

ADVOCACY ALERT

Issue 1 | 2025 Edition



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Dear Colleagues,

As we wrap up another productive year, I am filled with gratitude and pride for the accomplishments of the Texas Chapter of the American College of Physicians Services (TXACPS). Our commitment to shaping the future of internal medicine and advocating for policies that improve healthcare in Texas remains steadfast.

This fall, we hosted our Annual Fall CME Meeting, which included a robust legislative track. Through sessions like the Lobbying Skills Workshop and insights into the current political landscape, our members honed their advocacy abilities and gained critical knowledge to influence legislative decisions at both state and federal levels. These efforts underscore our collective impact as physician-advocates.

The recent state and federal elections brought significant changes that will shape healthcare policy in the coming years. As we analyze these developments, our Health and Public Policy Committee is already strategizing on how to position TXACPS to address emerging challenges and leverage new opportunities to benefit our patients and profession.

Looking ahead, I invite you to join us for our State Leadership Day on February 19th. Together, we will walk the halls of the Texas State Capitol, meeting with legislators to present our 2025 legislative priorities. This event provides an invaluable

opportunity to make your voice heard and champion issues vital to internal medicine. Whether you are a seasoned advocate or new to the process, your participation is crucial.

"The recent state and federal elections brought significant changes that will shape healthcare policy in the coming years."

As we prepare for this pivotal day, I encourage you to deepen your engagement with TXACPS and the ACP Advocates for Internal Medicine Network. Our success depends on your involvement, and I am confident that, united, we can continue to make meaningful strides for internal medicine and healthcare in Texas.

Warm regards,



Drew Payne, DO FACP
President, Texas Chapter of the American College of Physicians Services





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2025 TXACPS LEADERSHIP DAY

Join us for a day of advocacy in action at the Texas State Capitol!

Date: February 19th, 2025

Location: Austin, Texas

What you can expect:

- **Comprehensive Advocacy**

Orientation: Begin your day with a detailed orientation to help you navigate the world of healthcare advocacy. You'll learn about the legislative process, effective communication strategies, and the key issues facing Internal Medicine professionals in Texas.

- **Insight into Current Legislative**

Issues: Gain up-to-date knowledge on the most pressing legislative issues that impact your practice and patients.

- **Networking Opportunities:** Connect with like-minded professionals from across the state. This is your chance to share ideas, build alliances, and form relationships that will strengthen the voice of Internal Medicine in Texas.
- **Direct Engagement with Texas Legislators:** Take part in face-to-face meetings with state legislators. Discuss key healthcare policies, raise concerns, and advocate for solutions that can improve patient care and support the medical community.



Scan or Click For
Details & Registration

This is a crucial moment for shaping the future of healthcare in Texas, and your participation can make a tangible difference. Whether you're looking to learn more about advocacy, connect with colleagues, or actively engage in the legislative process, this event offers something for everyone.

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity, open to all ACP Texas members, to make a lasting impact.

CALL FOR TEXAS SOUTHERN GOVERNOR APPLICATIONS!

Call for Candidates: Southern Governor of the Texas Chapter, American College of Physicians!

The Texas Chapter of the American College of Physicians (ACP) is seeking dedicated and passionate leaders to serve as the next Southern Governor of our chapter (term: 2027 - 2031). This is a critical role for shaping the future of internal medicine in Texas, advancing policies and advocating for the interests of our members and patients across the state.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be an FACP or MACP of the Texas Chapter of ACP.
- Must have demonstrated leadership experience and a commitment to the mission and values of ACP.
- Must have an interest in advancing the field of internal medicine and improving the practice environment for physicians and patients in Texas.

As Governor, you will represent the Texas chapter at the national level, lead local initiatives, and help ensure that the voices of our members are heard. If you are ready to make an impact and contribute to the future of internal medicine in Texas, we invite you to apply.

Deadline is March 3rd, 2025

[View Governor Responsibilities Here](#)

[View Benefits of Governorship Here](#)

[Apply Today!](#)

A MESSAGE FROM HPPC COMMITTEE

Dear wonderful colleagues and friends,

Are you ready for the 2025 89th Regular Texas Legislative Session? Your Health Public Policy Committee has been preparing for this for months. We have dedicated a focus topic to each of our monthly meetings. These topics have included the Preceptorship Program GIMMSP, Prior Authorization, Scope of Practice, Artificial Intelligence and other subject matter relevant to bills submitted during the legislative session.

We met with stakeholder groups this fall in response to the Health and Human Services Hearing led by Lois Kolkhorst on scope of practice. The three groups that wish to expand practice are psychologists, pharmacists and nurse practitioners.

