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President's Column

By Molly McClain, MD, MPH



It has been impressive and reassuring to see how our legislature (and everyone who works to advise people in the roundhouse - GO NMAFP LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE!!) has made such an effort to recruit and retain physicians. It absolutely should be a priority and this session, it certainly was. It feels really good to work with residents and fellows and share that we now have the biggest state-funded loan repayment plan in the country, that millions of state dollars are being dedicated to building rural training programs, expanded physician multi-state licensing compacts, and reformed medical malpractice. We have much to continue to work on, but we're off to a good start.

As we experience so many foundational and destabilizing shifts in our world, and in the smaller world of healthcare, it can be harder to operate from our prefrontal cortex that allows for connection, learning and executive functioning. It makes more sense for our physiology to reflexively keep us more in a state that is more focused on immediate survival. This can lead us to feel more reactive and have higher vigilance for any signal that might indicate danger.

The hard thing about being in this state is that usually when we are in dan-

ger, we need relationships and the ability to solve problems even more.

For a long time, the healthcare system in New Mexico has been under-resourced and unstable for that reason. It's an environment that requires connection across multiple fields and even between people and groups that have disparate world views. One thing that stabilizes individuals and systems in healthcare in New Mexico is how easy it is to connect with each other, through professional groups like NMAFP, and with folks in our legislature.

Dr. Kevin Grumbach from UCSF proposed a model that might be helpful to consider here in New Mexico as well. In May 2026, JAMA published his article "Primary Care as a Public Utility, The Case for a Common Fund". In it, they remind us that many, including the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, have argued that primary care should be considered a public good, similar to police and firefighters. "Moreover, state mandates to spend more on primary care through a pluralistic insurance system are subject to payer mix and market power differences in the delivery system, which can lead to inequities in financial support across practices and patient populations. One solution to these challenges is a primary care common fund, which pools primary care spending from public and private purchasers and pays practices directly. This provides conceptual and practical advantages related to patient freedom, state choice, administrative burden reduction, and payment flexibility, which can include alternative payment models reflecting state preferences around non-fee-for-service

incentives. Furthermore, this can be done without altering the insurance, payment, and delivery of health care outside of primary care." The hope is that this change would both bolster access to primary care and get around common problems that states share in trying to fund primary care, all without changing the structure of other aspects of healthcare such as delivery systems and the current payment structures for the rest of healthcare. Each state would pool the money from all payors and then decide the percentage of the total funds that would be dedicated to primary care, thus simplifying billing processes for those providing primary care.

While there are many valid concerns with a model like this getting implemented in any state, novel ideas that might support improved access to primary care, as well as decreased administrative burden for those of us working in primary care should be welcomed and discussed. This is particularly true in a state like New Mexico where the need for access is so dire and barriers to building long-term relationships with our legislators are much lower than in other states. Data shows that working toward solutions and building relational connections can pull our brain activity into the prefrontal cortex and out of our limbic survival system.

Primary Care as a Public Utility the Case for a Common Fund

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Required Medicaid Enrollment: All Ordering, Referring, Prescribing and Attending Providers Must Enroll as Medicaid Providers

Beginning July 1, 2026, claims submitted for services ordered, referred, or prescribed by a provider who is not enrolled in Medicaid will be denied. This requirement applies to all individual clinicians who render services to Medicaid members including pharmacists, attending physicians, those practicing within group practices, hospital systems, facilities, behavioral health agencies, Indian Health Services, and other organizational providers.

What Providers Need to Do:

- Enroll as a Medicaid provider,
- Review your roster of all clinicians rendering Medicaid services,
- Confirm that each rendering provider is individually enrolled in Medicaid,
- Submit a provider enrollment application at YES.NM.GOV as soon as possible for any rendering, ordering or prescribing (including pharmacists) provider not currently enrolled. To create a YESNM.gov account follow the instructions at <https://tinyurl.com/35z67vbc>

Learn more here: www.hca.nm.gov/orp/

AAFP's Annual Chapter Leader Forum and National Conference of Constituency Leaders in Kansas City, MO, April 23-25, 2026

NCCL

By Heather Applewhite

"Healing starts the moment we decide to fix the environment, not the individual." — Jennifer Moss

Looking to lift your spirits?

I suggest attending the AAFP's National Conference for Constituency Leaders (NCCL). NCCL serves as a powerful antidote to physician burnout.

What space should you take up? As much as you want.

