THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC MAY BE WANING, BUT ITS IMPACT IS NOT.

When the nation needed you, you were there – delivering care, comfort and healing under unimaginable conditions. For nearly three years, hospitals and health systems have fought tirelessly on the front lines during the most devastating public health crisis of our time.

The prevalence of COVID-19 may be lessening, but its consequences are accelerating. From workforce shortages to increased costs of caring, inadequate reimbursements, and sicker patients, the pressures on hospitals and health systems are greater than ever.

That’s why we’re working harder than ever to deliver the resources and support you need, and to remind the nation of the invaluable role you play in the communities you serve.
We Are Telling Your Story

AS THE NATIONAL VOICE FOR AMERICA’S HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS, THE AHA HAS BEEN WORKING TO MAKE SURE YOUR MESSAGES ARE HEARD.

Stressing the need for financial sustainability to ensure access to care.

High inflation and workforce shortages, sicker patients who require complex care, and inadequate reimbursement rates combined with continued fallout from a global pandemic, have created an unsustainable financial situation for hospitals and health systems across the country.

The AHA has been raising awareness of these challenges through a multi-channel campaign. This includes data-driven reports, white papers and analyses; a series of briefings for media and Capitol Hill staff; advertising, including a series of advertorials in the Wall Street Journal; and podcasts and videos. AHA members have played an important role in these efforts by lending their voices and sharing their stories.

Demonstrating the value you deliver.

The public health crisis created by COVID-19 clearly showed the nation the essential role hospitals and health systems play in the communities they serve. The AHA continues to promote this value, with multiple campaigns that shine a light on the people, partnerships and innovative solutions that hospitals and health systems contribute to advance health in America.
More than 250 hospital and health system leaders participated in AHA Advocacy Day in December. During the briefing, which took place in Washington, D.C., and virtually, AHA leaders provided updates on the congressional landscape and shared key messages that hospital and health system leaders could deliver to their representatives and senators on Capitol Hill.

“There’s never been a more important point in time for all of us to be collaborating and working collectively and learning from one another to move our industry forward.”

– Mary Mannix, President and CEO, Augusta Health
We Are Delivering Results

THE AHA WORKED AGGRESSIVELY TO ENGAGE CONGRESS, REGULATORY AGENCIES AND THE COURTS SO THAT WE COULD DELIVER IMPORTANT WINS FOR YOU.

- The elimination of unlawful Medicare payment cuts to certain hospitals that participate in the 340B program thanks to a unanimous ruling by the United States Supreme Court in the case AHA v. Becerra. We continue to press on the district court to order the Department of Health and Human Services to repay hospitals that lost funds as a result of unlawful cuts from 2018 to 2022 without clawing back funds from other hospitals.

- Expanded subsidies for coverage purchased through the Health Insurance Marketplace allowing millions of low- and-middle-income families to continue to access affordable coverage, as well as additional flexibilities for states to help mitigate loss of Medicaid coverage at the conclusion of the public health emergency.

- The extension of the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration to ensure continued access to critical regulatory flexibilities and coverage programs.

- Securing critical supplies used to prevent and treat COVID-19, as well as engaging federal agencies in efforts to secure a robust pipeline and supply chain in the future.

- Expanded flexibility for telehealth, including successfully petitioning the Administration to make permanent Medicare coverage of certain telehealth services.

- Securing $2 billion in additional Medicare inpatient and outpatient hospital payments from the 2023 proposed to final rules, and attaining delays to policies that would further strain hospital resources, including appropriate use criteria for advanced diagnostic imaging and split visit payment policies.

During my first term in Congress, I am proud to have worked with the AHA to protect 340B, expand telehealth access in rural America, and keep our rural hospitals staffed and operational. I am confident that the AHA will continue to play a vital role in healthcare policy and hospital advocacy in the 118th Congress, and I look forward to strengthening our important relationship.

