

Record-setting Advocacy Day Spotlights Family Medicine and Patient-care Issues

Nearly 200 family physicians, family medicine residents, and medical students convened in downtown Lansing for the annual Michigan Family Medicine Advocacy Day, to advocate for their patients, communities, and profession.

Discussions with Michigan Representatives, Senators, and staff of 93 state legislative offices focused on issues impacting access to primary and preventive care, public health and safety, and the contributions of family physicians. With newly revised Fiscal Year 2024 state budget estimates indicating a nearly \$600 million reduction to Gov. Whitmer's executive budget proposal is expected, increasing awareness of how family physicians preserve health, save lives, and reduce healthcare costs is critical.

As the Governor and legislators continue negotiating line items to come to agreement on a FY 2024 balanced budget that goes into effect Oct. 1, 2023, MAFP and our members are asking for:

- Retained funding to assist in physician recruitment, retention, and distribution across health professional shortage areas through the state-funded MIDOCs program (\$6.4 million) and Michigan State Loan Repayment Program (\$1.5 million)
- An additional \$130 million to fund a Medicaid payment increase for primary care services, as called for by Gov. Whitmer

We are also calling for the preservation of physician-led team-based, person-centered care; payment equity for virtual visits following the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency; and research-based action to protect Michiganders from firearm violence, a public health crisis.

"Thank you to every family physician, resident physician, and medical student who attended Michigan Family Medicine Advocacy Day, and to the legislators who took time to meet with family medicine advocates. Year-after-year growth of this event highlights the dedication of family physicians to advocating for their patients, the communities they serve, and the preservation and advancement of their specialty, which is the backbone of the healthcare system," said **Matt Black**, MAFP Director of Government Relations.

While Advocacy Day is, indeed, a critical part of Michigan Academy of Family Physicians' advocacy plan, ongoing relationship-building and communication with legislators is essential.

To the MAFP membership, Matt said, "Grassroots advocacy must continue throughout the entire year, by meeting with your elected officials when they are home in district and sending them emails about bills that will hinder or help patients get the care they need, when and where they need it. As a healthcare expert, your physician voice is a vitally important and necessary voice as legislators are considering bills that will impact patients and how care is delivered."

Looking ahead, mark **March 20, 2024**, on your calendar to attend next year's Michigan Family Medicine Advocacy Day. We will once again convene in downtown Lansing, but our gathering spot for the morning advocacy seminar is moving to a new location that will accommodate the ever-growing number of advocates that want to attend. Stay tuned!