- BIPOC? This is for you.
- LGBTQ+? This is for you.

- Female Physician? This is for you.
- IMG? This is for you.
- New physician? This is for you.
- Do you want to "be the change you wish to see in the world," but don't know where to start? This is for you.

I spent two and a half days with smart, motivated, and inspiring family physicians from across the country and right here in New Mexico. Together, we wrote resolutions to be submitted to the AAFP's Congress of Delegates—addressing the issues we care about most. It is a way to ensure our voices are heard by the AAFP and across the United States.

Among the resolutions passed on to the Congress of Delegates were:

- Practice Enhancements: Requesting appropriate and adequate reimbursement for counseling codes.
- Workers' Rights: Supporting collective bargaining agreements for family physicians.
- IMG Support: Assisting our International Medical Graduate colleagues as they transition to practice in the U.S.

The NMAFP also took time to bond and experience some local thrills together! I had an amazing time, and I hope you will consider joining this wonderful experience next year.

To learn more about NCCL, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/5n6djp3y>



*Women's Constituency
NCCL 2026*



*NMAFP escaped the
escape room!*



NMAFP doing the impossible



*NMAFP chapter representation
at NCCL/ACLF 2026*

ACLF

By Alicia Gonzales, MD

It was such a pleasure to attend the ACLF conference on behalf of the board and New Mexico Family Physicians. These two days were full of programming that discussed ways in which AAFP is addressing the current healthcare crisis with policy and problem solving, as well as means by which to become more productive and efficient on both a personal level and on behalf of the New Mexico chapter. It is my second year in office as your board member for the NMAFP but my first year attending this conference. Here are some of my reflections from the content and goals for New Mexico upon my return:

Take Home Points:

1. Talking to the Media: Being called upon for media interviews can be a daunting but realistic expectation for all family medicine physicians. For those of us that relish the opportunity, staff members at AAFP are available to coach us through the process. If you have an interview with a media platform coming up and need

help drafting your content, reach out to jhirschhorn@aaafp.org.

For those of us who grimace at the prospect of the camera or mic, there are so many other options to become an active source of knowledge for your community and profession. You can control your content by writing op-eds or editorial columns for your local newspaper. You can also volunteer at your local school district or other organizations to write a "Ask Your Local Doc" column or a seasonal updates to advise the public on important healthcare concerns in your community.

Feel free to reach out to AAFP or us at info@nmafp.org for further questions about how to get involved.

2. Did you know that AAFP has really upped their game in educational content? If you are like me and feel guilty every time you toss another unread copy of American Family Physician magazine into the recycling bin, try out the new AAFP Audio App, which will read the magazine articles to you and link you to the online full article for charts and CME quizzes. Also check out the "Inside Family Medicine" podcast by AAFP.

They put out new content for on-the-go CME as well as political updates. AAFP has also partnered with OpenEvidence and all AAFP members now have access to this amazing platform. OpenEvidence is the new leading search engine for unbiased AI powered access to primary literature and practice guidelines from NEJM, JAMA, and AAFP.

3. As your board member, I am excited about several brainstorming sessions we had on how to better serve New Mexico as a chapter. New Mexico is unique in many ways including how wide spread our state is and the challenges to create a centralized chapter. We thought about many ways in which to represent our entire state ranging from organized NMAFP events in different counties throughout the year, to Zoom lunch and learns to individual county representation. What are your thoughts on how NMAFP can have a better presence?

Thank you for your time reading my reflections from ACLF. Please feel free to reach out to NMAFP at any time to share your ideas for our organization or questions on how to get more involved.

AAFP's Annual Chapter Leader Forum and National Conference of Constituency Leaders in Kansas City, MO, April 23-25, 2026

Representing New Mexico at the Annual Chapter Leader Forum 2026

By Kristy Riniker, MD, MPH,
FAAFP, Dip ABLM

As your Vice President of the NMAFP, I had the opportunity to participate in the Annual Chapter Leader Forum (ACLF) in Kansas City, April 23-25, which co-occurred with NCCL. I went with a fabulous group of women leaders from New Mexico - Dr. Alicia Gonzales, NMAFP Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Heather Applewhite, NM Women's Representative to NCCL, and Sam Morris, NMAFP Executive Director.

