

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 [New Unified Vision for Changing Primary Care Finance](#)
- Became a Co-Founder of [Primary Care for America](#), 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 [PPE, regulatory relief, and financial assistance](#) for practices
- Coordinated distribution channels to [support procurement of PPE](#)
- [Published clinical guidance](#) on treatment efficacy and safety, as well as PPE usage
- Held series of [ACP-Annals of Internal Medicine COVID-19 forums](#) on practical clinical considerations and implications
- Developed and updated in real time [clinical and practical tools and information](#)
- Joined with HHS as a founding member of the [COVID-19 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 [comprehensive framework](#) 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
- [Co-sponsored grant programs](#) 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
- [Critical care codes](#) can be billed on the same day as E/M services, and [critical care services](#) should not be bundled with global surgical fees
- Flexibilities for [telehealth extended](#) to ensure patient access to care
- Payment rates for [vaccine administration increased](#)
- Penalty phase of the [Appropriate Use Criteria Program](#) 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
- [New data collection](#) will focus on health equity and disparities
- [Relaxed reporting requirements](#) give ACOs more time to report
- The increase in the [quality performance standard that ACOs must meet](#) to be eligible to share in savings delayed until PY 2024

ACP Recommendations Reflected in Federal Programs

- [Mask and vaccine requirements](#) for workplaces along with the supply of PPE increased
- Improvements made to the [Affordable Care Act](#) 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 [lower prescription 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 [Health Care for Our Nation's Veterans](#)
- Released [Health Information Privacy, Protection, and Use in the Expanding Digital Health Ecosystem](#) policy
- Achieved positive movement around [streamlining visa and 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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