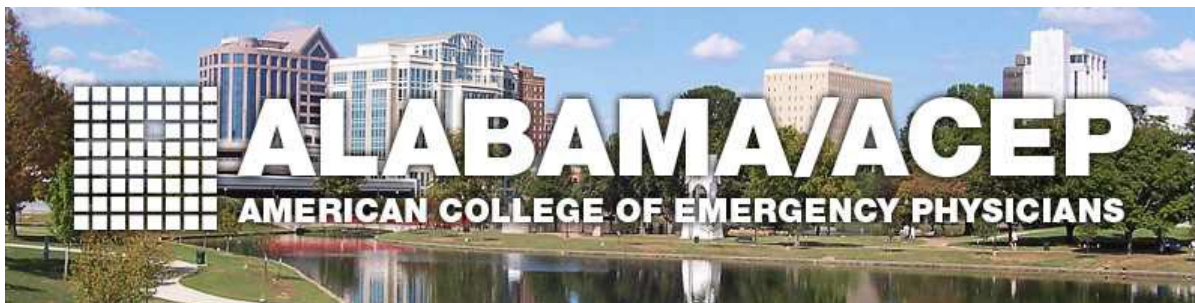


A Newsletter for the Members of the Alabama Chapter - Winter 2024

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Alabama ACEP President's Letter

Hamad Husainy, DO, FACEP
President, Alabama Chapter – ACEP

ALACEP members,

I hope your holidays and New Year were wonderful. It seems that this is the time of year that we tend to hold on a bit harder to those loved ones. Some of us have lost family members and loved ones this past year, and this gets highlighted over the holidays.

We talk about wellness and professional satisfaction. I encourage each of us to create personal satisfaction with their loved ones, and do not mix this with professional satisfaction.

I love what I do, but I love my family. These words "love" are not the same definition (I don't care what Webster's says). Love your family, friends, and people in general. This is passionate and intentional.

The "love" for our profession is more of a calling. It is like those people who say they "love" running. They are probably good at it and feel a sense of worth.

I have three teenagers and two will be going off to college soon (I am not crying, you are:). I took my youngest duck hunting for his first time this winter. I got to spend a number of nights with a fire in the fireplace and a Christmas movie on ("snuggling with my lovely wife").

This is who I love and what I love. I am blessed to have been called to be a physician, and for this I love.

Have a great Spring,
HH

Act Now to Reverse Medicare Physician Pay Cuts

Beginning Jan. 1, Medicare physician reimbursements were cut 3.4%. [Legislators need to hear directly from you to reverse these harmful cuts as soon as possible.](#) As Congress returns to Washington, D.C. to resume legislative business, **legislators need to hear directly from you** as an emergency physician on the front lines of our health care system that these cuts must be reversed as soon as possible.

The bipartisan "Preserving Seniors' Access to Physicians Act of 2023," introduced by Reps. Greg Murphy, MD (R-NC), Danny Davis (D-IL), Brad Wenstrup, DPM (R-OH), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), Larry Bucshon, MD (R-IN), and Michael Burgess, MD (R-TX), represents a critical opportunity to fully eliminate these harmful cuts.

As ACEP continues to work with Congress to identify policy solutions that will provide long-term stability for Medicare beneficiaries and the physicians who provide their care, we need immediate short-term relief to prevent these cuts from affecting patient access to care. Urge your U.S. Representative to cosponsor H.R. 6683, the "Preserving Seniors' Access to Physicians Act of 2023."



WHY I GIVE

"I give to ALAPAC because it truly matters who represents us in Montgomery and across the state! Healthcare policy evolves quickly and medicine needs a seat at the table and ALAPAC helps provide that. When laws change, it affects not only us as emergency physicians but also our patients. We must each do our part to support ALAPAC's efforts on our behalf."



**Bryan Balentine,
M.D., FACEP,**
*Emergency
Physician and
Member,
ALAPAC
Birmingham
Regional Board*



**Text ALAPAC to 91999
to donate today!**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON PAC CONTRIBUTIONS. Contributions to Alabama Medical PAC (ALAPAC) are not tax deductible. Political contributions to ALAPAC are voluntary and are not limited to the suggested amount. The Medical Association will not favor or disadvantage any person based on the amount of the member's contribution or a failure to contribute. This is not a solicitation for PAC contributions from any individuals who are foreign nationals (non-green-card holders). Contributions by foreign nationals are prohibited by Federal law.

Medical Association Focusing on Physician Workforce Challenges

The Medical Association has concluded its largest survey ever - this one focused on barriers to growing Alabama's physician workforce - with the goal of gaining additional context to the specific challenges Alabama faces in attracting and keeping its physicians.

Ultimately, the Association expects the results to drive its advocacy efforts moving forward. While results are still being analyzed, Alabama's current physician workforce ranks 43rd in the nation regarding physician/patient ratios and for primary care specifically, will need roughly 600 more primary care physicians by 2030 to maintain access at current utilization levels. Compounding this, 40% of the population will be over age 65 in 10 years, including 2-out-of-5 currently practicing physicians.

Currently, barely half of physicians (52%) trained in Alabama choose to stay here after completing residency, which is lower than the national average and lower than all but one contiguous state. Recent efforts to bolster Alabama's future physician workforce include not only continued loan forgiveness programs aimed at incentivizing new physicians to practice in medically underserved communities but also - for the first time ever - state funding for the creation of 5 new primary care residency slots, in addition to a number of tax credit opportunities for rural physicians and physician preceptors. As well, passage of the Association's 2023 Physician Workforce Act will ease the path to licensure for physicians moving here from out-of-state and for international medical graduates, while establishing a first-ever apprenticeship program for unmatched medical school graduates to work under the supervision of a fully-licensed physician. A few of the challenges identified in the physician workforce survey which are driving doctors shortages are increasing medical school debt, stagnant or declining reimbursement rates, inflation and other practice expenses, erosion of the doctor-patient relationship, liability concerns and burnout driven by burdensome items like prior authorizations and electronic medical records.