The conference offered leadership development, opportunities for networking with family physician leaders from across the country in order to cross-pollinate ideas for best practices of various chapters, and updates from our national family medicine leadership. I participated in sessions focusing on engagement and retention, strategic planning, effective board leadership, advocacy priorities, publication in AAFP journals, and AI in medicine to name a few. I am excited to see how the NMAFP grows and changes to meet the needs of our diverse family physicians across the state. We now have a virtual option for our meetings, so if you are in a rural area or are not able to attend in person for whatever reason, we still want your input on how the NMAFP can best serve you. If you are in a rural area of the state and would like us to host an event in your area, please reach out!

In addition to the ACLF activities, I at-

tended some of the NCCL sessions and met up with colleagues I had met last year as the NM Women's Representative to NCCL. The members of the Commission on Health of the Public and Science (CHPS) had an informal meetup, which was a great chance to connect, since our February in-person meeting shifted to virtual because of inclement weather. CHPS is working on updating the AAFP policy on Keeping Physicians in Rural Practice as well as policies surrounding vaccine recommendations, breastfeeding support, substance use disorder, cannabis use, environmental health and climate change. Members also serve as family medicine representatives on guidelines for other specialties including neurology, sleep medicine, pediatrics, lifestyle medicine, cardiology, otolaryngology, radiology, sports medicine, maternal fetal medicine, and addiction medicine.

I also had the opportunity to meet with the AAFP government relation team in person, some of whom had met with our Santa Fe family medicine residents during their Legislation and Advocacy block that Dr. Gonzales and I taught together this past year. We were able to update them on some of the advances to health policy our NMAFP Government Affairs Committee have been able to move forward in our state, and learn about policies other states are implementing to address the primary advocacy focus areas including:

- Recognizing the value of primary care
- Reducing administrative burden
- Increasing, strengthening and sustaining the primary care workforce
- Improving health care for all

The AAFP is working tirelessly on our behalf to ensure that the federal government understands the importance of vac-

cine science and availability; the impact that Medicaid cuts have on patients and physicians; the importance of protecting the physician-patient relationship; keeping family physicians in rural practice; addressing payment reform; and all the realities we face on a day to day basis. If you want to be more involved, I encourage you to come to our next NMAFP Government Affairs Committee Meeting, sign up for the Speak Out and Advocacy Ambassadors campaigns, encourage your patients and staff to vote through VotER, and share your stories. You can find links for each of these opportunities on our website.

I thank you for entrusting me with the opportunity to serve as one of your state leadership representatives. I think New Mexico is a fabulous place to practice medicine and I feel that we are on the cusp of changing the landscape of how we provide care to our unique population. I know it is a special breed of family physicians that choose to practice in our Land of Enchantment, and I want to thank each of you for continuing to make that choice to ensure our families and friends receive the high quality care they deserve. I look forward to working with you to ensure it remains a place you feel valued and have the resources you need to do this important work.

I'll close with a quote from Shawn Martin, Executive Vice President and CEO of the AAFP, "While the health care landscape is ever-changing, your role as a family physician remains constant: the ultimate advocate for your patients. The AAFP will always be in your corner as you work to keep your patients, their loved ones and communities safe and healthy. Your journey is our purpose. While we didn't choose the environment... We choose our mission."



Kansas City, MO

New Mexico Family Medicine Interest Groups Reports

Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine

By Alexis Morgan

Meet your new FMIG leaders!



Hi all! My name is Alexis Morgan, and I'm from Commerce, Texas. Currently, I'm a first-year medical student at Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine and serve as the President of the Family Medicine Interest Group. Family medicine is especially meaningful to me because it allows for long-term, patient-centered relationships while caring for rural and underserved communities. Outside of medicine, I enjoy riding horses and reading!



Hi everyone! My name is Joslyn Martinez, and I am from Española, New Mexico. I am currently a first-year medical student at Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine and am excited to be wrapping up my first year in Las Cruces. I serve as the Social Media Chair for the Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG), and I am passionate about Family Medicine because I hope to work with underserved communities throughout my home state while building long-term relationships with patients. A fun fact about me is that I have four dogs: a Yorkie, Parti Yorkie, German Shepherd, and a Lab/Pit mix!



Hello everyone! I'm Grace E. Luta, a third-year medical student at Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine in New Mexico and the third-year Liaison for the Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG). FMIG has been such a meaningful part of my medical school journey—it's given me opportunities for mentorship, community, and encouragement while exploring my interest in family medicine. A fun fact about me is that I was a figure skater through high school, and more recently I've become a newfound lover of country music!



