide will answer many of your questions about the Academy and family medicine, including:

➤ How AAFP membership benefits can promote growth, learning, and positive change for you and your profession
➤ How we can help you navigate through work and life issues
➤ How to get involved as a member

A PORTRAIT OF YOU

As a new (or soon-to-be) family physician, you have chosen one of the most valued specialties in medicine. And the AAFP can support you throughout your challenging and rewarding career.

Your training is unique. You treat patients across their entire lifetime. You’re not just a clinician. You’re an advocate, coordinator, and information resource for your patients.

Your versatility is valued. Your skills are in high demand everywhere—in cities, suburbs, and especially rural areas.

Your flexibility gives you options. You have the comfort level and capacity to work in all types of practices. And that’s a great advantage in today’s increasingly complex health care environment.
In 1947, America’s family physicians were ready for a national face and a stronger voice in the world of medicine. Thanks to the efforts of a small group of founders, the American Academy of General Practice was established to “promote and maintain high quality standards for every family doctor providing continuing comprehensive health care to the public.”

Among the Academy’s contributions to the specialty:

- **Recognition** — helped establish family medicine as medicine’s 20th primary specialty
- **Accreditation** — created a certifying board in family medicine
- **Continuing Medical Education** — CME requirement was the first of its kind

As the nature of primary health care evolved, the Academy changed its name to the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) in 1971.

Today the AAFP is one of the largest national medical organizations in North America with more than 100,300 members in all 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam.

The AAFP continues to uphold the highest quality standards for family physicians and to promote continuing education—what the organization believes to be the two best ways to maintain the integrity of the specialty.

As it has for more than 60 years, the AAFP ensures that the voice of its members is heard in all the critical places—D.C., state capitals, and board rooms across the country.
MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

The AAFP is committed to helping make your career unfold smoothly, and proceed successfully, throughout your years in practice.

The mission of the AAFP is to improve the health of all patients, families, and communities by serving the needs of its members. AAFP organizational priorities include advocacy, practice enhancement, education, and health of the public. Review the AAFP’s Initiatives to learn more about its efforts on behalf of family physicians and their patients.

ADVOCACY — Shape health care policy through interactions with government, the public, business, and the health care industry.

➤ Learn more about AAFP policy and federal advocacy efforts. For more information, you can also contact the AAFP’s Government Relations staff at (888) 794-7481 or contact your chapter executive.

Strategies:

➤ Advance the Patient-Centered Medical Home.
➤ Increase payment to family physicians.
➤ Advance health care for all.
➤ Increase family physician workforce.

I realized that helping my patients did not occur exclusively in an exam room. The AAFP gives me an outlet to advocate for my patients’ needs at a local and national level to try and make changes to improve their health and care.

— Peter Rippey, MD (resident)

PRACTICE ENHANCEMENT — Enhance members’ abilities to fulfill their practice and career goals.

Strategies:

➤ Assist members to become designated Patient-Centered Medical Homes.
➤ Promote ongoing imperative for practice redesign through education and communication.
➤ Assist members to achieve financial success through optimal practice management.
EDUCATION — Promote high-quality, innovative education for physicians, residents, and medical students that encompasses the art, science, evidence, and socioeconomics of Family Medicine.

Strategies:

➤ Increase the number of members and non-members who utilize AAFP Continuing Medical Education in pursuit of lifelong learning.

➤ Increase funding streams for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing medical education.

➤ Develop mechanisms that will increase the Part III Maintenance of Certification (MOC) passing rate of Family Medicine residency graduates.

HEALTH OF THE PUBLIC — Assume a leadership role in health promotion, disease prevention, and chronic disease management.

Strategies:

➤ Involve family physicians in targeted public health activities, specifically tobacco, obesity, exercise, and immunizations.

➤ Increase member and patient awareness of resources on www.familydoctor.org.

WHAT WE STAND FOR AS A GROUP

The AAFP and its members are committed to care that is:

➤ Equitable for all people;

➤ Centered on the whole person within the context of family and community;

➤ Based on science, technology, and best available evidence;

➤ Supported by lifelong professional learning; and

➤ Grounded in respect and compassion for the individual.
AAFP MEMBER PROFILE

AAFP’s new physician members are within their first seven years following residency completion and represent 25% of total AAFP members.

AAFP’s new physician members are richly diverse:
- 55% are women
- 33% are international medical graduates
- 76% are under the age of 40
- 15% practice rural medicine

AAFP resident members:
- 55% are women
- 37% are international medical graduates
- 95% of allopathic family medicine residents are members of the AAFP

AAFP student members:
- 55% are women
- 34% are M4’s
- 31% are M3’s
STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Congress of Delegates
The Academy is governed by a Congress of Delegates composed of two delegates from each of the 55 constituent chapters, as well as from resident and student groups, new physicians, and the special constituencies (women, minorities, international medical graduates, and GLBTs).

➤ Elects officers and Board members.
➤ Establishes policies and defines principles of the AAFP.

Constituent Chapters
The Academy’s federated structure means members join the national organization as well as state and/or local/regional chapters (including Uniformed Services). Involvement in your constituent chapter is a more personalized experience that keeps you informed about developments that directly affect you and your specialty.