The survey has been distributed and the results are to be used to provide clarity on how the membership wishes us to represent them in our advocacy efforts. We need to be nimble and respond to new topics that may emerge that are not on the survey and at the same time recognize where our garden ends and the wilderness begins. We will dedicate our limited resources to those topics that we have ACP policy on, are important to the Texas Chapter membership and considered feasible in the current political landscape.

Please mark your calendar and notify your school/residency/workplace of our gathering in Austin for Leadership Day at the State Capitol on February 19th, 2025. Please register as soon as you are able for strategic purposes! We are proud to announce that Dr. Naguib serves on the Rural Health Subcommittee of the Council on Legislation of the Texas Medical Association.

"The survey has been distributed and the results are to be used to provide clarity on how the membership wishes us to represent them in our advocacy efforts."

The HPPC Committee has two announced subcommittees and will announce other subcommittees very soon to include Value Based Care (VBC) and Medicaid. The announced subcommittees are Scope of Practice and Artificial Intelligence. Please see below the assignments to the Scope of Practice subcommittee.

- Tarek Naguib (Co-Chair)
- David Auerbach (Co-Chair)
- Cherry Onaiwu
- Kahtan Fadah
- Priyanka Bhugra
- Subhan Tabba
- Jack Myers
- Steffanie Campbell
- Moe Ameri
- Brenda Vozza

We are going to impact the future of our patients and colleagues by amplifying the voices of our membership this spring. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we are doing at this as the session unfolds.

Roxanne Tyroch, MD, FACP
Chair, HPPC

LOBBYIST REPORT



Only 148 days to Sine Die! And then? Perhaps a Special Session or two? So let's pace ourselves for this year's legislative marathon.

Policy Process

For the past year, the HPPC has worked diligently and constructively to develop TxACPS's legislative priorities going into next year's 89th Texas Legislative Session. Our priorities foundation is rooted in the ACP's priorities, combined with those issues we anticipate being addressed next year. You're aware that TxACPS has been actively engaged during the Interim educating members, candidates and staffers and sharing our positions at many interim committee hearings. Many of these issues we'll be on the offensive side of the ball and just as many we'll be playing defense to protect the patient-physician relationship.

"Our priorities foundation is rooted in the ACP's priorities, combined with those issues we anticipate being addressed next year."

Soon you'll receive TxACPS's survey instrument to gauge the intensity of interest and educating TxACPS members where we expect to spend resources and political capitol in the coming months.

- **Workforce:** Increase investments in state programs that support and expand the primary care physician workforce, such as protecting the General Internal Medicine Statewide Preceptorship Program, funding for Graduate Medical Education (GME), loan deferment initiatives.
- **Valuing the Care Provided by Internal Medicine Physicians:** Protect patients' access to care by ensuring fair and appropriate physician compensation, including annual inflationary adjustments, and policies that support physicians' transition from fee-for-service to value-based models of care.
- **Ensuring Access to Care:** Support policies that protect and enhance Medicaid, preserve access to telehealth services, improve the integration of behavioral health in

primary care, and increase access to care in rural areas. Assure preservation of Texas' tort damage limits and other defense related provisions.

- **Supporting and Enhancing Health Information Technology:** Support policies that will help leverage technology, including augmented intelligence, to improve patient care and reduce administrative and practice burdens on physicians. Promote policies to ensure technology is used in appropriate ways to enhance patient care, and not to discriminate or inappropriately restrict patient access to care.
- **Protecting the Patient-Physician Relationship:** We anticipate we'll be busy working on scope of practice issues particularly in rural areas of the State. Oppose unwarranted expansion by non-physicians, particularly advanced nurse practitioners, pharmacists regarding diagnosing, treating and prescribing, independent practice with little or meaningless physician oversight.
- **Health care cost initiatives:** Trim unnecessary or preventable costs; improve productivity; funding of the State's All Claims Payor Data Base and assuring robust physician applications; enhanced transparency of hospital charges; prescription drugs and PBM mark-ups; etc.
- **Insurance oversight of Health Plans:** Identifying and closing loopholes or misapplied provisions in Prior authorization laws; refine out of network standards.
- **Reproductive Health:** Work with other aligned advocates to provide safe harbors for physicians from criminal prosecution and restore clinical-legal exceptions to total ban.
- **Preventing Firearms-Related Injuries and Deaths:** Reduce firearms-related injuries and deaths through investments in research and much needed evidence-based policy reforms at all levels of government.
- **Public Health:** vaccines, infrastructure, communicable disease, nicotine, opioids.

Political Process

Texas General Election results in November met most of the expectations of many close observers. At the end of the day, Republicans strengthened their hand going into Session. The only question of importance, with one week before Session starts (Tuesday January 14th), who will be Speaker. If you like sports metaphors, we are tied with two minutes to go in the 4th quarter. By the time you read this, we'll know who won the game or perhaps we're in overtime. This is the adrenaline that keeps us coming back for more victories and abuse each session.



