

# STATE AFFILIATE & CHAPTER FORUM

CONNECTING AND EMPOWERING STATE LEADERS

OCTOBER 5-6, 2024



## DEFINING YOUR ROLE AS A STATE LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

Congratulations on being named the Legislative Liaison for your state MGMA! As a Legislative Liaison, you are part of a cohort of medical group practice leaders from across the country who track state healthcare policy and spearhead advocacy initiatives at the state level. National MGMA does not engage in state-level advocacy, only federal, and how your state wishes to engage is up to you and your state Board of Directors. We do, however, offer the states an opportunity to collaborate with the national organization on federal grassroots activities when key legislative issues arise in Washington. Below is a list of activities you may wish to consider in your role. These are suggestions, not requirements, from National MGMA.

### DEFINE YOUR STATE-LEVEL ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

Work with your Board of Directors to decide how your state organization would like to engage in state-level advocacy. At first your role will likely be informational as you gather news about legislative and regulatory initiatives in your state and share it with your members. Later you may want to form a government affairs or advocacy committee, poll your members, and create an Advocacy Agenda. Feel free to pull inspiration from MGMA's [National Advocacy Agenda](#), but remember your document should be state-specific and outline priorities and goals that you hope to achieve at the state level.

### CREATE A STRATEGIC ADVOCACY PLAN

Once you've defined your state advocacy role and direction, figure out how you can work towards achieving those goals. What tactics do you want to implement? This will involve communication and fact-finding at first, but eventually may involve direct advocacy on state issues impacting medical group practices.

### INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO YOUR STATE MEMBERS

For those of you new to the role, after coordinating with your state board, consider sending an email to your state members introducing yourself. You can use this as an opportunity to invite members to share their legislative and regulatory concerns with you and solicit volunteers interested in participating in your state advocacy activities. Be sure to emphasize the importance of participation in advocacy at the state level, and encourage future participation in federal grassroots campaigns from MGMA National. Once you have sent this message as an email, for those states that are a chapter, it is a good idea to also post it on your state's Member Community.

### TRACKING STATE HEALTH LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

Typically, it's your responsibility to stay up to date on the latest state legislative and regulatory news impacting medical groups so you can keep your members apprised. Familiarize yourself with your state legislature's website, as well as the websites of any state regulatory agencies. Your state legislature's website should allow you to search for various bills, find out who is sponsoring the legislation, and provide an update on its current status. Some websites even allow you to set alerts on legislation. Your state regulatory agencies' websites should allow you to find proposed and final rules, additional information about the various regulations, as well as how to submit comments and information on when the public comment window will close.

### KEEP MEMBERS INFORMED WITH PERIODIC STATE POLICY ARTICLES/COMMUNICATIONS

Working alongside your state staff, provide your state MGMA members with a regular newsletter article focused on providing state-level legislative and regulatory updates. In addition to news updates, you can include calls to action for participation in state and federal advocacy initiatives, seek feedback on the impact of various laws and regulations, and provide information about upcoming educational opportunities.

### CONNECT WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS/GROUPS

It's critical to establish relationships with other stakeholders to amplify your voice and impact. Introduce yourself to the state medical society or other like-minded healthcare associations in your state. Attending their events and inviting them to your own can be a great way to foster and build these relationships.

### PROACTIVELY INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO POLICYMAKERS

You don't have to wait until you have an issue to introduce yourself to relevant policymakers. At first this may take the form of your own state representative or senator. Invite them to tour your practice or simply connect with staff in their district offices. Networking is key and can evolve into introducing yourself to legislators and staff on important healthcare committees in your state legislature.

### FOSTER POLICY-RELATED COMMUNICATION ON YOUR MEMBER COMMUNITY

Each state MGMA chapter now has its own Member Community. When there are important legislative or regulatory updates, take a few minutes to share the news (as well as the anticipated impact to medical groups) on your Member Community. Perhaps you're planning on submitting comments on a proposed regulation – the Member Community is the perfect place to solicit feedback from your fellow members. Looking for support for a letter writing or social media campaign? Share a post on the Community asking for participation. Remember: with every post, be sure to explain the issue and why it is important to medical groups.

### ESTABLISH A STATE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Some state MGMA organizations will already have one in place, but if yours doesn't, we recommend setting up a Government Affairs Committee. This group can be as formal or informal as you would like, but convening a group of volunteers who are interested in advancing policy priorities on behalf of your state MGMA allows you to seek assistance in tracking state-level legislation and regulations, building relationships with legislators and other groups, and educating other members on advocacy issues. This group can assist in defining policy priorities, drafting position papers, collecting feedback from members about various issues, and more.

### COLLABORATE WITH NATIONAL MGMA ON GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES

From time to time there will be opportunities to work with National MGMA on federal grassroots initiatives. We would appreciate your forwarding grassroots alerts to members, which often include links to pre-populated letters to Congress. This helps magnify our efforts to help group practices succeed in a highly regulated environment.

### ATTEND AND PROVIDE UPDATES ON PERIODIC CALLS WITH NATIONAL MGMA

Often legislation from one state can be used as a blueprint for success in other states. Join periodic calls (approximately 3 per year) to share what your state is doing. On these calls MGMA's government affairs department will give a brief update on federal grassroots and opportunities for collaboration. Calls are, however, primarily intended as a forum for state legislative liaisons to share best practices with each other.

With a membership of more than 60,000 medical practice administrators, executives, and leaders, MGMA represents more than 15,000 medical groups in which more than 350,000 physicians practice. These groups range from small private practices in rural areas to large regional and national health systems and cover the full spectrum of physician specialties and organizational forms.