➤ Meet other family physicians in your area to exchange ideas on social and public health issues.
➤ Take advantage of excellent CME opportunities.
➤ Develop leadership skills that prepare you for involvement at the national level.
➤ Help determine your chapter’s strategy and direction.
➤ Find local contact information and meeting dates in the Constituent Chapter Directory.

LOCAL CHAPTERS
➤ Featured within some constituent chapters.
➤ Network on a more personal level with fellow members in your community.
➤ Mentoring opportunities—Ask your chapter executive to introduce you to family physicians willing to show you the ropes.
MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

The AAFP offers membership categories to meet your needs as you move ahead in your career, including Active, Resident, Student, Supporting, International, Inactive, and Life. Click on the appropriate link for details about eligibility, privileges, CME requirements, dues, and more.

**Active Member (Practicing Physicians)**

**Resident Member**

**Student Member**

**Supporting Member**

**International Member**

**Inactive Member**

**Life Member**

As a member, you have the opportunity to share ideas with and learn from colleagues with similar interests and backgrounds.

“As an AAFP member, I have opportunities to network with physicians from all over the country; to advocate for my patients and family medicine; to guide AAFP policy and the direction of the AAFP’s priorities; to attend evidence-based, high-quality CME courses with an easy method to report my CME credits; and to access journals and other resources to help me run my practice better.”

– Christina Kelly, MD, FAAFP (new physician)

FIND YOUR NICHE

**Special Constituencies**

The AAFP special constituencies include women, minorities, new physicians (in first seven years of practice following residency), international medical graduates (IMG), and gay, lesbian, bisexual, & transgender (GLBT). The special constituencies are perceived to be underrepresented in leadership at the national and chapter levels with concerns not being adequately represented in the Congress of Delegates. Upon approval of the Board of Directors, other groups of members that perceive the need for more participation in the AAFP may be established through the Congress of Delegates.

The special constituencies gather once a year at the National Conference of Special Constituencies (NCSC) to discuss issues of importance to physicians and patients in the special constituency groups. In addition, the AAFP’s Commission on Membership and Member Services oversees a Special Constituencies Subcommittee that attends to matters of relevance to the groups.

Learn more about the special constituencies, conference schedules, and useful resources.
Rural Physicians
The AAFP is committed to reaching out to rural family physicians with the **Rural Medicine Community** under AAFP Connection. Ask and answer questions, find and share resources, and read news and information specifically for rural family physicians within the privacy of this AAFP members-only community of family physicians.

In addition, the AAFP Working Group on Rural Health meets regularly to study issues, identify problems, and suggest solutions to rural health issues, paying special attention to the unique issues facing rural family physicians and rural populations, such as:

- health professional shortage areas (HPSA);
- aging patient population;
- access to acute and long-term care services;
- compensation and third-party payment;
- education of future rural family physicians; and
- legislative advocacy to focus on specific needs impacting rural physicians and their patients.

Family Physicians who Provide Emergency/Urgent Care Services
Many family physicians work in emergency or urgent health care environments, some exclusively and others as one of their care offerings for patients. For these members, the AAFP has developed a special interest group and online community under AAFP Connection — **the Emergency Medicine/Urgent Care Community**. The Special Interest Group for Emergency Medicine meets regularly to discuss issues such as privileging, certification, state and federal legislations’ impact on compensation/third-party payment, and patient access.

For information about the AAFP Emergency Medicine Special Interest Group, email the AAFP at [contactcenter@aafp.org](mailto:contactcenter@aafp.org).
PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

The list of AAFP membership benefits is long and growing. So take your pick and get started.

I continued my relationship with the AAFP after residency primarily for CME, but I have learned quickly that the AAFP is much more. The AAFP has been the voice of all family physicians during changes in the health care system and has been in the forefront advocating for its members’ concerns as well as their patients.

— Erica Savage-Jeter, MD (new physician)

My Academy
As a member, you have your own portal on the Academy website from which you can manage and track your CME, register for a course, pay your dues, and even join a members-only community. One of the most valuable features of My Academy is how easy it is to report, track, and plan your CME all in the same place—for your specific needs and requirements.

Member Advantage Discounts
The AAFP partners with select providers of personal, professional, and practice-related services to help you save on a wide range of products and services for your practice and home, including:

PERSONAL

➤ Avis Discounts — Take advantage of car rental discounts.
➤ Brennco Travel — Member discounts on cruise or land travel.
➤ T-Mobile — Member discounts and special promotions for new or existing accounts.

PRACTICE

➤ AAFP Mobile Solutions (Members Only) — Find hardware and medical software customized to your needs.
- **Delta-Exchange** — Member discount on TransforMED’s exclusive learning network for physicians, clinical staff, and office staff with best practices, online seminars, and more.


- **Intuit Health** — Create a practice website at a discounted price or expand services with your online communications.

- **MD Consult and First Consult** — MD Consult offers leading medical resources in one integrated online service for pressing clinical questions. First Consult adds exclusive access to additional medical topics in their comprehensive database.

- **Solveras Payment Solutions** — Low-cost credit card processing, easy-to-read merchant statements, ACH capability, and more.

- **UpToDate** — Access evidence-based, peer-reviewed resources to improve patient care and increase clinical knowledge.

**FINANCIAL**

- **Bank of America** — Get help with everyday personal or business finances.

**Publications, Sites, & Social Media**

With AAFP’s two information-packed journals, newsletters, and websites, you’ll always have the latest news and education about family medicine at your fingertips — including **CME**.

