

# MSMS Government Relations & Physician Engagement Team



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## Legislative *Platform and Priorities*



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# Legislative Platform and Priorities

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## 2021 Legislative Priorities

Key priorities of the Michigan State Medical Society (MSMS) and its 15,000 physician and medical student members in 2021 are as follows:

### COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a devastating toll on the physical and mental health of Michigan citizens, as well as the economic health of our state. Additionally, many of Michigan's medical practices are trying to regroup from financial and staffing losses and increased costs to comply with regulatory mandates. By using scientific data to help inform decision-making, MSMS is committed to working collaboratively with stakeholders to end the COVID-19 pandemic, safely re-engage all economic sectors, provide efficient and equitable vaccine distribution, and ensure practice sustainability.

### Prior Authorization and Step Therapy Reform

The prior authorization process diverts valuable resources away from direct patient care, can delay the start or continuation of necessary treatment, and can negatively impact patient health outcomes. Step therapy, also known as fail first, is another practice that disrupts patient care by requiring patients to try other therapies before being approved for the treatment that their doctor originally prescribed. MSMS will work closely with the Legislature, regulators, and other stakeholders on ways to reform prior authorization and step therapy processes to ensure transparency, remove unnecessary and costly care delays, and support shared decision-making.

### Team-based Care

Patients are best served by a team-based approach to care that provides the maximum amount of choice while ensuring that they benefit from the additional training and expertise that comes from having a physician on the team. A highly functioning health care team is the best way to serve patients. MSMS will continue to promote the role of the physician as the leader of the health care team and oppose any efforts to expand allied health professionals scope of practice that may put patients at risk.

### Telemedicine

Telemedicine has proven to be an effective care delivery method that ensures convenient and timely access to patients. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, insurers covered telemedicine visits to varying extents; however, there were often obstacles such as low reimbursement and restrictions on site of care. Although payers removed some of the regulatory and administrative barriers during the pandemic, these policies are now reverting to pre-pandemic times. Moving forward, payment and service parity for the use of clinically appropriate telemedicine services is critical.

### Health Equity

Several events in 2020 brought to the forefront the need to prioritize advocacy addressing systemic policies and other contributing factors that deny historically marginalized groups equal and just opportunities to maximize quality of life and health outcomes. In order to improve the health of all populations, MSMS will work to advance policies that reduce disparities and improve health equity.

### Graduate Medical Education (GME)

Studies repeatedly demonstrate that one of the best ways to recruit and retain physicians is via local medical schools and residency programs. GME helps fill the gap in underserved areas by providing extremely low-cost care to those most in need. Michigan has been a leader in expanding medical school class sizes to address the projected demand for physician services, it is imperative that we continue to fund GME slots to allow these future physicians to learn here in Michigan, train here in Michigan, and stay here in Michigan.

## MSMS Legislative & Regulatory Platform

MSMS also has long-standing positions and policies on numerous topics. The following provides an overview of some of the top issues comprising the MSMS legislative and regulatory advocacy platform.

### Insurance and Regulatory Advocacy

- Support mental health and substance use disorder parity
- Ensure appropriate access to and payment for telemedicine

- Advocate for adequate and transparent physician networks
- Reduce unnecessary administrative costs

### Public Health and Prevention

- Strengthen public health infrastructure
- Support vaccine availability and oppose efforts to weaken Michigan's vaccine laws
- Improve health equity
- Ensure access to evidence-based non-opioid pain care and opioid use disorder treatment
- Reduce childhood environmental hazards
- Reduce gun violence through health screening, patient counseling and expanded access to mental health services

### Professional Liability

- Preserve existing tort reforms
- Support higher negligence thresholds in medical liability cases
- Eliminate the lost opportunity doctrine
- Maintain the legislative intent and enforceability of all medical liability tort reforms

### Medicaid

- Seek funding parity with Medicare
- Seek funding sources that are fair and sustainable
- Support state funding for the Healthy Michigan Plan
- Ensure access to physician-directed care

### Physician Supply and Training

- Increase graduate medical education funding at state level
- Minimize burden of medical school debt

### Insurance Contracting Reform

- Limit retroactive audit timeframes
- Support adequate disclosure of fee screens
- Support appeals process that includes independent reviews

### Scope of Practice

- Support physician-led, team-based health care
- Support education over legislation as the means of increasing scope of practice
- Oppose independent prescriptive authority by non-physicians
- Support patient right-to-know/health professional credentials disclosure