



2024 IDAHO MEDICAL ASSOCIATION LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Idaho Medical Association is the leading organization representing physicians in all specialties, practice settings and geographic locations in our state, and is recognized as the voice of medicine in Idaho. IMA's mission is to unify and advocate for all Idaho physicians, promote the art and science of medicine, and remain dedicated to improving the health and well-being of all Idahoans.

IMA represents over 4,000 Idaho physicians and other providers on a variety of complex legislative and regulatory issues that impact Idaho physicians and their patients.

If you have comments or questions on any of these issues, please contact IMA lobby team members:

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Thank You for Improving Idaho's Abortion Ban

IMA extends our sincere gratitude to the Idaho Legislature for supporting HB 374 during the 2023 legislative session. While the bill did not encompass all the changes IMA originally pursued, it was a step in the right direction. HB 374 removed the affirmative defense (guilty until proven innocent) and provides physicians with the normal legal precedent of innocence until proven guilty. By codifying the Idaho Supreme Court ruling, physicians now have legal certainty when treating ectopic and molar pregnancies as well as miscarriage complications.

We are pleased with the progress. However, we agree with many in the Idaho Legislature who said in the waning weeks of the last legislative session, that more needs to be done. It is as important as ever to protect the health of our pregnant patients.

Safe and Timely Access to Reproductive Healthcare

Idaho women with pregnancy complications are experiencing delays and reductions in care that threaten their lives, health, and future ability to have children. These are expectant mothers who want to begin or grow their family but have received a devastating diagnosis.

A Full Health Exception is Needed

IMA supports changes to Idaho's abortion laws to make it legal for physicians to provide standard of care, evidence-based treatments for women whose life or health may be endangered by the following pregnancy complications, among others:

- Preeclampsia (Severe and dangerous hypertension)
- Premature rupture of membranes that cannot result in the birth of a child
- Maternal diagnoses of cancer
- Maternal heart failure
- Other very serious medical conditions, which if left untreated, can become life-threatening

IMA strongly supports Idaho laws that ensure timely access to healthcare for women, especially those experiencing pregnancy complications. IMA is once again committed to working with the Legislature to remedy the unintended consequences for Idaho families. Idaho physicians want to be able to provide standard of care treatments in these situations to protect the lives, health, and fertility of Idaho women.

Reinstatement of the Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC)

MMRCs convene at the state level to comprehensively review deaths that occur during or within one year of pregnancy. The committee is tasked to analyze these deaths and make recommendations to policymakers and state agencies on how they can best be avoided. MMRCs must be created through statute and reside in a state agency to assure access to key documents and proper peer review protections for the medical experts reviewing the cases.

During the 2023 legislative session, Idaho's MMRC sunset. As a result, we are now the only state in the country without a committee. IMA believes the MMRC plays a critical role in maternal health and preventing maternal death. We are committed to working with the Legislature to reinstate the MMRC and to do so as a permanent committee.

12-Month Extension of Medicaid Postpartum Coverage

Idaho is one of the last remaining states to offer just 60 days of postpartum coverage, the minimum amount required by federal law, for qualifying patients. Following 60 days, many mothers are without coverage, which means a lapse in routine appointments for recovery and development. Extending coverage to 12 months has been shown to reduce maternal mortality and was a key recommendation by the MMRC.

Access to timely and reliable postpartum care is critical for all mothers. IMA strongly supports Medicaid postpartum coverage and will work with the Idaho Legislature to extend access to 12 months.

Expanding Graduate Medical Education (GME) to Increase the Number of Physicians Throughout Idaho

GME, also known as residency training, is the last step in the physician training pipeline, after medical school and before establishing a medical practice. The residency phase of training establishes the physician's specialty, such as Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Psychiatry, etc.

IMA supports funding for the seventh year of the Idaho State Board of Education's (SBOE) Ten-Year Graduate Medical Education Expansion Plan. IMA is strongly committed to growing our physician workforce, especially in rural and underserved parts of Idaho, to increase access to care, meet the demands of a fast-growing population, and produce the next generation of caregivers in Idaho's aging physician workforce.

For 2024, the SBOE and Idaho residency programs will seek \$859,500 in new funding to fulfill the seventh year of GME expansion. This funding will increase residency positions by another 14 slots across Idaho, plus continue to incrementally increase the base funding level for existing programs. While we continue to rank near the bottom of the country in physicians per capita, Idaho ranks in the top 10 for residency retention. The GME Expansion Plan has been a success, and its funding is critical.

Resuming Naloxone Distribution

Opioid overdose rates continue to increase in Idaho. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) has tried to combat this through an opioid reversal medication called naloxone. When administered timely, naloxone is critical to prevent permanent damage and death. In 2022, naloxone kits distributed throughout the state were responsible for 1,200 opioid overdose reversals.

Unfortunately, during the 2023 legislative session, the DHW's ability to distribute naloxone kits through community-based organizations was severely restricted, and broad availability is limited. IMA strongly supports lifting those restrictions and restoring DHW's ability to distribute these kits more widely.