**American Family Physician** — Consistently ranked as the best-read medical journal among primary care physicians, the *American Family Physician* is the official clinical journal of the AAFP. In addition to the print journal, published twice each month, members receive exclusive online access to members-only content, including:

- The latest on diagnosis and treatment of common clinical conditions;
- Commentary, clinical answers, and patient information; and
- An average of 3.8 CME credits per issue (*applicable to AAFP, ABFM, AMA, and AOA requirements*).

**Family Practice Management** — Published six times a year, this top quality, content-packed publication is the official practice management journal of the AAFP with:

- Peer-reviewed advice on how to succeed and keep quality and satisfaction high—for your patients, your staff, and yourself;
- Proven tools for building better practices and improving patient care; and
- An average of 3.2 CME credits per issue (*applicable to AAFP, ABFM, AMA, and AOA requirements*).
Annals of Family Medicine — Published in partnership with the “Family of Family Medicine” (AAFP, ABFM, STFM, AFMRD, ADFM, NAPCRG, and CFPC), the Annals of Family Medicine is a peer-reviewed clinical research journal dedicated to advancing knowledge essential to understanding and improving health and primary care. Six issues each year deliver:

➤ Reports of clinical, biomedical, behavioral, social, health services, and policy research;
➤ Essays from clinicians, patients, families, communities, and policy makers; and
➤ Open online access at www.annfammed.org.

AAFP News Now — The official online news publication of the AAFP provides:

➤ Up-to-the-minute coverage of issues affecting you and your fellow members;
➤ Optional email notification alerting you to late-breaking online stories; and
➤ An end-of-month rundown of selected online content emailed in PDF format.

Familydoctor.org — Award-winning, trustworthy, easy-to-use health portal providing users the easiest path to consistent, reliable patient health information. All of the information on this site has been written and reviewed by physicians and patient education professionals at the AAFP.

AAFP Connection — Expand your family medicine circle by joining a safe and secure members-only community where you can:

➤ Connect with peers in a safe online community for AAFP members;
➤ Connect and share in a secure environment through discussion forums, file share, and wikis; and
➤ Connect with family physicians who share common interests.

AAFP on Facebook — Share your thoughts and read what other members think about hot topics. Facebook members: search “AAFP” to see numerous pages related to our organization, including new physicians and international medical graduates.
CAREER SERVICES

Make the most of your AAFP membership by taking advantage of members-only resources that honor, connect, and inform.

Degree of Fellow — The Degree of Fellow recognizes AAFP members who have distinguished themselves among their colleagues, as well as in their communities, by their service to family medicine, by their advancement of health care to the American people, and by their professional development through medical education and research. Apply for the Degree today.

AAFP Email Discussion Lists — Discuss issues important to you and share ideas. Choose from emergency/urgent medicine, international medical graduates, minority issues, new physicians, practice management, rural health, and more.

AAFP CareerLink — Check out the only employment search engine dedicated to family physicians and employers seeking candidates for clinical and faculty jobs.

Health Care Notification Network — Receive FDA-mandated and product-related Patient Safety Alerts (PSAs) as soon as they are issued.

AAFP Insurance Services — AAFP Insurance Services is the administrator for the insurance programs sponsored by the Academy. Programs available include disability, life, practice overhead, long-term care, and even auto, homeowner, and renter insurance. Not a commercial vendor, AAFP Insurance Services is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the AAFP Foundation.
EXPERIENCE THE AAFP:
EXCLUSIVELY FOR NEW PHYSICIANS

Your AAFP membership is a great asset during the challenging years following residency. Our products and services will help you successfully manage the issues every new physician encounters, such as coding, CME reporting, and Board certification. Get acquainted with these member benefits through Experience the AAFP, a program designed exclusively for new physicians. Discounts* available to AAFP members in their first seven years following residency completion include:

➤ 25% off regular member price:
   • FPM Enhanced Pocket Guide to the 1997 E/M Documentation Guidelines
   • FP Essentials™
   • FP Audio™
   • Combined Subscription of FP Essentials™ and FP Audio™
   • Any AAFP Self-Study CME package (including Board Review)
   • Starting a Medical Practice from the Ground Up
   • Any METRIC module
   • Physician Office Laboratory (POL) Microscopy Atlas, 3rd Edition
   • FP Comprehensive CD-ROM
   • FP Comprehensive CD-ROM CME

➤ FREE 1st Year registration ($75 savings) on AAFP-Proficiency Testing Program for Office Laboratories

➤ $100 discount off the AAFP Scientific Assembly

➤ $75 discount off a Family Medicine Board Review Express course

➤ $75 discount off any live AAFP-produced clinical CME course

*For details about Experience the AAFP and current discounts, visit www.aafp.org/experience or email experience@aafp.org. (Discounts are subject to change.)
Quality, Relevant CME

STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE

You owe it to your patients to stay on top of the latest evidence-based research, care regimens, and practice enhancements.

Enhancing your practice. Expanding your clinical knowledge. Preparing for certification. All this and more is available to AAFP members at the click of a mouse through AAFP’s CME course listings and event schedule.

AAFP Active members are required to earn 150 credits of CME during their three-year re-election cycle (at least 75 must be AAFP Prescribed credits and 25 must be from a live activity). Constituent chapters may have additional CME requirements. Learn more about CME requirements.

