

## Summary of ACP's Virtual Leadership Day Priorities

May 25-26, 2021

### Expand Health Coverage and Affordability

Congress should pass legislation below to expand access to health coverage and make it more affordable by supporting policies that would continue expanded eligibility for higher premium tax credits (as enacted in the American Rescue Plan Act) to purchase coverage through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and provide higher federal payments for states to expand their Medicaid population beyond CY2022.

- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass H.R. 340, *the Incentivizing Medicaid Expansion Act of 2021***, to expand federal matching assistance for states that choose to expand Medicaid, regardless of when such expansion takes place. Introduce and pass the companion bill in the Senate.
- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass H.R. 369, *the Health Care Affordability Act of 2021***, to permanently expand eligibility for higher premium tax credits under the ACA. Introduce and pass the companion bill in the Senate.

### Train and Support Frontline Physicians during and after COVID-19

Congress should pass legislation below and support policies to ensure an adequate supply of internal medicine specialists trained in primary and comprehensive care that includes increasing Graduate Medical Education (GME) positions, addressing medical education debt, decreasing barriers to increase the number of international physicians in the U.S., funding Title VII Health Professions grants, and addressing the behavioral health and well-being of physicians.

- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass H.R. 2256/S. 834, *the Resident Physician Reduction Shortage Act of 2021***, to increase the number of GME slots by at least 2,000 per year over seven years (14,000 slots) for specialties facing shortages, including internal medicine.
- ✓ **Reintroduce and pass H.R. 1554 (116<sup>th</sup> Congress), *the Resident Education Deferred Interest Act***, to allow borrowers to qualify for interest-free deferment on their student loans while serving in a medical or dental internship or residency program. Introduce and pass the companion bill in the Senate.
- ✓ **Reintroduce and pass S. 948, *the Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act (116<sup>th</sup> Congress)* and S. 3599 (116<sup>th</sup> Congress), *the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act***, to support the COVID-19 response workforce by expediting visas for international medical graduates (IMGs) to enter the U.S. for training and patient care, permanently authorizing the Conrad 30 Program, and providing a pathway for IMGs and their families already in the U.S to obtain permanent residency status. Introduce and pass the companion bills in the House.
- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass H.R. 2418, *the Student Loan Forgiveness for Frontline Health Workers Act***, to forgive student loans for physicians and other clinicians who are on the frontlines of providing care to COVID-19 patients or helping the health care system cope with the COVID-19 public health emergency. Introduce and pass the companion bill in the Senate.
- ✓ **Urge appropriators to fund Title VII Primary Care and Training Enhancement (PCTE) for FY2022 at \$71 million** to support and expand the pipeline for individuals training in primary care.
- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass H.R. 1667/S. 610, *the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act***, to address the behavioral health and well-being of physicians, including depression, suicides and burnout.

### Support the Value of Primary and Comprehensive Care

Congress should pass legislation below and support policies to ensure patients continue to have access to vital primary care services by stabilizing and improving payments for undervalued office-based visits under both Medicare and Medicaid, providing sufficient funding to prevent scheduled and future cuts in payments, maintaining incentives for physicians to transform their practices into Advanced Alternative Payment Models (APMs) under Medicare's Quality Payment Program.

- ✓ **Continue to fund the 3.75 percent increase to all physicians' services that was approved by Congress at the end of last year** to prevent CY2022 "budget neutrality" cuts for physician services, including primary care visits and other evaluation and management services.
- ✓ **Ensure that any legislation that addresses budget neutrality treats all services fairly and equitably.**
- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass H.R. 1025, *the Kids' Access to Primary Care Act*, to increase access to health coverage for Medicaid patients** by achieving payment parity for primary care services under Medicaid and Medicare. Introduce and pass the companion bill in the Senate.
- ✓ **Extend the five percent bonus that physicians receive if they meet performance expectations in Advanced APMs that is set to expire at the end of 2022.**
- ✓ **Act before the end of CY2021 to prevent scheduled cuts for physician services, including primary care, resulting from budget sequestration and pay-as-you go budget rules.**

### **Improve Access to Prescription Drugs and Reduce Costs**

Congress should pass legislation below to improve access to prescription drugs by reducing excessive prescription drugs costs through pricing transparency, providing authority to the federal government to negotiate prescription drug prices under the Medicare Part D program, eliminating federal tax deductions for direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising and removing harmful step therapy protocols.

- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass S. 898, *the Fair Drug Pricing Act***, to require drug companies to disclose and provide more information about imminent drug-price increases, including data about research and development costs. Introduce and pass the companion bill in the House.
- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass S. 833, *the Empowering Medicare Seniors to Negotiate Drug Prices Act of 2021***, to help to reduce drug prices and out-of-pocket costs by allowing the federal government to negotiate lower drug prices on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries. Introduce and pass the companion bill in the House.
- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass S. 141, *the End Taxpayer Subsidies for Drug Ads Act***, to end the federal tax deduction that pharmaceutical companies use to pay for drug advertising. Introduce and pass the companion bill in the House.
- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass S. 464/H.R. 2163, *the Safe Step Act***, to ensure patient access to appropriate treatments based on clinical decision-making and medical necessity rather than arbitrary step therapy protocols.

### **Support Essential Public Health and Research Initiatives**

Congress should pass legislation to fund public health, medical and health services research initiatives, as noted below. Congress should adopt a public health approach to reduce firearms-related injuries and deaths that includes dedicated funding for firearms violence prevention research, strengthening the criminal background check system, closing loopholes that allow domestic violence offenders to acquire firearms, and promoting state adoption of extreme risk protection laws. Congress should pass legislation below to mitigate the harmful effects of climate change on health.

- ✓ **Support funding in FY2022 appropriations for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Injury Prevention and Control, Firearm Injury and Mortality Prevention Research, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Office of the Director, Firearm Injury and Mortality Prevention Research.**
- ✓ **Follow the actions of the House and pass in the Senate H.R. 8, *the Bipartisan Background Checks Act*** that would establish new background check requirements for firearm transfers between private parties.
- ✓ **Reintroduce in both chambers H.R. 3076/S. 506, *the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act from the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress***, to establish a grant program to help states and Indian tribes implement extreme risk protection order laws and expands categories of individuals who are prohibited from receiving, possessing, shipping, or transporting a firearm.
- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass H.R. 3271/S. 1702, *the Climate Change Health Protection and Promotion Act*** that would take important steps to mitigate the harmful impact of climate change on health.

### **Promote Health Equity, Social Justice, and Eliminate Disparities**

Congress should pass legislation to promote health equity, social justice and eliminate racial/gender disparities in health care. Integral to that effort would be advancing policies to reduce discriminatory practices in law enforcement, bar discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, collect racial and ethnic data on health disparities and reduce pregnancy-related deaths among minority and other underserved women.

- ✓ **Follow the actions of the House and pass in the Senate H.R. 1280, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021**, to overhaul qualified immunity for law enforcement, prohibit racial profiling on the part of law enforcement and ban no-knock warrants in federal drug cases and chokeholds and carotid holds at the federal level. It would also establish a federal registry of police misconduct to be maintained by the Department of Justice.
- ✓ **Follow the actions of the House and pass in the Senate H.R. 5, the Equality Act**, to prohibit discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation and gender identity in public accommodations and facilities, education, federal housing credit and the jury system.
- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass the H.R. 666/S. 162, the Anti-Racism in Public Health Act of 2021**, to establish within the CDC a National Center on Anti-racism and Health for data collection and research and a law enforcement violence prevention program.
- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass H.R. 959/S. 346, the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021**, to reduce preventable maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity in the U.S. and close disparities in maternal health outcomes, particularly among pregnant minority women.

### **Expand Access to Telehealth Services and Promote Patient Safety/Privacy**

Congress should pass legislation below designed to increase the flexibility and use of telehealth services as needed during and beyond the public health emergency, as these services have become and will continue to be vital to patient care. Integral to that effort is the need for Congress to protect patient safety by ensuring that harmful barriers in law are removed that would otherwise help connect patients with their medical records and promote privacy by passing broader federal privacy protections for health information collected and used throughout the expanding digital health ecosystem.

- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass H.R. 2903/S. 1512, the CONNECT for Health Act**, to remove arbitrary barriers to telehealth services such as geographic and site of service restrictions.
- ✓ **Cosponsor and pass S. 168/H.R. 708, the Temporary Reciprocity to Ensure Access to Treatment Act or the "TREAT Act"**, to ensure that telehealth services can be provided across states lines after the public health emergency ends.
- ✓ **Urge appropriators to include adequate funding in FY2022 to support expansion of broadband capabilities nationwide**, especially to rural and underserved communities, and to remove the ban on adoption of a national unique health identifier standard.
- ✓ **Develop comprehensive privacy legislation governing personal health information that builds on the HIPAA statute and that is consistent with the six principles outlined in ACP's 2021 [position paper](#).**

### **Where can I go to learn more?**

[advocacy@acponline.org](mailto:advocacy@acponline.org); Digital version of this issue brief can be found at: [Policy Priority Issues | ACP Services](#)