**MGMA GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**  
1717 Pennsylvania Ave., Suite 600, Washington, DC 20006  
202.293.3450 | [govaff@mgma.org](mailto:govaff@mgma.org)  
[www.mgma.com/advocacy](http://www.mgma.com/advocacy)

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A person in a dark suit is shown from the chest up, holding a small, silver, mesh-covered microphone in their right hand. Their left hand is open and gesturing. The background is dark with a large, light-colored, stylized letter 'N' or 'V' shape. The word 'Communication' is written in white, sans-serif font across the center.

# Communication

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# Gather Feedback

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### Quick poll on regulatory burdens impacting medical practices

From measuring quality to completing prior authorization requirements, medical practices face mounting regulatory hurdles that interfere with clinical goals and improving patient outcomes. To help MGMA better educate Congress and the Administration about obstacles to delivering high-quality patient care, we are asking members to please take one minute to rank key regulatory issues from 1 to 10.

Your feedback is greatly appreciated and will help guide MGMA's advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C., as we work to improve the regulatory landscape in which group practices operate.

**Take the brief, one-minute poll now!**



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# Create an Agenda

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The foundation of MGMA's federal advocacy agenda is to ensure the sustainability of medical group practices and advance their ability to provide high-quality patient care.

#### PROTECTING THE FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF MEDICAL GROUP PRACTICES

MGMA champions physician payment policies that establish appropriate reimbursement rates. At a minimum, government rates should cover the cost of delivering care and be regularly updated commensurate with inflation. Policies should support medical practices' ability to provide a full range of ancillary services, such as imaging, testing, and physician administered drugs. MGMA works to protect medical practices against predatory business tactics and supports regulatory flexibilities that allow practices to focus their time and resources on delivering high-quality and efficient care.

#### REDUCING PRIOR AUTHORIZATION BURDEN

To promote patients' timely access to care, and reduce provider and patient burden, MGMA seeks to eliminate or significantly reduce the volume of prior authorizations and other prerequisites for coverage. There must be greater health plan transparency, uniform national standards, and increased automation.

#### ADVANCING VALUE-BASED CARE

Value-based delivery reform should ensure group practices have the choice to move away from fee-for-service into alternative payment models (APMs). APMs must be designed to offer participants appropriate support, incentives, reimbursement, and flexibility. New voluntary APMs should be launched to expand participation opportunities for group practices of all specialties. Incentive payments for participation in APMs should be reinstated and extended beyond the 2025 payment year, for a period of at least six years.

#### IMPROVING QUALITY REPORTING

MGMA supports maintaining traditional Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) reporting as a reporting option under the Quality Payment Program, and encourages the Administration to ensure other quality reporting programs are streamlined to improve clinical relevance and reduce reporting burden. Providers should be encouraged to furnish higher-quality care through quality and cost incentives. Quality reporting programs must support providers' ability to focus on efforts to improve patient care, not distract from them.

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#### PROMOTING STANDARDIZATION AND EFFICIENCY

MGMA supports policies to standardize healthcare transactions, documentation requirements, claims review processes, and audits, to decrease the administrative burden and costs associated with inefficient and inconsistent standards.

#### MAINTAINING ACCESS TO CARE THROUGH TELEHEALTH

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth usage dramatically increased due to the flexibilities afforded by Congress and the Administration. Recent congressional and regulatory action extended many telehealth flexibilities until the end of 2024. MGMA supports long-term telehealth solutions that promote cost-effective, high-quality care while appropriately reimbursing practices. Telehealth policies must support continuity of care between a practice and its patients, rather than disrupt it.

#### EXPANDING THE PHYSICIAN WORKFORCE

The country is facing a significant shortage of physicians and other non-physician healthcare professionals. To ensure a robust provider workforce and enhancements to the nation's graduate medical education system, MGMA supports federal legislative efforts to strengthen and expand physician training programs.

#### IMPROVING IMPLEMENTATION OF NO SURPRISES ACT REQUIREMENTS

MGMA supports implementation of the *No Surprises Act* (NSA) in a manner that does not interfere with medical groups' ability to engage in reasonable and balanced contractual negotiations with health plans. Independent dispute resolution (IDR) fees should be minimal to protect the ability of medical groups to initiate the IDR process. MGMA supports clear implementation guidance from the Administration to ensure practices have the information necessary to protect patients. The Administration should provide sufficient time for practices to understand and implement new processes and workflows to comply with the NSA's surprise billing and transparency requirements.

#### SUPPORTING THE EFFECTIVE AND ETHICAL APPLICATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGY

MGMA supports development and oversight of artificial intelligence (AI) that appropriately balances the technology's promise with its risks. Congress and the Administration should avoid establishing competing and confusing standards, and not allow AI to aggravate current administrative burdens faced by medical groups. AI technology should be transparent, ethical, and include sufficient privacy protections while not perpetuating harmful healthcare inequities. ■

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# Become a Resource

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# Forge Partnerships

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## Our State / National Partnership

- “Defining your role as a Legislative Liaison” (June)
- MGMA ‘Mid-Year Policy Update’ webinar — opened to states (July)
- Legislative Liaison orientation call (Sept.)
- Grassroots opportunity to avert 2025 Medicare cuts (Sept.)
- Participate in annual “Top Regulatory Burdens” poll (Sept.)
- 3-4 Liaison calls annually to share what’s working
- Sharing the Washington Connection (ongoing)
- Legislative Liaison e-community (ongoing)

A person in a dark suit is shown from the chest up, holding a small, silver, mesh-covered microphone in their right hand. Their left hand is raised, palm facing forward, in a gesturing motion. The background is dark with a large, light-colored, stylized letter 'A' that has a circular top. The overall lighting is dim, with a blueish tint.

Kelly Ladd, FACMPE, COPM, Piedmont Internal Medicine

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**Q&A**



**THANK YOU**