AAFP CME delivers:

Quality — Awarded “Accreditation with Commendation” for Excellence by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education ACCME).

Relevance — Curricular framework that aligns with the scope of practice for family medicine in multiple practice settings and patient populations.

Convenience — Learn your way: attend live conferences, listen to podcasts, and access self-paced learning. Take advantage of exclusive tools that organize, track, and report your CME credit.

Range — From hands-on courses for medical students to career planning for residents to content-rich continuing education that addresses ongoing learning needs and practice gaps for practicing physicians.
The AAFP’s high quality, relevant CME programs and products feature evidence-based science and are presented in a variety of formats.

**Customize your CME learning plan** and track your progress.

- Organize your learning strategy around your licensure requirements.
- Stay on schedule with your CME requirements.
- Sort and find CME (AAFP and non-AAFP) courses by name, date, or location.
- Report completion of self-study CME or individual activities.
- Send out transcripts for job searches, licensure, and credentialing.
- Submit CME transcripts to the ABFM for easier Maintenance of Certification (MOC) and recertification.

One of the most convenient ways to earn credit is the online and web-enabled mobile device quiz available for *American Family Physician* and *Family Practice Management*.

- Catch up on clinical developments with *American Family Physician*.
- Explore the business side of medicine with *Family Practice Management*.
- Complete each issue’s quiz and earn your credit—it’s as simple as that.

**Learn the way you prefer:**

*Live...*at regional and national events. This is face-to-face learning and sharing at its best, with didactic and hands-on lectures in energized learning environments.

*On your own...*enjoy the convenience of learning whenever and wherever you choose. Stay current with self-study CME and choose the format that suits you best.

**Note to Residents and New Physicians**

You can begin reporting earned CME as early as January 1 of the year in which you complete residency. Simply log-in with your AAFP member ID to jumpstart your CME credit reporting and management.
PREPARING FOR CERTIFICATION

Becoming certified is one of your first big hurdles as a new physician. And recertification will be an ongoing responsibility throughout your career. The AAFP helps you through both processes with a complete toolbox of prep aids. You can learn more by clicking on the following links:

➤ Maintenance of Certification
➤ Board Review Resources
➤ MC-FP Part II (SAM Working Group)
➤ MC-FP Part IV (METRIC)

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS & RESIDENTS

“As an AAFP member, I have direct access to so many resources such as the Family Medicine Residency Directory, National Conference for Family medicine Residents and Students, scholarships, research opportunities, you name it! I also have leadership opportunities to prepare myself and hone my skills to be the best Family Physician possible.”

– Nailah S. Adams, MS (medical student)

AAFP hands-on courses, prep programs, journals, and web pages help put students and residents on the road to solid careers in family medicine.

➤ Virtual FMIG offers medical students at each point in their medical career resources to enhance their medical school experiences and make informed career and residency decisions. It creates an interactive forum where students have the opportunity to share information and experiences around medical education and family medicine.

➤ The AAFP’s Directory of Family Medicine Residencies, Fellowship Directory, and Resident and Fellow section of the AAFP website offer resources and assistance with residency and fellowship program identification.

➤ The AAFP’s National Conference for Family Medicine Residents and Medical Students is an opportunity for family medicine residents and medical students to explore career planning, clinical skills, health policy and advocacy, leadership development, practice management, and research.
Serving the Specialty

GET INVOLVED

Through your AAFP membership, you can become a force for positive change and make meaningful contributions to family medicine. You can advocate for patients by helping to create more efficient healthcare delivery and cost-effective services. You’ll also build a network of family physician colleagues across the country and flex your leadership abilities.

Participating members say that speaking out about policy development and lobbying reenergizes their commitment to their work and their community.

Reasons to get involved:

➤ Network with family physicians from all across the country by attending national, chapter, and local meetings.
➤ Spend time with other new physician, resident, and student leaders who share your interests and concerns.
➤ Cultivate organizational and communication skills.
➤ Discuss issues key to health care delivery and to family medicine.
➤ Learn more about topics of special interest.

ADVOCACY ON YOUR BEHALF

Today’s health care environment is changing rapidly and fundamentally. And the AAFP is at the forefront, helping to steer it toward positive change that benefits you, your patients, and your profession.

The AAFP’s Government Relations staff meets regularly with legislators and other decisionmakers to increase awareness of family medicine issues and to work toward goals such as universal access to health care and better payment models. We also support similar efforts by our constituent chapters in state and territorial capitals.

“My dues help support an organization that is taking an active role in reinventing our health care system to provide better quality care, is advocating for access to care for all Americans, and is improving the environment in which I practice medicine.”

– Ryan Kauffman, MD, FAAFP (new physician)
Current activities include working to:

➤ Improve payments for family physicians by the Medicare program.
➤ Revise physician payment to support the Patient-Centered Medical Home model.
➤ Ensure that all Americans have access to health care.
➤ Legislate to protect the public health.
➤ Identify funding for family medicine training grants and for residency programs that use volunteer preceptors.
➤ Strengthen the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the federal agency that translates basic biomedical research into measures that physicians can use in their practice.
➤ Create relief from burdensome regulations.
➤ Push for meaningful reform of the medical liability system that will encourage non-defensive medicine, improve health care delivery in underserved areas, and stabilize currently unsustainable medical liability insurance premiums.
LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Advocate for family medicine. Get involved on the national, chapter, or local level. (Students and residents: click here for additional information on how you can get involved.) Some of the ways you can make a difference:

**AAFP Commissions** — The AAFP Board of Directors establishes commissions as necessary to carry out the activities of the organization. **Appointments to commissions** are made on the basis of the abilities of the nominees.

