

# ADVOCACY

## FACT SHEET

**Making Care Primary** – Numerous studies show that family physicians uniquely improve health, increase lifespans, and reduce costs in the communities they care for. The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) advocates for a primary care-based system where optimal health is a reality for all.

Family physicians conduct one in five office visits in the United States—that's **195 million visits annually**—48% more than the next-most visited specialty.

**Right to Health** – Access to health care is a basic human right, and the AAFP actively supports legislation that enables all people to access timely, quality, and affordable health care. An equitable system that addresses the social determinants of health must be achieved.

At least **56 million Americans lack access to primary health care**.

Additionally, more than 75% of the factors that influence health outcomes are socially related.

**Building the Workforce** – Family physicians have unique clinical and leadership skills that present solutions for the health care system, and the AAFP is working to achieve growth of this workforce. Key aims include reforming graduate medical education and reducing the burden of medical school debt.

The United States will require up to **55,200 additional primary care physicians by 2033**. There are currently not enough primary care training positions to meet this need.

**Loan Repayment** – Preserving innovative initiatives like the National Health Service Corps and other loan forgiveness programs is critical for ensuring all communities have access to primary care physicians. Nearly 10.7 million people living in underserved communities receive primary care because of such programs.

It would take **15,275 primary care physicians** to eliminate all primary care health professional shortage areas.

# ADVOCACY AND YOU

## HOW TO ADVOCATE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

### Attend the National Conference of Family Medicine Residents and Medical Students — [aafp.org/nc](http://aafp.org/nc)

Learn to write resolutions, participate in the Student Congress, and watch recommendations become AAFP Policy.

### Join the Family Medicine Action Network — [aafp.org/fman](http://aafp.org/fman)

Unite with others in family medicine and stay informed of grassroots advocacy strategies to advance change.

### Participate in the Family Medicine Advocacy Summit — [aafp.org/fmas](http://aafp.org/fmas)

Learn how to lobby, and then go do it. Students can attend this conference in Washington, DC, each spring. Several scholarships are offered.

### Speak Out — [aafp.org/speakout](http://aafp.org/speakout)

You are the expert. Use your voice to write your representative or senators about how pending legislation will impact you.

### Contribute to FamMedPac: The AAFP's Federal Political Action Committee — [fammedpac.org](http://fammedpac.org)

Its purpose is to help elect candidates to the U.S. Congress who support the AAFP's legislative goals and objectives.

### Use our Advocacy Toolkit — [aafp.org/advocacytoolkit](http://aafp.org/advocacytoolkit)

Our toolkit outlines ways to get involved. Whether you want to meet with your legislator or engage online, our toolkit has resources for you.

## HOW TO ADVOCATE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

### Join Your Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG) and Organize an Advocacy Event

Invite a legislator to speak at your school, start a letter-writing campaign on a significant issue, or partner with the community to engage in change.

### Advocate for Your Profession

Identify a community health need and work with local leaders to make changes on behalf of family medicine.

### Create a New Student Advocate Position with Your State Chapter

Encourage your state chapter to include students and residents in Hill visits. Organize a student legislative liaison to report on state activities to FMIGs.

QUESTIONS?

Contact [grassroots@aafp.org](mailto:grassroots@aafp.org)