

# 2022 Advocacy Agenda

*As the professional association for some 7,000 physicians of all specialties in Alabama, the Medical Association of the State of Alabama exists to serve, lead, and unite physicians in promoting the highest quality of healthcare for the people of Alabama through advocacy, information, and education.*

*The Medical Association of Alabama is proud to advocate on behalf of physicians and their patients and, despite the challenges to care delivery and daily life brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, is committed to moving medicine forward in 2022.*

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## **General Policies Supported**

The Medical Association supports the physician-led health team model and maintaining the highest standards for medical care delivery across all specialties of medicine. The Association supports reforming the “certificate of need” process to increase physician ownership of equipment and facilities and expand access to quality, affordable care. The Association supports continued physician compounding and dispensing of drugs in physician offices. The Association supports prohibiting deceptive health care advertising and requiring health professionals identify their license to patients.

The Association supports physician autonomy in patient care and medical practice decisions as well as fair reimbursement for services. The Association also supports reducing the administrative tasks required of physicians by insurers which increase annual health spending and negatively impact patient health. Specifically, the Association supports reforming prior authorization processes and step therapy protocols and ending non-medical switching and co-pay accumulator programs.

Further, the Association supports increasing health insurance options for Alabamians, including expanding Medicaid. The Association supports increasing access to quality mental health care and continued state funding for the Maternal Mortality Review Committee and the Infant Mortality Review Committee. Recognizing the long-term effects of social determinants of health on individuals, families and ultimately communities, the Association supports comprehensive solutions to addressing these challenges, with emphasis on pipeline programs, tax credits and loan forgiveness proposals benefitting rural and underserved areas.

Finally, by ensuring medical liability environment stability and pursuing further civil justice reforms, the Association believes Alabama can continue to attract highly-qualified physicians.

## **Specific Policies Supported**

For 2022 , the Association specifically supports:

- Extending Medicaid coverage for qualifying mothers to 12 months postpartum as recommended by the Maternal Mortality Review Committee
  - Providing access to state-managed personal protective equipment reserves for medical practices in times of critical need and shortage
  - Same standards and reimbursements for telehealth as for face-to-face visits, and expanding broadband initiatives to facilitate increased use of telemedicine
  - The ability of medical practices to set patient practice policies
  - Increasing physician representation on state healthcare boards
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## **General Policies Opposed**

The Medical Association opposes any scope of practice expansion for non-physicians that would fracture the physician-led health team model, lower quality of care and/or increase costs for patients. The Association also opposes any interference with the physician-patient relationship and attempts to reduce a physician's autonomy in patient care or medical practice decisions.

The Association opposes legislation or other initiatives that could increase lawsuit opportunities against physicians, including the establishment of statutory standards of care or any statutory dictums for medical care delivery. The Association also opposes any state-level increase of requirements for Maintenance of Certification. Finally, the Medical Association opposes tax increases disproportionately affecting physicians.

## **Specific Policies Opposed**

For 2022, the Association specifically opposes:

- New lawsuit opportunities against physician employers and medical practices over employment policies
- Efforts to reduce and/or politicize physician involvement in health regulatory affairs
- Expanding Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) access for law enforcement
- Statutory requirements for mandatory Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) checks
- Changes to workers' compensation laws negatively affecting treatment of injured workers and medical practices