Family physicians who serve on AAFP commissions help carry out activities on behalf of the AAFP and Family Medicine and occasionally serve as AAFP’s representatives to other organizations. If you are interested in serving on an AAFP commission, contact your Chapter to learn more about the nomination process. Commission members are appointed for a single, four-year term. (Students and residents serve a one-year term only.) Commission terms begin on December 15 of each year.

**Congress of Delegates** — The Congress of Delegates is the AAFP’s policy-making body. Its membership consists of two delegates from each constituent chapter. Special constituencies include new physicians, residents, students, and other constituency groups represented at the National Conference of Special Constituencies (NCSC) and the National Conference of Family Medicine Residents and Medical Students (NC). The Congress also elects new officers and three members to serve on the Board of Directors.

All Academy members are welcome to participate in hearings of the five reference committees: Advocacy, Education, Health of the Public and Science, Organization and Finance, and Practice Enhancement. During the two and one-half day meeting (held prior to the Scientific Assembly), the Congress agenda includes addresses from AAFP officers, resolutions from chapters, and reports from the Board of Directors and commissions. The Congress of Delegates meets each fall in cities across the country.

Follow the activities of the policy-making body of your organization. Join the Congress of Delegates Community on AAFP Connection. The online community allows delegates and alternate delegates to connect with each other before, during, and after the Congress of Delegates.
Board of Directors – The AAFP Board of Directors includes one new physician, one resident, and one student member. The new physician candidate is elected at the National Conference of Special Constituencies (NCSC); the resident and student candidates are elected at the National Conference of Family Medicine Residents and Medical Students (NC). Each of these three candidates and their credentials are forwarded to the Congress of Delegates for approval. These representatives are responsible for representing the interests and opinions of the new physician, resident, and student constituencies to the AAFP Board of Directors and the Congress of Delegates.

National Conference of Special Constituencies (NCSC) – NCSC is the AAFP’s forum to address member issues specific to women, minorities, new physicians, international medical graduates, and GLBTs. Integrating the perspectives of AAFP members from these underrepresented constituencies, NCSC helps participants voice their concerns in an effort to shape Academy policies and positions, build leadership skills, elect national officers, and meet others that share common interests. NCSC is held in conjunction with the Annual Leadership Forum (ALF) each spring.

“ The AAFP is not just about CME and political debate. It is a true community of physicians from across the country. Events like NCSC allow networking and creating common agendas to address the special needs of new physicians.”

– Kisha Davis, MD (new physician)

National Conference of Family Medicine Residents & Medical Students (NC) – NC offers new and innovative programming to educate family medicine residents and medical students on topics pertinent to the development of their careers, including career planning, clinical skills, health policy and advocacy, leadership development, practice management, and research. The event has three distinct elements: educational programming, the exhibit hall (with hundreds of exhibits featuring family medicine residencies, healthcare systems, placement services, medical publishers, pharmaceutical companies, and AAFP programs and services), and the resident and student congresses (forums discussing issues and concerns facing medical students and residents and voicing those concerns to shape Academy policies and positions).
Step Up and Serve

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Participating in your AAFP chapter is a great way to get involved in advocacy for your profession and lend your voice at the local level. The AAFP has opportunities to volunteer at the state level with national programs, such as Tar Wars and Ready, Set, FIT!

Tar Wars is a school-based, tobacco-free education program for fourth- and fifth-grade students. Tar Wars volunteers educate children about the harmful effects of tobacco use and teach them how to conquer pressure from peers and the media. To volunteer as a Tar Wars presenter, download the program guide online and contact your state coordinator.

Ready, Set, FIT! is a school-based educational program that enlists family physicians to teach third and fourth graders about the importance of fitness. Through a partnership between the AAFP’s fitness initiative, Americans In Motion—Healthy Interventions (AIM-HI) and Scholastic, Ready, Set, FIT!, its volunteer FP staff provides in-class lessons and take-home activities aimed at encouraging kids to be active, eat smart, and feel good. For more volunteer opportunities at the state and local levels, contact your chapter.

Volunteering with the AAFP Foundation is another way to share your time and expertise. Whether you help with an event, evaluate grant applications, or work with physicians around the world, the AAFP Foundation welcomes your involvement.

MORE WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Play a Humanitarian Role
- Help Legislators Help Family Medicine
- Write Your Legislator
- Take Political Action
- Attend Advocacy Conferences
- Investigate Private Sector Advocacy
- Make a Difference From Your Keyboard
- Explore Student Opportunities

“The greatest value I see is simply getting involved. The AAFP has tremendous resources and support to push forward with the goal of addressing our primary care physician shortage. This organization is a great opportunity for students to get involved and then stay involved.”

– Theo Hensley (medical student)
**Play a Humanitarian Role** — If your interest in public health reaches global proportions, consider volunteering with a humanitarian organization. Family medicine is a specialty that uniquely prepares its physicians to practice medicine in international and underserved communities. Be sure to educate yourself on what you need to know before you volunteer. There are organizations that are always looking for volunteers to call upon in disasters and emergencies as well as non-emergency situations. Check out this video where you will hear from students, residents, and practicing physicians who have gained valuable experience from caring for populations abroad. The AAFP also maintains a volunteer database.

