

2021 Advocacy Priorities

Group	Issue	Priorities
American Hospital Association (AHA)	COVID-19	• Ensure the declaration of a Public Health Emergency (PHE) continues through the duration of the COVID-19 crisis, including critical 1135 waivers. • Provide appropriate liability protections for facilities and front-line medical providers treating patients amid the COVID-19 crisis. • Provide enhanced federal funding for Medicaid during the PHE, including through an increase to both the Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) and the Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program. • Rescind recent rules that weaken protections for Medicaid enrollees and allowing states to delay Medicaid eligibility recertification during the PHE. • Expand coverage and zero-cost-sharing for COVID-19 treatment and apply this in all forms of public and private coverage. • Provide additional money to the Provider Relief Fund by covering lost revenue, purchasing supplies and equipment, standing up emergency testing centers, and construction and retrofitting of facilities. In addition, ensure that the rules governing the use of these funds provide needed flexibility. • Support state efforts to expand scope of practice laws, allowing non-physicians to practice at the top of their licenses. • Reauthorize nursing workforce development programs to support recruitment, retention and advanced education for nurses and other allied health professionals. • Promote medical licensure reciprocity to allow practitioners to work across state lines. • Address physician shortages by increasing the number of residency slots eligible for Medicare funding and rejecting reductions to Medicare funding for direct and indirect Graduate Medical Education (GME). • Make permanent certain telehealth flexibilities, including lifting geographic and originating site restrictions, allowing Rural Health Clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers to serve as distant sites, expanding the practitioners eligible for providing telehealth, and allowing hospital outpatient billing for virtual services, among others. • Enhance payments for behavioral telehealth services rendered during the pandemic. • Increase annual appropriations for the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) to at least \$515 million. • Provide flexibility in quality measure programs by temporarily waiving quality reporting in time periods most affected by the pandemic. • Implement a communication effort on vaccine safety, particularly among vulnerable populations. • Ensure the availability of personal protective equipment, breathing support devices and other resources needed to fight the pandemic.
	Affordability in Health Care	• Ensure that regulations to implement surprise medical billing protections for patients result in timely and reasonable reimbursement to providers. • Support price transparency efforts by including the expected out-of-pocket costs when appropriate. • Permanently rescind the rules requiring the disclosure of privately negotiated rates between hospitals and payers. • Ensure patients and providers can access critical drug therapies by establishing fair and sustainable drug pricing practices and reimbursement mechanisms. • Protect the 340B Drug Pricing program by reversing harmful policies and holding drug manufacturers accountable to the rules of the program. • Test new approaches to delivering high-quality care at lower costs through alternative payment models, including expanding access to non-medical services that impact health. • Enact technological, legislative and regulatory solutions to reduce administrative waste, such as by streamlining prior authorization requirements. • Promote greater efficiency and safeguards against unnecessary burden in HIPAA administrative standards. • Enact comprehensive medical liability reform, including caps on non-economic damages and allowing courts to limit attorneys’ contingency fees.
	Health Care Coverage	• Preserve the gains in health coverage made over the past decade and further expand coverage. • Expand Medicaid in states that have not yet expanded. • Ensure the stability and affordability of the Health Insurance Marketplaces by expanding eligibility for and the level of subsidies. • Protect access to a minimum set of essential health benefits. • Encourage states to extend coverage through innovative state waivers (section 1115 and 1332 waivers) with appropriate safeguards against eligibility reductions and cost-sharing increases, as well as better integration of social and health services. • Rescind or withdraw policies that could result in coverage losses, such as the Public Charge Rule. • Ensure care for veterans by working with hospitals and health systems and the Department of Veterans Affairs as they implement the next generation of comprehensive community care for veterans.
	Mental Health	• Enforce existing federal parity laws to ensure coverage for physical and behavioral health benefits, including substance use disorder treatment. • Repeal the Medicaid Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) exclusion, which prohibits the use of federal Medicaid funds to cover inpatient mental health services for patients aged 21 to 64 in certain freestanding psychiatric facilities. • Eliminate Medicare’s 190-day lifetime limit for inpatient behavioral psychiatric admissions. • Provide robust incentives to ensure electronic communication between acute care hospitals and psychiatric hospitals and providers; assist psychiatric hospitals and mental health providers to optimally use Electronic Health Records (EHRs). • Implement policies to better integrate and coordinate behavioral health services with physical health services.

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		Ensure the implementation, through rulemaking, of Sec. 3221 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which revises and better aligns 42 CFR Part 2 regulations with HIPAA.