Hello! I'm Charisse Dumlaio, serving as FMIG Treasurer for the 2026-2027 year. I'm from Manteca, California. I am currently finishing my first year of medical school as an OMS-1 at Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine and excited to continue serving the whole community and build lasting relationships with patients through events and community support. I know how to play three instruments and enjoy being active, cooking, and listening to music in my free time.



Hello! I am Monica Touma, and I am a first year student at Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine and the Secretary of Family Medicine Interest Group. I am interested in Family Medicine because of the opportunity to be involved in the community and have long term relationships with patients. I am from Mililani, Hawaii and am looking forward to going back to spend time with family over the summer. In my free time I like to read, go to the gym, swim, and play the piano.



Hello everyone! I am Kim Lopez, and I am serving as Vice President of the Family Medicine Interest Group at Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine. I am excited to get involved with the community and learn from my fellow E-board members as well as our mentors. My goal as a future physician is to build long lasting relationships with my patients while giving back to underserved communities like my own. When I am not studying, I enjoy cooking, reading, and creating embroidery crafts.



Hello, my name is Nhu Bui and I am serving as the Community Outreach Coordinator of the Family Medicine Interest Group at Burrell College School of Medicine. I was drawn to Family Medicine by the specialty's ability to connect with patients and be a companion along their health journey. In my free time, I love listening to songs in different languages and learning how to speak or

pronounce words. That's how I started learning Chinese as well!



Hello! My name is Anamaria Ancheta and I am proud to serve as the Fourth Year Regional Academic Center Representative. I chose to become part of FMIG because I love connecting

medical students with resources to explore how vast Family Medicine is and fostering opportunities to serve our community. I am continually grateful for all the opportunities the New Mexico Primary Care Training Consortium and the New Mexico Academy of Family Physicians have provided me to grow professionally in the field of Family Medicine. I hope to share these same opportunities with other students as they continue their medical school journeys.



Hello! I'm Sana Ali, a third-year medical student and the third-year Liaison for the Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG). I joined the Family Medicine Interest Group because of my passion for

becoming a Family Medicine physician. Before medical school, I had the opportunity to work at Penn Family Care, where I gained a deep appreciation for the diverse patient population and the vital role family medicine physicians play as advocates for their patients. I am excited to continue with FMIG at Burrell to engage in meaningful opportunities and connect with like-minded peers who share this passion!



Recent Events: (since our transition to the new Eboard)

April 16-18, 2026: Our president, Alexis Morgan, had the privilege of attending the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians Annual Convention. During the conference, she was able to network with physicians and medical students from across the country while learn-

New Mexico Family Medicine Interest Groups Reports

ing more about the future of osteopathic family medicine. The experience provided valuable insight into advocacy, leadership, and opportunities within the specialty.



April 17, 2026 : Our organization participated in "DO for a Day," where members had the opportunity to work with aspiring high school students interested in healthcare careers. Students learned how to use medical tools such as stethoscopes and tuning forks while gaining exposure to the principles of osteopathic medicine. The event allowed members to inspire the next generation of healthcare profession-

als through hands-on learning and mentorship.



April-May 2026: Members contributed to the Anthony Women's Intercultural Center Drive by collecting nonperishable food items for individuals and families in need. This initiative emphasized the importance of serving and supporting our local community beyond the clinical setting. Through these donations, our organization was able to help provide essential resources to those facing food insecurity.



May 16, 2026: At the Immaculate Heart of Mary Health Fair, members engaged with community members through interactive health education activities focused on hearing and vibration sensation testing using tuning forks. This event allowed students to practice patient communication skills while promoting awareness of preventative health and wellness. It was a rewarding opportunity to connect with the community and encourage greater understanding of basic health screenings.

University of New Mexico, School of Medicine

By Jenna Basham

Hello! We are the new FMIG Officers representing UNM SOM! We are grateful to be part of the New Mexico Academy of Family Physicians and are excited for future events. We would like to briefly introduce ourselves and share a little about the recent events FMIG has participated in.

Since transitioning into officer roles earlier this year, we have held a Match Mixer event for the recently matched MD Class of 2026. The event was hosted by Dr. Bissell, who has been very welcoming and helpful with our FMIG officer transition. There were 19 total matches into FM residency programs this year. It was wonderful to recognize the hard work and celebrate the accomplishments of our newest Lobo docs before they head off to residency.