**Help Legislators Help Family Medicine** — Consider serving as your legislator’s “go to” person on family medicine. The AAFP Federal Key Contact Program is an organized, proactive, and strategic grassroots advocacy program designed to build strong ongoing relationships with key congressional members in positions important to the policy goals and objectives of the Academy.

**Write Your Legislator** — Through the AAFP Legislative Action Center, you can access contact information on congressional representatives, state, and local officials and much more. Send a letter or email on a specific health care issue to federal or state legislators by following the directions provided on the site.

**Take Political Action** — Get involved with FamMedPAC, the AAFP’s federal political action committee. Its purpose is to help elect candidates to the U.S. Congress who support the AAFP’s legislative goals and objectives. Since 2005, over 4,000 of your fellow AAFP members have contributed more than $2 million to give family physicians a “seat at the table” when important healthcare decisions are made.
Attend Advocacy Conferences — Learn how to speak up effectively for your profession and your patients at the national and state level.

➤ Family Medicine Congressional Conference — Held each spring in Washington, D.C., the Family Medicine Congressional Conference explains the legislative process and how to lobby your federal legislators.

➤ State Legislative Conference — Held every fall, the State Legislative Conference addresses health care issues at the state level.

Investigate Private Sector Advocacy — AAFP’s Private Sector Advocacy represents family physicians’ interests to health insurance companies, medical specialty societies, and employers by:

➤ Challenging cumbersome administrative practices by health plans;

➤ Pressing for fairer payments to family physicians; and

➤ Promoting health plan adherence to CPT coding standards and conventions.

Stay up-to-date on private sector advocacy activities:

➤ Subscribe to the Private Sector Advocacy E-mail Discussion List.

➤ View Grievances Received (Members Only) — What are other members experiencing? View logged grievances regarding administrative, coding, contracting, payment, and claims processing issues with specific payers.

Make A Difference From Your Keyboard — Get involved in legislative conversations that are changing the health care environment.

➤ Join Connect for Family Medicine — Or become a Key Contact and build ongoing relationships with your elected officials.

➤ Practice Grassroots Advocacy — As a practicing family physician, you know what’s happening in health care. You live it every day. You know what works. And what doesn’t. Make a difference today by getting involved.

➤ Get A Grassroots Toolkit — Get started with tips and tools, policy resources, and advocacy training.
➤ **Speak Out** — When family medicine issues arise in Congress, the AAFP emails Speak Out alerts about legislation and provides template letters or talking points to help you communicate with your elected officials. Stay informed with what’s happening in Congress and in your state by accessing the AAFP’s *Speak Out* website.

➤ **Stay informed through Family Physician Alert Network** — *Get an alert* when your involvement can make a critical difference.

➤ **Add A Web Sticker** — Put our “*Write to Congress*” *web sticker* on your own website.

➤ **Spread the word through Tell-A-Friend** — Send a note to a friend to let them know about this site.

➤ **Check Out What’s Up In Congress**
  - Today’s House schedule
  - Today’s Senate schedule
  - Search the House and Senate current committee schedules

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**Explore Student Opportunities** — Students have a voice too. In some ways, you are closest to the most current developments in Family Medicine. The AAFP welcomes your perspective and involvement. Here are some great ways to get involved:

➤ **Student Advocacy** — Learn how you can *get involved* at the local and national levels.

➤ **James G. Jones, MD Student Health Policy Scholarship** — The James G. Jones, MD Student Scholarship Program will provide funds for one medical student to attend the Family Medicine Congressional Conference (FMCC), sponsored jointly by the American Academy of Family Physicians and the Academic Family medicine Advocacy Alliance.

➤ **Robert Graham Center: Visiting Scholars and Fellows Program** — One of the main goals of this internship program is to provide medical student researchers with an immersion experience in the Washington scene. The focus is health policy as seen from a family medicine and primary care perspective.

If you have an interest in research, government policy, and primary care, you may want to consider doing one of your “away” rotations at the policy center.
CREATE A PLAN

Your medical career will be filled with decisions. Career moves. **Licensure steps. Board certification requirements.** Practice goals. Let the AAFP be your expert career resource and support system.

Choosing your first type of practice experience is a big decision. Consider the following:

**What type of work environment or setting suits you best?**

Single or multi-specialty groups? Academic or public service? International or military? Urban or rural?

**What scope of care interests you?**

Your options abound—sports medicine, geriatrics, obstetrics, adolescent medicine, community wellness, and more.

**What if you’re still undecided?**

If you’re unsure about practice settings or styles or simply want to freelance for a few years, then locum tenens might benefit you more than a series of permanent jobs over the same time frame. **Locum tenens** allows you to “sample” different work environments as you fill temporary openings in hospitals or practices. Assignments can range from a few days to several months.

“**The AAFP has offered me countless leadership and CME experiences even before I have struck out on my own. It has also reinforced my choice of Family Medicine with great conferences, excellent news updates on the website, an excellent journal, and by linking me with others also proud to be part of this specialty.”**

– Heidi Meyer, MD (resident)
Family medicine is the most heavily recruited of all medical specialties.