ACP ADVOCATES FOR INTERNAL MEDICINE NETWORK

Join AIMC Today!

Please join ACP Advocates in Internal Medicine to join more than 15,000 colleagues in the Advocates for Internal Medicine Network (AIMn) in advocating for the interests of internal medicine in Washington, D.C.

The AIMn program is for ACP members interested in participating in federal advocacy. It is designed to help members engage with their federal lawmakers on policy issues important to ACP and internal medicine. It's free and painless to sign up!



[ACP Legislative
Action Center](#)

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Generally, we have a solid idea who'll chair and serve on Senate Committee's. Over on the House side, the Speaker appoints chairs and members, with so much in the state of flux, we won't know make up of committees nor develop legislative strategies of move and stop bills at the committee level.

As the fight for the Gavel continues, lobbyists and their client's policy and legislation are high centered until the Speaker names committee chairs and members are named. Fortunately, we are in the same position as our opponents. We will continue to meet and educate current members and incoming freshmen.

Texas Senate: Lt Governor Patrick picks up an ally in the Valley. Republican Alex Dominguez beat incumbent and Senate Health and Human Services committee member Morgan LaMantia. This brings the number of Republican senators to 20. Senate rules state that 2/3rds of Senators present are necessary to suspend the rules to bring up and consider any bill that the Lt Governor chooses to hear. Functionally, the Senate R's could conduct business without the support of the Democrats. This shall be the case for partisan bills. The Senate will also welcome Brett Hagenbuch (R-SD 30) to the club.

Texas House of Representatives: the consequential 2024 General elections saw the Republicans sweep all the close seats we had discussed last month. The net result was Republicans picking up two seats to hold an 88-62 advantage. A month later, the Republican caucus convened on December 6 to choose a Speaker candidate to support on the first day of session. Even with a +2, Speaker Dade Phelan lacked enough support and abandoned his campaign for another term. The next day and to no one's shock, 2 R's each produced a list of 76 supporters and several members showed up on both lists bearing out the old yarn that in the period leading up to the Speaker vote in January there's probably enough commitments to elect 2 or 3 Speakers. Some of the high-profile contentious issues for members on both sides of the aisle to resolve include a) will a Democrat chair a committee; b) School Vouchers and c) taxpayer funded lobbying.

Legislative Process

Texas Senate: Chair Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) called the Senate Health and Human Service Committee to Austin to hold an interim hearing on Workforce Issues (read: Scope of Practice). The key take away from this hearing is Medicine has its work cut out for it in the coming Session as a number of Senators by the questions they asked of witnesses seemed to favor a loosening of Scope of Practice statutes. In the time since the hearing, this issue has become a focus of numerous conversations within the House of Medicine about strategies on both the offensive and defensive sides of the equation.

Legislative Budget Board: The Texas Legislature relies on the LBB to draft the initial budget prior to the Appropriations/Finance bill filing. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board delivered their presentation to Lege



staffers of LBB leaders in September. In short, THECB interim commissioner provided a 10K' overview of key programs. Of importance, the GIMSEPP program was included in the documents but not presented nor did it draw any questions nor concerns. The program continues its well position legislative journey towards Sine Die. Additionally, the LBB took testimony on the Health and Human Services Commission. TxACPS co-signed onto the testimony. The hearing proceeded along uneventfully.

House Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence & Emerging Technologies: Chairman Giovanni Capriglione (R-Southlake) held a wide ranging hearing on how Artificial Intelligence impacts key Texas business sectors including healthcare. TMA Council on Legislation chair Zeke Silva provided testimony on behalf of medicine. The key takeaway from Committee questions and comments are their deep concerns of protecting the patient-physician relationship and opposition to anything other than a physician diagnosing, prescribing, and treating their family members. And opposing health plans utilizing AI to deny claims. I am in agreement with the Chair, that the Legislature will be addressing augmented and artificial intelligence in all Texas businesses sectors for a long time.

ACP LEADERSHIP DAY ON CAPITOL HILL

Save the Date for ACP's Leadership Day on Capitol Hill!

Date: April 28th - 29th, 2025

ACP's annual national advocacy event, Leadership Day, will take place in Washington, D.C. this year on April 28th - 29th, 2025. Leadership Day enables the College to increase its presence on Capitol Hill and advocate directly with Congress in support of legislation directly impacting internal medicine physicians and their patients.

Registration is open through April 10th, 2025 [here](#).

[Discounted hotel rooms can be booked here](#) through April 3rd at the Westin Washington, DC Downtown Hotel – 999 9th Street NW, Washington, DC.

To help members prepare for Leadership Day, ACP has developed a FAQ document with logistical information for the event which can be accessed [here](#).

For more information, visit [ACP Online here](#).



American College of Physicians Services | Texas Chapter

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