

GET INVOLVED

2012 Advocacy Agenda

Make Your Voice Heard in Washington ...

Know South Dakota's Members
of Congress.

Senator Tim Johnson
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Washington, DC 20510
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Senator John Thune
Phone: 202.224.2321
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Washington, DC 20510
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Representative Noem
Phone: 202.225.2801
Fax: 202.225.5823
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<http://noem.house.gov>

... and in Pierre

Know your State Senators
and Representatives.

Call your State Senator:
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Call your State Representative:
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Write to:
The Honorable (name)
State "Senator" or "Representative"
500 E Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501-5070

Want to learn more?
Contact the SDSMA at 605.336.1965
or visit our website, www.sdsma.org

Increase Medicaid Reimbursement

The SDSMA is dedicated to protecting the health care of patients and enhancing the effectiveness of medical care throughout South Dakota. Reimbursement levels and access to care are linked – the bottom line is that an overwhelming majority of physicians lose money when providing care for Medicaid patients, and their inability to meet overhead costs has a negative effect on their ability to meet the health care needs of the public. Physicians have already begun to reduce their Medicaid patient load, and failure to find a solution to adequately fund the Medicaid program will worsen access to care for those on Medicaid. The SDSMA is opposed to cuts in Medicaid reimbursements and calls for reimbursements that keep pace with inflation and utilization increases.

Improve Clinical Quality and Patient Safety

The SDSMA supports a balanced framework that implements quality-improvement initiatives and clinical performance measures for treating major diseases. The SDSMA is a founding organization of the South Dakota Quality Collaborative which is a joint effort with the South Dakota Association for Healthcare Organizations to transform health care delivery in South Dakota through provider-led initiatives designed to improve quality, patient safety and value. The SDSMA also promotes the use of electronic prescribing and electronic health records. The SDSMA will continue to be an advocate for the enhancement of patient care and safety while avoiding medical errors.

Reform Medical Liability

Experts agree that the practice of defensive medicine adds billions of dollars to our health care costs. A report published by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) estimates the cost of defensive medicine to be between \$70 and \$126 billion per year. These costs mean higher health insurance premiums and higher medical costs for all as well as higher taxes. Every dollar that goes toward medical liability costs and defensive medicine is a dollar that does not go to patient care. South Dakota has a \$500,000 cap on non-economic damages in medical liability cases. The SDSMA supports legislation that caps non-economic damages as a means to stabilize medical-liability insurance premiums and reduce the overall cost of care.

Support Increased Funding for Medical Education

The Sanford School of Medicine of the University of

South Dakota is again facing tighter budgets, which means medical students will have to shoulder a larger percentage of their education. The average 2010 medical student graduate was indebted \$157,944 for educational and related expenses upon graduation. The impact of such indebtedness hurts South Dakota through the loss of medical students to higher paying specialties or to other more populated states. Given the need for more physicians, especially in the rural and frontier areas of the state, the SDSMA strongly supports increased funding for medical education in South Dakota.

Improve Public Health

To improve public health all South Dakotans must have access to high quality and affordable health care. The SDSMA believes that effective, efficient and appropriate health care can be achieved by promoting a robust private health insurance market, reducing or eliminating administrative barriers and unreasonable overhead costs, and increasing our investment in prevention and wellness. The SDSMA believes in developing and implementing programs to promote healthy lifestyles, eliminate health disparities, and improve awareness of public health issues such as obesity, drug and alcohol abuse, and violence prevention.

Enforce Scope of Practice

To ensure the delivery of high quality health care and to eliminate unnecessary medical liability, the SDSMA believes that only physicians should practice medicine and non-physician responsibilities should be consistent with appropriate training and physician oversight. The SDSMA will continue to fight for the enforcement of these basic tenets of scope of practice.

Reform Medicare Physician Payment

The SDSMA believes Medicare's sustainable growth rate (SGR) should be repealed and replaced with a system that reflects increases in practice costs. Prior to the adoption of innovative financing and delivery systems such as accountable care organizations, shared savings/gain sharing and bundled payments, the SDSMA believes all new payment methodologies should be evaluated and tested in a variety of practice settings (including large and small practices), geographic locales (including rural and urban), and among different specialties and patient populations.