– Rep. Randy Feenstra, R-Iowa

- Extending to at least mid-December the Medicare-dependent Hospital and enhanced Low-volume Adjustment programs that help maintain access to care in rural communities.

- Influencing the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to create a favorable reimbursement and regulatory structure to implement the new AHA-supported Rural Emergency Hospital designation to allow certain rural facilities to continue providing critical services to their communities.

- Enacting the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act, legislation that authorizes grants for programs that offer behavioral health services for frontline health care workers.

- Securing the House passage of legislation that would streamline prior authorization under Medicare Advantage plans.
The American Hospital Association is an important voice for the health care industry and has been a great partner working to support rural and critical access hospitals across North Dakota. They were instrumental in my successful effort to increase payments for acute care hospitals in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Fiscal Year 2023 final rule for the inpatient prospective payment system, which resulted in a better accounting of the current cost of care and the largest increase in such payments in 25 years.

– Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D.

As Congress prepared to vote to fund the federal government, the Coalition to Protect America’s Health Care launched a national television ad urging action to prevent Medicare cuts to hospitals and health systems. AHA is a founding member of the coalition, which has 2 million community members.
We Are Supporting the Workforce

With workforce challenges at the very top of the list of members’ concerns, the AHA has been responding to this crisis. Among other efforts, our advocacy focuses on lifting the cap on Medicare-funded residencies, expediting visas for all highly-trained foreign health care workers, extending workforce flexibilities, streamlining prior-authorization and other regulatory activities to eliminate burden. A special task force of the AHA Board of Trustees is tackling the issue as well, releasing a three-part report on strategies and resources to strengthen the workforce.

As health care workers increasingly are under threat in the workplace, we are pushing for passage of the bipartisan Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act that would deliver the same legal protections as those now place for aircraft and airport workers. And AHA’s Hospitals Against Violence (HAV) initiative continues to share examples and best practices with the field, with a particular emphasis on youth violence, workplace violence prevention, and tackling gun violence as a public health issue.

AHA has been instrumental in helping us understand the legislative needs of our frontline health workers, including legislation like the SAVE Act that will help protect hospital workers from assault and intimidation. I’m grateful for their advocacy and work to prioritize our health care workers who serve our communities every day.

Vice Chair of the House Judiciary Committee
Lead Sponsor of AHA-supported Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees Act

Robyn Begley, CEO, American Organization of Nurse Leaders and SVP, CNO, AHA, welcomed more than 3,200 nurse leaders to the AONL Annual Meeting in April.

It was a packed house at the AHA Annual meeting for a workforce forum that included former AHA Board chair Melinda L. Estes, M.D., AHA board member and workforce taskforce chair Ron Werft, and AHA Board member and workforce taskforce member Mary Beth Kingston, Ph. D., RN.
We Are **Fighting Back Against Commercial Insurers’ Practices that Compromise Patient Safety**

The AHA worked to bring attention to the actions of certain commercial health plans that not only overburden clinicians and starve providers of critical resources, but also restrict patient access to medically necessary care. We released two reports on these burdensome practices this year that have garnered attention from media and policymakers, and we have offered solutions.

In a recent survey of members, 78% of hospitals and health systems’ report that their experience working with commercial insurers is getting worse, not better.

The AHA is calling for policy solutions to standardize prior authorization requirements and processes, and to ensure necessary oversight to stop inappropriate prior authorization and payment delays and denials.
We Are **Reconnecting to Collaborate & Learn**

After two years of virtual meetings, we were eager to reconnect live at meetings in 2022. AHA’s national conferences provided robust opportunities for in-person engagement, whether it was hearing directly from congressional leaders, celebrating our members’ award-winning programs, or participating in discussions around common challenges and ways to move our field forward.

“I go back every time with literally pages of notes that I can then share with my team internally and also through my state hospital association. There’s incredible learning and a lot of camaraderie.”

— Tori Bayless, President and CEO, Luminus Health

**Rick Pollack, AHA President and CEO.**

The field has been “through unprecedented challenges, but the way we have overcome gives me hope and optimism for the future,” AHA Board Chair Wright Lassiter III.

**Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., accepted the 2022 AHA Award of Honor, at our national membership meeting.**

**AHA EVP and COO Michelle Hood discusses creative change with Jennifer Mueller, PhD, at the 2022 Rural Health Care Leadership Conference.**

**Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo.: “Hospitals and the people who work there (during the pandemic) were really seen … as the heroes in the system.”**
Cybercriminals continue to target the health care field, with 324 incidents against health care organizations reported in the first half of 2022 alone. The AHA has long been committed to helping hospitals and health systems guard against and repel cyber threats that can compromise operations and threaten patient care. AHA’s National Advisor for Cybersecurity and Risk John Riggi, a former FBI cyber executive with decades of experience on the front lines and extensive connections with federal law enforcement, leads these efforts.

We offer members a robust menu of tools and resources to develop the defenses they need, and we also are working on legislative solutions to address these threats. We also worked closely with federal partners to treat ransomware attacks not as economic crimes, but as what they really are: threat to life crimes.

Senior leaders from the AHA and its members participate in a special advisory council at the FBI to address cyber threats to the health care system.

John Riggi, AHA’s National Advisor for Cybersecurity and Risk, discusses best practices to avoid, plan for, or mitigate cyber threats.

The AHA supports the Healthcare Cybersecurity Act legislation that would improve collaboration and coordination between the Department of Health and Human Services and Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency.

Speaking to AHA members, FBI Deputy Director Paul Abbate said the FBI and AHA have a strong partnership on cyber and risk issues.
We Are Leading the Way on the Health Equity Journey

AHA members are working hard to provide culturally appropriate care, create an equitable and inclusive culture, and support neighborhoods with hospital-community partnerships. Advancing these efforts and others is the goal of the Health Equity Roadmap, an innovative framework to guide members in their actions to become more equitable organizations and to dismantle structural barriers to health.

We celebrated three members as winners of the Carolyn Boone Lewis Equity of Care Awards this year: Mount Sinai Health System (winner); and Novant Health and Thomas Jefferson University/Jefferson Health (honorees). The award, named in honor of the first African American and first hospital trustee to chair the AHA Board, recognizes outstanding efforts among hospitals and health systems to advance equity of care and to spread lessons learned.

AHA also is working to address equity through its investment in three funds that provide access to capital for targeted populations: SteelSky Ventures, a female-led venture capital firm focused on companies working to improve maternal health outcomes for women; Jumpstart Nova, which invests exclusively in Black-founded-and-led health care companies focused on communities facing disparities in health outcomes; and Seae Ventures, which invests in women and Black, Indigenous and other historically marginalized entrepreneurs who are developing health and financial technologies that benefit traditionally underrepresented populations.

“The AHA took a leading position on getting us all to commit to eliminating disparities of care. And we’ve now got an equity roadmap that provides all of us the opportunity to assess how are we doing in that space and provides us with tools to address some of the deficiencies that we might identify.”

– Jack Lynch, President and CEO, MainLine Health
As the need for expanded access to behavioral health care services continues to grow the AHA is working with Congress toward passage of legislation that would enhance access to care by improving coverage and removing regulatory barriers, and would also support the development and delivery of high-quality and innovative treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders. Mindful of the toll that the pandemic has taken on our health care workers, we also have worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop and deploy a suicide prevention plan aimed specifically at health care workers. And we were pleased to see our sponsored legislation, the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act (H.R. 1667), enacted in March. This bill authorizes grants for programs that offer behavioral health services for front-line health care workers. Named for a doctor who led the emergency department at New York-Presbyterian Allen Hospital, the legislation also requires the Department of Health and Human Services to recommend strategies to facilitate health care provider well-being and launch a campaign encouraging health care workers to seek assistance when needed.
AHA’s rural members have faced particularly difficult challenges over the past year. The AHA drew attention to the need for additional support with a report on rural hospital closures and a series of videos featuring rural hospital leaders sharing their stories and working with Congress and the Administration to get that support. On Nov. 17, National Rural Health Day celebrated the #powerofrural by showcasing the many efforts of rural providers and other stakeholders to address the unique health care challenges faced by these communities.