Prior authorizations are specifically a point of contention, because they not only delay care for and even harm some patients but have become an increasing administrative burden for physicians and practices, driving up expenses and simultaneously burnout. In fact, a separate survey conducted by the Association in 2022 focused on prior authorizations found that 1/3 of Alabama patients waited nearly a week or more for a decision on whether the care their physician believes is necessary would be covered! The survey also indicated 90% of prior authorizations are eventually approved, that prior authorizations consume 3-6 hours/day for office staff in 60% of Alabama practices and nearly an entire work day each week for more than 1/3 of physicians and clinical staff! The uncompensated time required of prior authorizations increases medical practice overhead (averaging near 70%), tightening operating margins and - combined with other factors - ultimately could lead to more practice closures.

The burden of prior authorizations must change, and the Association is currently working on a number of fronts to achieve relief for physicians and patients, and the workforce survey will serve to better focus those efforts. With a liability environment the U.S. Chamber of Commerce ranks as the sixth-worst for per-capita nuclear verdicts of \$10 million or more (all cases, not just medical liability), the realities of practicing medicine in Alabama are clearly changing. Does Alabama's being number 6 on that list convey business-friendliness or a stable liability environment to current or future physicians?

Thank you to those who participated in the workforce survey. As the results are more closely analyzed in-depth, they will guide the Association's future advocacy efforts on your and your patients' behalf. If you are not a member of the

Association, please join today so we can continue to tackle the challenges holding back Alabama's ability to become more-physician and medicine-friendly in 2024 and beyond.

Evans Brown is the Manager of Government Relations and Public Affairs for the Medical Association of Alabama.

EMerald Coast 2024



Make plans to join us for EMerald Coast 2024, an educational meeting for all emergency medical service personnel including physicians, PAs, NPs, nurses, EMTs, administrators, recruiters and corporate suppliers. This four-day meeting provides attendees with the opportunity to earn CME at the beach, along with plenty of free time to relax and reconnect with colleagues.

Monday, June 3–Thursday, June 6, 2024

Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort
Destin, Florida

Room rates begin at \$204 per night. For room reservations, call (800) 320-8115 with group code 24R1R0 or book online at <http://www.Sandestin.com/24R1R0>. The deadline to reserve a room at the discounted rate is **May 1, 2024**.

A tentative agenda and registration information will be available soon. Visit <https://www.alacep.org/education-and-cme/> for details.

If you have a recent case study that you would like to submit to our quarterly newsletter for publication email Meghan at mmartin@alamedical.org.

FROM NATIONAL ACEP



ACEP Resources & Latest News

ACEP President spoke at a Congressional briefing Tuesday to discuss violence in the ED and advocate for legislative solutions to protect health care workers. Aisha Terry, MD, FACEP, detailed the urgent need for accountability and stronger protections, saying, "We can't be the safety net without feeling safe ourselves." [Read more.](#)

Amplify your voice at ACEP's Leadership & Advocacy Conference, April 14-16. Together, we will advocate in person to policymakers for a better environment for EM and your patients. [Register today!](#)

Emergency medicine continues to move beyond traditional routes. With multiple meetings in one location within the same week, ACEP Accelerate offers different tracks to forge ahead and rise to your career goals. Get some of the best features of a large conference experience while retaining the targeted education of a focused meeting - all at a brand new resort in the exciting entertainment capital of Texas! [Read more.](#)

ACEP Advocacy: Act now to reverse Medicare physician pay cuts. Beginning Jan. 1, Medicare physician reimbursements were cut 3.4%. Legislators need to hear directly from you to reverse these harmful cuts as soon as possible. [Read more.](#)

Dive into Unionization: ACEP invites you into the hard conversations about emergency physician unionization as we collectively wrestle with how to protect EPs now and in the future. [Take a quick survey about your interest level in physician unionization.](#)

- [Watch two courses from ACEP23](#) about unions and employer models. [Listen to a recent Frontline podcast](#) about physician unions. Then commit to more discussions about next steps for EM.

ICYMI: PEER's gone mobile! All PEERprep and PEERCert+ subscribers can download and log in to use the study tool with its new mobile app today. Available for both Apple and Android users. Also, don't miss out on the ACEP Mobile App, which provides easy, offline access to clinical policies, point of care tools, reimbursement FAQs, news, advocacy alerts and more! Download both today. [Read more.](#)

ACEP Awards: ACEP's Leadership Awards Program recognizes members in all career stages and environments for their professional contributions and service to the College. The nomination deadline is March 12. [Read more.](#)

Upcoming ACEP Events and Deadlines

Feb. 26: [Introducing Emergency Medicine Residents to Democratic Group Practice](#)

Feb. 28: [Develop a Plan to Tackle Your Student Loans](#)

Feb 29: [Becoming a Forensic Medicine Expert Witness](#)

Feb. 29: [Ruptured Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm](#)

March 7: [Nuts and Bolts of Physician Reimbursement](#)

March 9-15: [ACEP Accelerate](#), Arlington, TX, Featuring -

- Advanced Pediatric EM Assembly – **March 11-13**
- ED Directors' Academy – **March 11-15**
- Reimbursement & Coding – **March 11-13**
- Teaching Fellowship – **March 9-14**

March 11: [Board of Directors Nominations Deadline](#)

March 12: [ACEP Award Nominations Deadline](#)

April 14-16: [ACEP Leadership & Advocacy Conference](#), Washington, DC

Contact Alabama ACEP

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Alabama ACEP

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