	Access to Care	- Protect rural communities’ access to care by preserving and improving Medicare rural hospital designations, including reopening the necessary provider critical access hospital (CAH) designation, removing the 96-hour condition of payment for CAHs and clarifying and facilitating co-location policy compliance. - Reject additional payment cuts or site-neutral payments. - Modernize the Improving Medicare Post-acute Care Transformation (IMPACT) Act of 2014 to ensure the unified payment model for post-acute care reflects both new insights from the pandemic and the major payment reforms underway for the existing post-acute care payment systems. - Ensure stability for providers in post-acute care settings by avoiding new payment reductions or administrative burdens. - Protect not-for-profit hospitals’ tax-exempt status. - Prevent and mitigate drug shortages by strengthening requirements for drug manufacturers to disclose the root causes and expected duration of shortages; extending reporting requirements to active pharmaceutical ingredients manufacturers; and requiring manufacturers to have contingency plans for ensuring ongoing supply.
	Advance Health System Transformation	- Explore the creation of a predictable, upfront pre-payment by government payers to improve the financial stability of hospitals and health systems. - Build on the progress in modernizing the Stark Law and Anti-kickback Statute regulations. - Expand the use of telehealth, broadband and new technologies by providing the Medicare and Federal Communications Commission with funding, coverage and reimbursement for such services, technology and workforce training. - Advance use of innovative technologies and software (e.g., clinical decision support algorithms) without increasing regulatory burden. - Invest in health care infrastructure by expanding access to virtual care technologies and rural broadband, strengthening the capacity and capability for emergency preparedness and response. - Develop and refine payment models that address health equity and the social determinants of health. - Advance rural health care alternatives, including exploring rural pre-payment models; supporting additional inpatient/outpatient transformation strategies; promoting virtual care strategies; and refining existing models that support hospitals serving vulnerable communities. - Explore a new payment mechanism for vulnerable urban critical access hospitals that treat a disproportionate number of government-funded or uninsured patients. - Support efforts to increase government cybersecurity assistance and information sharing.
	Enhance Quality, Patient Safety	- Continue to streamline and coordinate quality measures in national programs to focus on the “measures that matter” most. - Advocate for improved Medicare Conditions of Participation, interpretative guidance and Joint Commission standards that hold hospitals accountable for taking actions that lead to higher-quality and safer care. - Enhance the effectiveness of the physician quality payment program by advocating for more accurate and meaningful cost measures. - Promote the adjustment for sociodemographic factors in quality measurement programs where appropriate.
	Health Equity	- Promote health equity by encouraging cultural competency training for health care professionals. - Support the coordinated collection of race and ethnicity data across federal agencies. - Increase funding for the health equity infrastructure in the Department of Health and Human Services, including the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. - Support efforts to increase diversity in the health care workforce, including through federal grants to minority-serving institutions for scholarships. - Pursue strategies and support public policies aimed at improving maternal and child health outcomes with a particular focus on eliminating racial and ethnic disparities.
Premier	Creating Healthy Markets	Redesign the Strategic National Stockpile and increase transparency of supply chain. - Advance domestic manufacturing and supply chain diversity. - Allow hospital use of GPOs in the 340B Drug Pricing Program. - Advance policies to help eliminate drug shortages. Advance unique device identification, comparative effectiveness research and real-world evidence.
	Interoperability & Data Access	Expand interoperability of EMR information systems through standards and open, affordable public APIs. - Achieve access to data needed for research and performance improvement while ensuring privacy policies protect patients. - Advocate for legislation to require health plans to use electronic prior authorization. - Support the use of data and health information to improve quality measurement.
	Affordability in Health Care	- Improve payment and delivery system reforms through the legal, legislative & regulatory process (i.e. ACOs & evolving APMs, bundled payments, medical homes, MA). - Advance value-based payments and incentives for APMs. - Ensure Premier members remain leaders in advancing quality and Premier’s quality and reporting products are able to compete in a changing regulatory environment. - Manage state reforms and Medicaid reimbursement reductions.

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Academy Advisors	Integrated Delivery Networks (IDNs)	• Educate lawmakers about how Integrated Delivery Networks (IDNs) differ from traditional single-site, non-integrated hospitals. • Communicate IDNs unique ability to provide services and manage a patients’ health across the care continuum. • Highlight how health systems’ responses to the COVID-19 pandemic as examples of how IDNs can quickly scale a response, invest in new services (telehealth) and re-allocate resources (staff, supplies) to best meet their communities’ needs. • Collect examples of health systems’ innovation to improve health equity, reduce disparities and address social determinants of health in their communities. • Highlight ways in which health systems can pursue innovation – through technology, through private partnerships, through payment models – to deliver high quality care to their communities.