2009 Review of Physicians and CRNA Recruiting Incentives

For additional information on current career opportunities or career choices, refer to the following AAFP resources:

➤ AAFP CareerLink (Access the latest jobs available to professionals seeking employment and create job alerts for matching job opportunities)

➤ AAFP Classifieds Online (arranged by state, multi-state, or international opportunities)

➤ 14 Alternative Practice Styles

➤ Finding the Perfect Job

NEGOTIATE YOUR CONTRACT

Don’t undervalue yourself, but at the same time be realistic about your starting salary goals. What you make in the beginning of your career is less important than the stability of your practice and the quality of care you can give your patients. You have a long career ahead of you—there will be higher pay down the road.

The value of your salary is more than the base compensation. Your contract negotiation with a potential employer should involve a discussion of a benefits package, not just salary numbers. Negotiate benefits into your contract, like CME monies, professional societies’ dues, licensure fees, travel expenses, board recertification fees, and subscriptions.

For additional information, refer to the following AAFP resources:

➤ For a comparative look at what other family physicians are earning, view Median and mean individual income before taxes of family physicians, 2008.

➤ For a look at what other specialties are earning, view Income Offered to Top 20 Recruited Specialties, excerpted from the 2009 Review of Physician and CRNA Recruiting Incentives published by Merritt, Hawkins & Associates.
For more information about negotiating principles, employment contracts, managed care contracts, and more, visit the AAFP’s Contract Negotiations.

For a second opinion before you sign, consider FP Assist, the AAFP’s online database of consultants and attorneys who understand family medicine. They provide support for contract review, résumé writing, starting a new practice, joining an existing practice, or practice management assistance in general.

Demystifying Common Terms in Employment Agreement

Assessing Benefits Packages

Negotiation Gambits

**PAY BACK YOUR STUDENT LOAN**

Carrying student loans well past graduation and into your practice years is common. But there are programs in place to help you pay them back in a timelier (and less painful) manner. Here are two examples of repayment programs available to you:

**Exchanging Services for Repayment Assistance** — In exchange for significant repayment help, the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program obligates the recipient to a two-year minimum of providing primary care services in federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas. The Indian Health Service Loan Repayment Program is another avenue for family physicians. View the AAFP’s Funding Resources for Practicing in Underserved Areas for more information.

**Loan Consolidation Programs** — When considering student loan consolidation, explore the many different options and financial arrangements. Many people make the mistake of jumping on the first loan consolidation program they see.

*Note: The law only allows you to consolidate your loans once; therefore, you should investigate as many options as possible to make the best financial decision for you. More information on loan repayment is available in the AAFP’s Debt Management Guide.*
CONQUERING THE CODING CHALLENGE

Coding for office visits, chronic illness care, and supportive diagnostic services can prove daunting. Even if coding was (or will be) part of your residency training, it is important to stay on top of changes that can impact your payment.

According to the American Health Information Management Association’s website, “...as the basis for reimbursement, appropriate medical coding has become crucial as healthcare providers seek to assure compliance with official coding guidelines.

In addition to their use on claims for reimbursement, codes are also included on data sets used to evaluate the processes and outcomes of healthcare. Coded data are also used internally by institutions for quality management activities, case-mix management, planning, marketing and other administrative and research activities.”

Bottom line? You’ve just discovered another good reason to turn to the AAFP for resources, reference, and all the answers you need when it comes to coding.

Helpful Links
- The AAFP provides a wealth of coding resources online.
- Check out CPT and ICD reference tools and coding/documentation worksheets in the popular FPM Toolbox.
- Get regular coding updates in Family Practice Management and read the “Getting Paid” blog.
- Can’t find the answers you need? Call the AAFP at (800) 274-2237 or email chughes@aafp.org.
What does it take to run a highly effective practice? It takes everything from efficient use of communications to an organized charting system to identifying ways to control costs. And perhaps most important of all, it takes building a collaborative, rewarding work environment that encourages the staff to do their job—and do it well.

The AAFP offers initiatives to help family physicians enhance their practices. Among those, the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) and TransforMED are helping to make a difference in practices across the country.

The Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH)
Solid evidence supports the promise of the Patient-Centered Medical Home—better health outcomes, lower total costs, and higher patient satisfaction. The pay-off includes everything from greater job satisfaction in the short run to higher compensation in the long run. Explore the many PCMH tools and resources available to you and your staff through the AAFP.

To learn more about the steps it takes to transform a practice, download the PCMH Checklist. You can read more about the PCMH model in the AAFP News Now Special Report on the Patient-Centered Medical Home.

TransforMED — Transforming Medical Practices
TransforMED is a wholly-owned AAFP subsidiary that provides hands-on medical home facilitation, practice retreats, assessments, and tailored training to help primary care practices measurably improve in three critical areas: patient care, financial sustainability, and well-being and satisfaction of the physician and staff.

TransforMED accomplishes these goals through:
> Collaborative Relationship Building
> Strategic Transformation Process
> The Residency Demonstration Initiative

Conference on Practice Improvement (CPI)
The CPI is designed to help any practice setting gain the nuts and bolts on how to incorporate the PCMH in their practice and enhance interdisciplinary team development.
Bookmark these “best of the best” practice management advice and tips.

➤ **AAFP Guidelines for Interaction in 'Hospitalist' Models**

➤ **Center for Health Information Technology (CHIT)** — Find tech reviews from other family physicians. Plus, access the latest information on available federal incentives to help you review, plan, prepare for, and implement electronic health records.

