# 2021 ACP **ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS**

# **ADVOCATING TO SUPPORT INTERNISTS AND THEIR PATIENTS**



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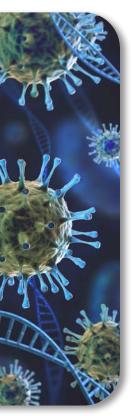


## **Championed Initiatives to Advance the Value of Internal Medicine and Primary Care**

- I.M. Proud: Celebrated National Internal Medicine Day, internists, and the profession of internal medicine
- Sponsored the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report, Implementing High-Quality Primary Care: Rebuilding the Foundation of Health Care
- Collaborated to develop a <u>New Unified Vision for Changing Primary</u> **Care Finance**
- Became a Co-Founder of <u>Primary Care for America</u>, a public affairs campaign

## **Supported Internists' Needs During the COVID-19 Crisis**

- Helped obtain pay parity for both telehealth and audio-only visits during the public health emergency, and pushed to continue increased availability of telehealth post pandemic
- Pushed for <u>PPE, regulatory relief, and financial assistance</u> for practices
- Coordinated distribution channels to <u>support procurement of PPE</u>
- <u>Published clinical guidance</u> on treatment efficacy and safety, as well as PPE usage
- Held series of <u>ACP-Annals of Internal Medicine COVID-19 forums</u> on practical clinical considerations and implications
- Developed and updated in real time <u>clinical and practical tools</u> and information
- Joined with HHS as a founding member of the <u>COVID-19</u> Community Corps to help increase vaccine uptake
- Called for COVID-19 vaccine mandates for all health care workers, employers, and schools









#### **Committed to Combatting Racial Disparities** and Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Led research, policy development, and finding evidence-based solutions
- Published a <u>comprehensive framework</u> addressing disparities and discrimination related to:
  - Education and the physician workforce
  - Health of persons and populations at highest risk
  - Law enforcement and criminal justice affecting the health of at-risk persons and populations
- <u>Co-sponsored grant programs</u> that help advance health equity for internal medicine residents and faculty members
- Partnered with "The DEI Shift" podcast

# **Focused on Improving Board Certification Policies and Procedures**

- Served on the commission to inform the new standards for continuing certification from the American Board of Medical Specialties, which oversees specialty boards that include the American Board of Internal Medicine.
- Advocated to:
  - Reduce administrative burdens
  - Minimize financial burdens
  - Recognize physicians for their ongoing work to improve quality of care, including efforts to eliminate health care disparities
  - Clarify the purpose and limitations of certification for the public, diplomates, and credentialers
  - Assess the value of certification programs to diplomates

# **CMS Physician Fee Schedule Changes Reflect ACP Recommendations**

- Congress passed legislation to avert cuts to Medicare physician payments that were scheduled to take effect in January 2022
- <u>Critical care codes</u> can be billed on the same day as E/M services, and <u>critical care services</u> should not be bundled with global surgical fees
- Flexibilities for <u>telehealth extended</u> to ensure patient access to care
- Payment rates for vaccine administration increased
- Penalty phase of the <u>Appropriate Use Criteria Program</u> when ordering advanced diagnostic imaging services delayed
- New Merit-based Incentive Payment System Value Pathway, Optimizing Chronic Disease Management, provides a relevant option for participation
- <u>New data collection</u> will focus on health equity and disparities





- <u>Relaxed reporting requirements</u> give ACOs more time to report
- The increase in the <u>guality performance standard that ACOs must</u> meet to be eligible to share in savings delayed until PY 2024

# **ACP** Recommendations **Reflected in Federal Programs**

- <u>Mask and vaccine requirements</u> for workplaces along with the supply of PPE increased
- Improvements made to the <u>Affordable Care Act</u> and access to health care for all
- Protections granted for international medical graduates and other immigrants
- Funding for COVID-19 health care in the American Rescue Plan increased
- Infrastructure Bill will include greater broadband access and measures to combat climate change
- Advancement of ACP-supported legislation to <u>lower prescription</u> drug pricing achieved

# **Additional Key Initiatives**

- Made recommendations to protect patients-over-profit orientation in **Financial Profit in Medicine**
- Called for policies to strengthen veterans' health care in <u>Health Care</u> for Our Nation's Veterans
- Released <u>Health Information Privacy, Protection, and Use in the</u> Expanding Digital Health Ecosystem policy
- Achieved positive movement around <u>streamlining visa and</u> naturalization processes for international medical graduates in line with ACP recommendations
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program changes reflect ACP's call for reform and will enable more people to qualify

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