	Affordability in Health Care	• Educate legislators about the outcomes, or lack thereof, of the current price transparency mandates. • Advocate to develop meaningful policies that will drive cost savings and empower patients when selecting health care services.
	Tax-Exempt Status	• Share the unique ways that health systems have partnered in their communities to address social determinants of health. • Highlight how health systems are working to promote health equity among minority populations in their communities. • Proactively communicate community benefit investments and projects.
	Communicate Impact of a Government-Run Public Insurance Option	• Proactively engage lawmakers in Congress and in the Biden Administration on large-scale health market changes. • Communicate the financial impacts that would result from various proposals (public option, lowering Medicare age, and others). • Advocate for potential solutions to increase access to quality health care for more Americans.
Catholic Hospital Association	COVID-19	• Continued support for front-line providers. • Additional resources for testing, PPE and the Provider Relief Fund. • Extend the telehealth flexibilities for two years to ensure greater outreach.
	COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts	• Strengthen vaccine distribution by fully funding a coordinated federal response which increases vaccines, supplies and provides timely information. • Improve vaccine outreach efforts by providing at least \$20 billion for a national vaccination outreach and distribution program for hospitals, long-term care facilities and community partners. • Ensure affordable access to vaccines for low-income communities by increasing the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage for vaccines to 100%.
	Health Care Coverage	• Protect and expand health care coverage and access for the most vulnerable. • Increase state resources for outreach and enrollment in the Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program.
	Health Equity	• Address the disparate effect of COVID-19 on people of color and their communities. • Ensure states can use emergency Medicaid coverage for all immigrants who need COVID-19 testing, vaccines or treatment and do not otherwise qualify for Medicaid. • Ensure support for language assistance resources and outreach for limited English proficient populations and other minorities. • Collect, analyze and disseminate accurate public health data using race and ethnicity in order to understand and effectively address the pandemic.
	Social Determinants of Health	• Increase funding for emergency rental assistance, housing vouchers, and 202 housing programs. • Extend the eviction and foreclosure moratoriums through September 30, 2021. • Increase the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for all recipients through the length of the PHE. • Support homelessness assistance outreach programs by providing additional Emergency Solutions Grants to state and local communities. • Raise the cap and extend the Paycheck Protection Loan program to assist nonprofits providing critical social services to those in need.
	Maternal Care, Behavioral Health and Access to Quality Palliative Care	• Promote access to prenatal and postpartum care by expanding Medicaid coverage for one year postpartum, expanding presumptive eligibility for pregnant women and expanding maternal home visitation programs. • Increase support for and access to palliative care by including the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act with additional immediate funding to expanded palliative care.
Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)	Enhance Quality, Patient Safety	• Reevaluate the Stark and Anti-Kickback laws. • Ensure support for both the Medicare and Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) programs and other supplemental payments. • Increase access to affordable health coverage, including sustaining and strengthening programs that provide access to health care coverage. • Advocate for the continued support of the 340B Drug Pricing program.

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	Advance Health System Transformation	• Ensure adequate funding of the NIH through the annual federal HHS appropriations bill. • Support sufficient funding and opportunities to ensure that research careers are an attractive and viable option for new generations of physicians and biomedical scientists.
	Health Care Workforce Education	• Increase federal investment in GME is the first step in producing more physicians to care for our nation's patients. • Ensure continued funding for HRSA's Health Workforce Programs. • Ensure federal financial and policy support for federal recruitment programs, such as Public Service Loan Forgiveness, the National Health Service Corps, and those administered by the VA, DoD, and HHS' Indian Health Service. Support student loan relief to physicians who serve in Health Professional Shortage Areas and nonprofit or government facilities. • Oppose immigration policies that lead to training disruptions and strained patient coverage. Make permanent and expand the Conrad 30 J-1 visa waiver program to help vulnerable patients affected by nationwide physician workforce shortages.
	Health Equity	• Collaborate on interventions and research with federal, local and community partners to address social risk factors, such as affordable housing, transportation, access to healthy food, job security, economic inequities and environmental health. • Address racism and explicit and implicit bias in medicine and mitigate racial inequities.
American Medical Association (AMA)	COVID-19	• Continued work on ending the COVID-19 pandemic; including issues surrounding vaccine distribution and practice sustainability. • Address public health infrastructure issues, including pandemic preparedness.
