



2023–2024 | A Year in Review of Advocacy and Impact

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) continues to serve as a catalyst for positive change in health care by supporting our physicians, patients, and people of the Commonwealth. Throughout the last year, the Medical Society remained at the forefront of vital issues and initiatives, achieving significant victories that promote access to health care by supporting physicians in the practice of medicine and reinforcing the health care system overall. Several of the year’s most meaningful accomplishments included:

Advancing Public Health Through Policy Initiatives

Streamlining Prior Authorization: A Unified Effort to Prioritize Patient Care



The MMS, the Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association, and Health Care For All collaborated with lawmakers to introduce [new legislation](#) to streamline the prior authorization process, putting patient care first. It reduces the time physicians spend on paperwork and waiting for decisions from insurance personnel who may not have clinical expertise.

Pioneering Public Health Solutions to Combat Opioid Addiction



The Society and key stakeholders continue to be at the forefront of legislative efforts on Beacon Hill to establish a robust legal and regulatory framework that would allow the Commonwealth to add [Overdose Prevention Centers](#) as another harm reduction measure in the battle against the opioid crisis.

Advocating for Patient Care and Reducing Physician Burden



Through [proactive advocacy](#) and constructive engagement, the MMS collaborated with physician partners to successfully secure continued coverage for conscious sedation and full anesthesia for colonoscopy and endoscopy procedures. This effort helped safeguard patient access to necessary care while preventing additional strain on physicians and care teams.

Spearheading the Response to Critical Public Health Issues



The MMS hosted educational webinars on Mpox, RSV, and measles, providing crucial clinical recommendations and advocating for patient care.

Improving Patient Access to Mental and Behavioral Health Care



The MMS collaborated with the Massachusetts Division of Insurance and the Department of Mental Health to help develop elements of the [Mental Health Wellness Exam](#), allowing patients to receive one free annual mental health wellness exam. The Society created [resources](#) and hosted a live [webinar](#) for physicians covering the mental health wellness examination, the process, the roles of the health care professional and the insurers, and the anticipated benefit for the patient.

Championing DEI in Artificial Intelligence Technology



The Society continues to raise awareness around mitigating unconscious bias in technology to ensure all patients benefit from more inclusive algorithms. In March, our signature conference, Future Health: Best Practices for Advancing Care, hosted a keynote speaker and featured faculty and editors from *NEJM AI* to raise awareness of responsible AI and health equity.



Physician Leadership and Engagement

Grassroots Advocacy Amplifying the Physician Voice



The new [MMS Grassroots Action Center](#) empowers members interested in engaging with elected officials on key policy issues that benefit patients, physicians, and their practices. MMS members sent 2,400 messages to elected officials advocating for telehealth, prior authorization, and Medicare payment reforms.

Championing the Next Generation of Physician Leaders



The MMS's successful mentoring program provides early career physicians and physicians from underrepresented communities with the opportunity to engage with an experienced physician, to foster career development, work-life balance, and leadership within the Society.

Strengthening the Practice of Medicine

Reducing Medicare Payment Cuts

Congress reduced the proposed 2024 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule cuts from 3.37 to 1.67%, following extensive [lobbying efforts](#) by the MMS and a nationwide campaign led by the American Medical Association.



Mitigating Stigma and Promoting Physician Well-Being

Persistent [advocacy by the MMS](#) with key partners led to Massachusetts being the first in the nation to have every hospital, health system, and local health plan committed to eliminating potentially stigmatizing questions in the credentialing process.



Advocating for the Future of Primary Care

- The MMS continues to address the primary care physician shortage, providing [education](#) and working with policymakers and others to develop policy [solutions](#) to attract, retain, and diversify our physician workforce providers in Massachusetts and reduce administrative burden.
- The Medical Society, in collaboration with Massachusetts Health Quality Partners, provided input to the [state's Primary Care Dashboard](#), which tracks the health and performance of the primary care system across the Commonwealth.



Responding Rapidly and Providing Advocacy During Crises

- **Cyberattack Response:** When a cyberattack on Change Healthcare disrupted transactions with insurers, the MMS quickly partnered with providers and payers to address the continuity of patient care and to [ensure practices had access](#) to the cash flow necessary to sustain their operations.
- **Steward Health Care Bankruptcy:** In response to the uncertainty of Steward Health Care's bankruptcy, the MMS leadership actively engaged with state officials and stakeholders to represent physicians' concerns and provided timely updates, resources, and live [webinars](#) to help physicians navigate this unprecedented and rapidly evolving situation.



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