➤ **Clinical Practice Guidelines**

➤ **Credentialing** — Learn more about the **Universal Credentialing DataSource**.

➤ **Health Plan Grievance Registry** — Share your health plan hassles and frustrations by completing the AAFP **Health Plan Complaint Form** (Members only).

➤ **Immunization Resources**

➤ **Managed Care Contracts** — A comprehensive guide to negotiating managed care contracts is **Managed Care Contract Negotiation—An AAFP Guide**.

➤ **Managed Care Guidelines and Policies**

   • **Principles of Interaction Between Family Physicians and Health Plans**

   • **Patient-Centered Formularies**

➤ **Open-Access Scheduling** — Learn more about open-access scheduling, including a step-by-step guide to prepare your practice for and implement same day scheduling. You can also find information from the **Institute for Healthcare Improvement** and through **FPM**.

➤ **Practice Administrator’s Desk**

➤ **Practice Management Tools**

➤ **Privileging** — Read the AAFP’s **privileging policies** and find more privileging resources.
HOW DO SUCCESSFUL FAMILY PHYSICIANS DO IT?

Now that you’re out of school and training, get reacquainted with you. Rediscover hobbies, fitness, and friends. Think about your future. Do you want to practice by the ocean? Build your own office space? Work part-time? Retire early?

Writing down a strategy and revisiting it regularly will keep you on track and help keep your work and your life in balance.

An important part of the AAFP’s commitment to you is searching out great resources and ideas for enriching your life and work.

Be sure to check out:

- AAFP’s Physician Life Balance, a list of excellent articles on the subject
- The FP Report article, National survey findings bode well for specialty (FP Report)
- The AMED article, Achieving work-life balance: More than just a juggling act (amednews.com)
- The Physician’s News Digest article, Part-time practice options for physicians (Physician’s News Digest)
- The AMA’s report on women in medicine, Explorations in Work/Practice Options
- Interested in working part-time? Download a physician’s self-assessment tool to weigh your options.
AAFP Resources

AAFP CHAPTER DIRECTORY

Looking for a way to get involved with your AAFP state or local chapter? Reference the AAFP Chapter Directory for phone, email, and website addresses of state chapters.

Each site is unique, but all are excellent sources for information about local meetings, events, state-specific legislation, and much more.

AAFP EVENTS CALENDAR

Find details about AAFP conventions, conferences, courses, and meetings. Search by year or event.
USEFUL LINKS, GUIDES, & ARTICLES

The information you need is at your fingertips. Below is a selection of links and phone numbers that may be of interest to you:

**AAFP Directory of Family Medicine Residency Programs** — The online directory allows users to search for a list of residency programs using specific criteria, including location, community setting, type and size of program, and benefits offered.

**Explore Family Medicine** — This brochure for medical students provides a short introduction to Family Medicine.

**Family Practice Management’s (FPM) Anthology of Articles for Residents and New Physicians** — If you’re just getting started in practice and are feeling overwhelmed, these articles from *Family Practice Management*’s archives can tell you what you need to know now.

**FAQs about Family Medicine** — Great resource for dispelling myths and misconceptions.

**My Academy** — AAFP members who log in to the My Academy section of the AAFP website will find tools to manage their CME, update their address, pay their dues online, join a members-only community, and more.

**State Licensure Requirements** — Access a directory of state medical boards.

**Unfilled Residency Positions Hotline** — For more information about open residency positions, call (800) 288-2668. Have a pen and paper ready, as this information is not posted on the AAFP website. Contact programs directly for more information about their open positions. This listing is updated approximately every two weeks.
Looking for a particular AAFP product, service, or program? For your convenience, phone numbers and email addresses for key organization contacts are listed below for quick reference.

**General AAFP Information**
The AAFP Contact Center can assist you with many of your questions, including those related to your AAFP membership, CME record, meeting registration, subscriptions, catalog orders, and more.

### NEW PHYSICIANS

**AAFP New Physician Membership**  
Ext. 6824  
ccastro@aafp.org

**Clinical Practice Guidelines/Immunizations**  
Ext. 3160  
bschoof@aafp.org

**Coding and Billing Issues**  
Ext. 4176  
chughes@aafp.org

**Consultant Locator**  
(Legal/Attorneys Practice Management)  
Ext. 4162  
gjones@aafp.org

**Experience the AAFP**  
(discounts for new physicians)  
Ext. 6824  
experience@aafp.org

**Health Insurance Company/Health Plans/Managed Care Issues**  
Ext. 4134  
lschmidt@aafp.org

**Hospital and Privileging Issues**  
(Scope of Practice)  
Ext. 4162  
gjones@aafp.org

### Payment/Reimbursement Issues

**(Insurance Companies)**  
Ext. 4134  
lschmidt@aafp.org

**(Medicare)**  
Ext. 4170  
kmoore@aafp.org

### Practice Management

Ext. 4162  
gjones@aafp.org

### RESIDENTS

**AAFP Resident Membership**  
Ext. 6827  
dhurst@aafp.org or residents@aafp.org

**Resident Information**  
Ext. 6720  
lflanaga@aafp.org

### STUDENTS

**AAFP Student Membership**  
Ext. 6823  
jherzog@aafp.org or students@aafp.org

**Student Interest Information**  
Ext. 6722  
abieck@aafp.org