	Advance Health System Transformation	• Support for digital health, including telehealth (payment, coverage and expansion to audio) and augmented intelligence.
	Access to Care	• Support improvements to the ACA, such as: ○ Adequate funding for and expansion of outreach efforts to increase public awareness of ACA's premium tax credits. ○ Increasing the amount of premium tax credits. ○ Increasing the size of cost-sharing reductions. ○ Policies allowing states and/or the federal government to auto-enroll individuals who qualify for zero-premium Marketplace coverage. • Implement regulations for surprise medical billing
	Addressing the Opioid Crisis	• Expand access to medications to help treat opioid use disorder. • Support efforts to ensure mental health and substance use disorder parity. • Prevent the adoption of new or additional opioid prescribing restrictions.
Children Hospital Association	Behavioral Health	• Raise awareness of the mental, emotional and behavioral health crisis in children and youth made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.
	Medicaid and CHIP	• Ensure appropriate reimbursement for Medicaid and CHIP. • Promote policies that increase access to comprehensive health benefits.
	Health Equity	• Advocate to reduce disparities in health outcomes and health care among our nation's children.
AHPA Health System Priorities		
AdventHealth	Health Equity	• Ensure that every patient is treated equitably. • Invest in or support clinics and organizations that provide access to care in underserved neighborhoods. • Support efforts to provide healthy living conditions in distressed communities. • Support workforce and economic development programs that provide residents of underserved neighborhoods a path to prosperity and sustainability.
	Mental Health	• Pursue policies and funding to better provide services for those who have been diagnosed with mental illness. • Pursue partnerships and programs to increase access to mental health beds in our communities. • Collaborate with public, private and faith-based organizations to better coordinate mental health services, particularly out-patient services. • Educate employees, elected leaders and the public to strip away the stigma surrounding mental illness and to reveal its hidden costs to our communities.
	Chronic Disease	• Advocate for food security programs that provide access to healthy foods. • Pursue federal and state support for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). • Initiate and support programs that ban smoking in public places.

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		Develop and pursue local zoning and development regulations that encourage walking and exercise.
	Economic and Workforce Development	- Champion pro-business policies that provide for growth and prosperity. - Invest resources in platforms and institutions that open the door for those trapped in the cycle of poverty and underemployment. - Expand influence and footprint in programs that help the state fill the need for qualified medical and health professionals
	Health Care Transformation	- Advocate for policies, laws and regulations that establish a level playing field to ensure hospitals on the frontlines of delivering health care are not disadvantaged to the benefit of other industries. - Advocate for rules and regulations that simplify the efficient delivery of health care. - Advocate for deregulation that spurs innovation and the delivery of value-based care.
Adventist HealthCare	Promote a Single Consolidated Medical Bill	Create a single consolidated medical bill for patients by shifting the responsibility for collecting patient costs from providers to insurers.
Kettering Health Network	Federal Priorities	- Promote the continuation of COVID-19 flexibilities after the PHE has ended. - Expand rural health access and funding. - Protect the not-for-profit status. - Guard against overzealous expansion of site-neutral payment policies. - Continue Stark and Anti-Kickback reforms.
Loma Linda University Health	COVID-19	- Support for children’s hospitals combating the pandemic. - Support for COVID-19 health equity measures.
	Federal Legislative and Regulatory Priorities	- Maintain 340B Drug Pricing program Part B reimbursement rates. - Support Stark Law and Anti-Kickback Statute reform.
Adventist Health	Enhance Quality, Patient Safety and Equity	- Ensure that community benefit regulations promote partnerships and incentivize hospitals to invest in community building activities. - Establish equity promoting strategies that reduce social disparities. - Increase focus and funding on the social determinants of health with special emphasis on housing, employment, food security, education and transportation.
	Affordability in Health Care	- Promote integrated, comprehensive strategies to reform care delivery and payment. - Make permanent the telehealth waivers and flexibilities currently tied to the PHE, including hospital without walls. - Ensure payment policies that preserve coverage for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. - Protect the 340B Drug Pricing program. - Integrate mental health into medical care while improving access in community-based settings by addressing barriers, workforce shortages and mental health parity. - Support policies that make care more affordable and accessible, especially policies that focus on the uninsured and underinsured.
	Rural Health	- Ensure the stability of rural hospitals and rural health clinics. - Address rural workforce shortages. - Support policies that expand rural broadband and make it more affordable.