Recognizing the unique role of a particular set of urban hospitals that serve high-need, vulnerable communities, we are urging Congress to create a special statutory designation, called Metropolitan Anchor Hospitals (MAHs). Many of these urban hospitals are also Academic Medical Centers, for which we have advocated lifting the cap on Medicare-funded residencies in order to ease the workforce shortage.

Children’s hospitals play an increasingly important role in protecting the youngest patients from COVID-19. The AHA received a $1.5 million CDC grant to build vaccine confidence, and we are partnering with the Children’s Hospital Association on pediatric vaccination throughout 2023. In addition, we continue to focus on the issues faced by members in Maternal and Children’s Health through our Better Health for Mothers and Babies initiative and a collaborative effort we engage in with the Alliance for Innovation for Maternal Health.

When the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation issued their report to Congress on a draft unified payment model for the four post-acute care settings, the AHA quickly raised objections. We continue to urge the agencies to go back to the drawing board to create a solution that reflects the current health care delivery system, as well as ensures access to high-quality care for all Medicare beneficiaries.
We Are Developing the Next Generation of Leaders

AHA members are leading the field forward, with innovative strategies and approaches that offer solutions to emerging challenges and improve quality and access for patients. We are working to share this knowledge through our weekly MarketScan newsletter, case studies, webinars and presentations at our national events.

This past year 32 rising leaders completed the Next Generation Leaders Fellowship year-long program in which each was paired with an executive-level mentor to guide them through the development of a transformation project at their hospital tackling challenges affecting health care affordability, cost, quality and safety. A cohort of Age-Friendly Fellows were supported by the John A. Hartford Foundation and implemented the Age-Friendly Health Systems 4Ms Framework at their organizations.

Joanne M. Conroy, M.D., chief executive officer and president of Dartmouth Health and AHA chair-elect designate, and Janice Nevin, M.D., president and CEO of Christiana Care discussed transformative collaborations at the AHA Leadership Summit.

Former AHA Board chair Rod Hochman, M.D. led a discussion at the Annual meeting on innovations that emerged during COVID-19 that will transform the field.

2021-2022 Class of AHA Next Generation Leaders Fellowship.
The Value of AHA Membership

2023 Save the Dates

Rounding out these events are a variety of conferences led by the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) and AHA’s professional membership groups, designed to advance operational excellence within your organization.

New location for 2023!

38th ANNUAL AHA RURAL HEALTH CARE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
FEBRUARY 19-22, 2023
SAN ANTONIO, TX
JW MARRIOTT SAN ANTONIO HILL COUNTRY
ruralconference.aha.org

The conference convenes senior executives, physician leaders, trustees and nurse executives from rural hospitals and health systems to share insights and strategies to transform rural health care delivery and business practices.

Save the Date!

2023 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
April 23-25
Washington, D.C.
annualmeeting.aha.org

AHA members have the opportunity to meet face to face with elected officials and key policymakers at this 3-day event in April.

Save the Date!

ACCELERATING HEALTH EQUITY CONFERENCE
MAY 16-18, 2023
MINNEAPOLIS

Organized by AHA Community Health Improvement and Institute for Diversity & Health Equity, the Accelerating Health Equity Conference brings together thought leaders, front-line workers and health care pioneers to advance the discussion on dismantling structural barriers and achieving equitable outcomes for all.

Save the Date!

2023 AMERICAN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
JULY 16-18, 2023
SEATTLE, WA
leadershipsummit.aha.org

Health care leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs and others gather to explore opportunities to leverage data and insights to address the field’s most pressing challenges.

Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra.

