



MMS Legislative and Public Health Advocacy

With more than 25,000 members, the MMS remains the Commonwealth's largest physician-led organization. The Society is dedicated to its mission of representing the concerns of physicians and their patients.

Throughout the response to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the MMS has been a respected voice and authority on the practice of medicine and delivery of health care. State leaders, including Governor Baker's administration, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the Division of Insurance (DOI), and the Board of Registration in Medicine, have sought the MMS's counsel and assistance.

Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

At the outset of the pandemic, the MMS advocated for policies and measures that maintained patient access to care while supporting physicians in the practice of medicine during the crisis.

- Advocated for payment parity for telehealth and reduction of cost-sharing and prior authorization
- State plans initially proposed parity for COVID-19 care only. The MMS advocated successfully for coverage of all care
- Continue to advocate for expansion of medical practice to address patient access and deferred care
 - Successfully advocated to remove proposed delays to expansion of practice in Phases 1 and 2 (original proposals called for additional one-week delay)
- Rolled back 50% volume restriction proposed for Phase 2 expansion of procedures
- Achieved accelerated licensing for foreign medical graduates

- Secured expanded professional liability protections due to the pandemic
 - Established broad protections to include care beyond COVID-19
- Consistently communicated (13 letters and numerous phone calls to state and federal lawmakers) the priorities and concerns of frontline physicians, such as PPE, testing, financial needs, and liability matters
- Secured temporary suspension of CME licensing requirements
- Advocated for temporary suspension of some educational loan payment requirements
- Represented physician perspective with the DOI. Advocated for and secured clarification for rapidly evolving health plan policy guidance
- Secured health plans compliance with DOI guidance, including testing reimbursement levels, deadlines for policy changes, and coding considerations
- Participate in the DPH COVID-19 Health Equity Advisory Group addressing disproportionate impact of the pandemic
- Produced *Tips for Expanding Practice During COVID-19*, which provides comprehensive, up-to-date information for medical practice operations during the COVID-19 emergency
- Secured major media outlet coverage to tell the story about impact of COVID-19 on patients, physicians, and other providers

Ongoing Public Health Initiatives

The MMS remains dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of individuals and communities throughout the Commonwealth.

- Leadership voice in Food is Medicine Massachusetts (a multi-stakeholder partnership) advocating for education about role of healthy nutrition in preventing chronic illness. The MMS is co-chair, Food Is Medicine Provider Nutrition Education and Referral Task Force
- Led state efforts to establish a commission to study and make policy recommendations to address racial disparities in maternal health outcomes
- Recognized leader and co-founder of Tobacco Free Massachusetts, leading the call to ban flavored tobacco and vaping products
- Continued advocacy for safe injection facility/sites
- Continued advocacy for expanded access to substance use disorder care and services

Physician Wellness and Burnout, Administrative Simplification

The MMS continues to engage with partners and stakeholders to address physician well-being and burnout, while advocating for streamlined reporting requirements that promote quality and eliminate unnecessary administrative burden for physicians and other providers.

- Advocated with the National Committee for Quality Assurance and the State Quality Alignment Task Force to reduce quality measure reporting. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts has reduced its total reporting measures by as much as 27%
- Advocated for streamlined prior authorization processes with the Health Policy Commission and continues to pursue and recommend alternative solutions, including “gold carding” and e-prior authorization
- Reduced length of new physician license application by 50%
- Advocated for and secured electronic Massachusetts Controlled Substance Registration, resulting in a significantly reduced application approval process (less than five days) and a renewal process that takes minutes



Every physician matters,
each patient counts.