



Grassroots Newsletter

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Policy Sessions at SHM Converge

SHM Converge, our reimagined annual conference happening May 3-7, has over 200 sessions addressing topics important to hospital medicine. If you have not already, please [register](#) and learn more about the conference and its offerings.

Since you're interested in our health policy work and engaged in our grassroots advocacy efforts, we want to highlight the sessions you will not want to miss, particularly from the Health Policy track.

The Biden Administration, the 117th Congress, and What We Might See in Healthcare

Friday, May 7 at 3:30 PM-4:10 PM EDT.

In this session, join Jennifer Bell of Chamber Hill Strategies in a discussion on the health policy landscape within the context of a new Congress and new Administration. She will discuss the outlook for key healthcare policy issues we can expect to see from the Biden Administration and how they are likely to be addressed in Congress. Her session will be followed by a question-and-answer period. This is a live session.

Researching Toward Policy Change

Friday, May 7 at 4:10 PM-4:50 PM EDT

Dr. Ann M. Sheehy, Associate Professor and Division Head of Hospital Medicine at the University of Wisconsin and chair of SHM's Public Policy Committee, has used her research to help push for policy changes in Washington, DC. She will discuss the intersections between clinical work, research, and advocacy. In this session, Dr. Sheehy will discuss how clinical observations and experiences can be used as data and research to advocate for policy change.

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Hear from the U.S. Surgeon General at Converge

Throughout the past year, hospitalists have found themselves on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic. They have worked tirelessly to care for their patients while putting themselves and their health at risk in the process. While burnout has been a prevalent issue in the medical community for years, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to address burnout and mental and emotional well-being.

SHM is proud to have United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, MD, MBA, joining out-going SHM President Danielle Scheurer, MD, MSCR, SFHM, in a fireside chat about burnout and well-being in hospital medicine. This conversation will be held on Thursday, May 6, 2021 from 1:30 to 2:00 p.m. ET.

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#XtheXWaiver Update: HHS Issues Practice Guideline Changes

Buprenorphine, a partial opioid medication, is an effective addiction treatment. It is classified as a Schedule III controlled substance under the Controlled Substances Act, meaning that the drug is highly regulated. Under the Drug Addiction Treatment Act, clinicians can only prescribe buprenorphine, with very limited exceptions, if they have completed a training and possess a specialized waiver known as the "X-waiver." Buprenorphine is a powerful tool to combat the opioid crisis, particularly in communities with inadequate access to addiction specialists and treatment programs.

In an effort to combat the opioid epidemic and expand access to buprenorphine, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued updated practice guidelines that will allow providers to forego the X-waiver training requirement. Practitioners who wish to prescribe buprenorphine will need to submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within HHS. Once SAMHSA approves the NOI, practitioners will be able to prescribe buprenorphine to up to 30 patients.

While these practice guideline changes will eliminate some unnecessary barriers to treatment, SHM is committed to advancing access to buprenorphine and [eliminating the X-waiver](#).

To read the full practice guidelines, please [click here](#).

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Medicare Sequester Moratorium Extended

On April 14th, 2021, President Biden signed legislation that, among other provisions, will extend the moratorium on Medicare sequester cuts until the end of 2021. Medicare sequester cuts are across-the-board cuts automatically issued to control Medicare spending. The impact of sequestration on Medicare payment is negative 2% yearly. However, COVID-19 has placed enormous financial strain on hospitals, hospital systems, and physician practices throughout the country. To alleviate some financial pressures, Congress issued a moratorium on Medicare sequester cuts through March 31, 2021.

Extending the sequester moratorium throughout 2021 will ensure quality care throughout the duration of the pandemic.

To learn more, please [click here](#).

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