



AMA Alliance Advocacy Connection

June 2007

In This Issue

[Advocacy Resources](#)

[Legislation Committee Chairman Graduates from AMPAC Campaign School](#)

[Physician Shortages Fuel Access to Care Crisis in Florida](#)

[Nevada Alliance and Medical Society Collaborate on Health Advocacy](#)

[Kansas Consumer Act Excludes Medical Negligence](#)

[Illinois Bill Would Expand List of Losses Allowed Under Noneconomic Damages](#)

Legislation Committee

Pat Hyer

Emily Hill

Keely Hunsaker

Mary Shuman

Sue Vegors

Rosemary Xavier

Content Editor

nancy.battaglia@ama-assn.org

www.amaalliance.org

Dear ,

Welcome to the AMA Alliance Advocacy Connection, quarterly electronic newsletter for Alliance members, designed to keep you informed of reported state legislative actions that may have an impact or future impact on the medical practice in your area.

For details on specific legislative activity or help in your state or county, send an e-mail to amaa@ama-assn.org. A member of the Legislation Committee will contact you to hear your concern or follow-up your interest. To suggest a story for this newsletter, please e-mail nancy.battaglia@ama-assn.org.

Please share this e-newsletter with other Alliance members and non-members. For more information on Alliance activities, visit the [AMA Alliance](http://AMAAlliance) website.

Legislation Committee Chairman Graduates 2007 AMPAC Campaign School

Have you always had an interest in politics? Kept up with all the current campaign cycles? Always studied the people running for public office and thought maybe someday I should think about doing that? Have you ever worked or volunteered for anyone running for elective office? And, do you faithfully pay your AMPAC dues without fail? If the answer is yes to several of the previous questions, then the AMPAC Campaign School may be the best kept secret you will want to discover through your membership in the Alliance.

[Read more...](#)



Advocacy Resources

Find the status of legislative issues in your state in an easy to read format - Health Care, Health Finance, Cost and Insurance, Public Health - Visit the National Conference of State Legislators [Web site](#) for information on these topics and more.

Learn about nonprofit advocacy and lobbying basics. Visit the Center for Lobbying on the Public Interest [Web site](#). Its *Nonprofit Lobbying Guide* is available online, and explains lobbying laws and describes how to lobby effectively within the non-profit realm. It has a wonderful piece on what is legal within the nonprofit world.

Quick Links

[AMA Alliance Website](#)

[Alliance Products](#)

[Join Now](#)

Physician Shortages Fuel Access to Care Crisis in Florida

*Emily Hill, Member
AMA Alliance Legislation Committee*

A recent census by the Palm Beach County Medical Society confirmed that physician shortages are reaching critical levels. Doctors are limiting their services, leaving their communities or simply leaving medicine altogether, creating an access-to-care problem for patients. By 2011, Physician shortages of 33% or more will exist in Palm Beach County among seven essential specialties, including obstetrics and gynecology, thoracic surgery and radiation oncology, according to ProtectPatientsNow.org, a nationwide project of Doctors for Medical Liability Reform (DMLR). DMLR is based in Washington, D.C., a coalition of 230,000 practicing medical specialists.

- [Click Here](#) to continue reading.

Nevada Alliance and Medical Society Collaborate on Health Advocacy

*Denette Kuhlman, Member
AMA Alliance Legislation Committee*

The Nevada State Medical Association Alliance (NSMAA) played an important role in the passage of the Nevada Clean Indoor Air Act which bans smoking in all indoor areas, including restaurants. Coordination between the Clark County Medical Society Alliance, the Nevada State Medical Association Alliance and the State Medical Society produced grass roots advocacy initiatives promoting the ballot initiative. Alliance members visited physicians' offices with brochures. More than 60 volunteers participated in the Clark County Medical Society Alliance's "YES on 5 Clear the Smoke from Children's Lives" rally.

- [Click here](#) to continue reading this article.

Kansas Consumer Act Excludes Medical Negligence

AM News, June 4, 2007

Trial lawyers say a new law gives doctors special protection, but the state medical society says it is necessary to restore consumer law's traditional application.

Kansas physicians no longer have to worry about plaintiff lawyers using the state's Consumer Protection Act as another way to sue them for medical negligence, now that a new law has passed.

Despite a Kansas Supreme Court defeat and an initial veto by the governor, doctors in May reached a compromise with Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, who signed a bill that differentiates between medical liability claims and consumer protection claims, which cover intentionally deceptive business practices.

The law does not allow individuals to bring claims under the act against doctors or other licensed health care professionals for personal injury or death allegedly resulting from medical negligence. The Kansas Medical Society lobbied for the changes, modeled after a Texas statute.

- [Click here](#) to continue reading this article.

Illinois Bill Would Expand List of Losses Allowed Under Noneconomic Damages

AM News, May 21, 2007

Illinois physicians are protesting a bill they say would reverse course on enacted medical liability reforms.

In April, the House passed a measure that would allow noneconomic damages for grief, sorrow and mental suffering in wrongful-death lawsuits. Current law allows spouses and next of kin of the deceased to recover money for loss of society and companionship, and deprivation of care and protection, among other losses.

Rodney C. Osborn, MD, president of the Illinois State Medical Society, said the bill "is clearly an attempt to inflate damages in medical liability awards and is a major step in the wrong direction."

In 2005, lawmakers passed a \$500,000 cap on noneconomic damages levied against doctors in medical liability cases. Dr. Osborn said the law has helped maintain access to care in the state. The cap faces a constitutional challenge in court.

Twenty-three states allow damages for grief, sorrow and mental anguish in wrongful-death cases, according to the Illinois Trial Lawyers Assn., which supports the bill. The measure now heads to the Senate