Organized by AHA Community Health Improvement and Institute for Diversity & Health Equity, the Accelerating Health Equity Conference brings together thought leaders, front-line workers and health care pioneers to advance the discussion on dismantling structural barriers and achieving equitable outcomes for all.

SVP and Chief Health Officer for Kaiser Permanente and former White House Vaccine Coordinator Bechara Choucair.

Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra.

AHA members have the opportunity to meet face to face with elected officials and key policymakers at this 3-day event in April.

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Rounding out these events are a variety of conferences led by the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) and AHA’s professional membership groups, designed to advance operational excellence within your organization.
Thank You for Your Engagement and Support

The annual TradeMarks survey of association public policy effectiveness ranks the AHA as one of the top associations in Washington, recognizing the association for working effectively across the executive, legislative and regulatory branches, representing the field well, producing accurate and reliable information and data to inform policymakers and working with the media and opinion leaders to highlight the hospital story.

Our work is possible because of your engagement and support. Thanks you for all that you do to advance the field, and the health of the patients, families and communities you serve.

None of us can do this on our own; the challenges we face are nationwide. The solutions are going to have to be things that are taken from the best ideas from across the nation. So get engaged with one another. Make sure that you’re listening to the information coming from the AHA.

– Russ Gronewold, President and CEO, Bryan Health

At the AHA Leadership Summit AHA Chair-elect John Haupert, president and CEO of Grady Health System, said, “Our field is a powerful leader, a force for good, in harnessing the new digital tools and technologies that are changing our society so rapidly.”

Kulleni Gebreyes, MD, U.S. Chief Health Equity Office, Deloitte, and Greg Adams, chair and CEO of Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and Hospitals, engage in a conversation around advancing health equity at the 2022 AHA Health Systems Leadership Retreat.

The NorthwellHealth Nurse Choir opens the 2022 AHA Annual Meeting.

AHA Board member Warner Thomas, President and CEO of Ochsner Health, joins Robin Begley, AHA SVP, CNO and AONL CEO on a live podcast at the Annual Meeting.
Stay in Touch

AHA Today
Our flagship e-newsletter brings you the news, insights and resources you need 6 days a week, directly to your inbox. www.aha.org/news

Special Bulletin
Use Model Letter to Submit Comments on the Issue of the 240B Remedy
Hospitals are encouraged to submit comments to CMS on CV 2013 OPPS proposed rule due Sept. 3.

Special Bulletins, Alerts and Advisories
AHA Special Bulletins get you the key takeaways on breaking news, while Alerts let you know when we need you to weigh in with your federal lawmakers or regulatory agencies.
AHA Advisories provide in-depth summaries of regulations, legislation, litigation or other issues affecting the field. Visit www.aha.org/action.

Trustee Insights
This monthly, multimedia package provides resources and education specifically for this audience, on both governance topics and the forces driving the nation’s health care system.
To subscribe, visit trustees.aha.org.

AHA Events & Education
Every Wednesday we share upcoming webinars, calls, events and conferences. Subscribers to AHA Today receive this email.

Podcasts and Videos
Our Advancing Health podcast channel features conversations with hospital and health system leaders on a variety of issues that affect patients and communities. Visit www.aha.org/advancing-health-podcast to listen. Video series, including Leadership Rounds with AHA’s Board Chair, spotlight leaders in the field talking about cutting-edge topics. Watch the Leadership Rounds www.aha.org/leadership-rounds.

AHA.org
Our website provides you with a customizable dashboard to stay on top of the topics that matter most to you. Need help logging in? Email ahahelp@aha.org to set up an account and password.

My AHA Connect
Exclusively for AHA members, this mobile app lets you access the latest updates on health care policy, contact your congressional legislators, and more. Visit the Apple App Store or Google Play store and search for “American Hospital Association.”

Market Scan
Brought to you by the AHA for Center for Health Innovation, this weekly e-newsletter delivers the latest intelligence on health care disruption and health system transformation. www.aha.org/center

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