We also had an opportunity to organize a Post Match panel where the recently matched fourth year students discussed their experiences with rotations, residency applications, and more. The first, second, and third year students in attendance were able to ask questions and learn about upcoming conference opportunities. We really appreciated the fourth years taking the time to talk to us right before graduation.

Thank you for welcoming us into the New Mexico Academy of Family Physicians, we are excited to see what the rest of our terms as FMIG officers will hold!



My name is Benjamin Ciener, and I am the incoming President of FMIG. I was raised in Santa Fe, NM. My strong interest in family medicine and primary care has only been reaffirmed

by my experiences meeting FM physicians through the NMAFP Med Student Reception and clinical experiences. I hope to practice as a family medicine physician here in New Mexico in the future.

Hello! My name is Marycarmen Chavarria-Ruiz, and I am the new Vice President for FMIG at UNM! I was born in Mexico and raised here in Albuquerque.

I completed my undergraduate degree at UNM and worked as a paramedic in the city for the past five years before starting medical school. I'm super excited to be here and looking forward to this year with FMIG!



My name is Jenna Basham, and I am the secretary of UNM FMIG. I was born in Farmington, and raised in La Plata, New Mexico on a small farm. Prior to

medical school I attended undergrad at UNM, and graduated in 2025. I am interested in family medicine and sports medicine. I love where I grew up, and plan on living and practicing in a rural community after residency.



Hello! My name is Aysu Nora Caglar and I am an officer for the Family Medicine Interest Group. I was born in Istanbul, Turkey and moved to New Mexico when I was 13 years old. I

am interested in Family Medicine because I value the opportunity to provide comprehensive, patient centered care while forming meaningful connections within the community.

I'm Rochelle Fliethman, the incoming FMIG Treasurer. While I'm not originally from New Mexico, it is truly my home. The family medicine community has been

generous and welcoming to me in every phase of my healthcare career. I hope to, someday soon, serve New Mexicans as a primary care physician.



Southern New Mexico Family Medicine Residency Program

By Thakur Shrestha, MD

A Message From Our Program

It has been another exciting and transformative year for the CHRISTUS Health Southern New Mexico Family Medicine Residency Program. As our program continues to grow, we remain committed to our mission of training compassionate, skilled, and community-focused family physicians who will serve the diverse populations of New Mexico and beyond.

Over the past year, our residents and faculty have achieved remarkable milestones in clinical excellence, scholarship, leadership, and community outreach. We are proud to share some of the highlights and accomplishments that continue to shape the future of our residency program.



Southern NM FM Residents

Residency Program Updates

New Residents — Class of July 2026

Welcoming our newest residents to the CHRISTUS Family: Raza Aslam, MD; Theja Pakala, MD; and Fuseina Salifu, MD.

New Faculty Members

We are delighted to welcome two new faculty physicians to our growing inpatient Family Medicine team: Dr. Saba Sharif — Family Medicine Hospitalist; and Dr. M. Owais Khan — Family Medicine Hospitalist.

Expansion of Family Medicine Service

This year marked a major milestone for our residency program with the official launch of our Family Medicine Inpatient Service under the leadership of Dr. Martha Montanez. Dr. Sharif and Dr. Khan will be joining the inpatient service team as we continue expanding resident-led inpatient training opportunities.

In addition, our program is actively planning to bring PGY-1 resident training to Alamogordo in the future, reflecting meaningful progress toward our long-term vision of offering all three years of residency training locally.

These exciting developments represent continued growth in our commitment to high-quality rural and community-based medical education.

Graduation Highlights

This summer, we proudly celebrated the graduation of several exceptional resi-

dents whose dedication and accomplishments have left a lasting impact on our program and community.

Class of 2026 Graduates: Thakur Shrestha, MD — Beginning his career as a Hospitalist in Maryland; Quang Phuc Vu, MD — Starting his career as a Hospitalist in Arizona; Grace Amoke, MD — Beginning practice as a Hospitalist in New Mexico.

Alumni Spotlight

Dr. Zaira Lucero Villa, one of our previous graduates, is completing her Emergency Medicine Fellowship and will soon return as an Emergency Department attending physician.

We are incredibly proud of all our graduates and confident they will continue to embody the values of Family Medicine through compassionate patient care and leadership in their communities.

Resident Scholarship & Conference Highlights

Our residents continue to excel in scholarly activity and quality improvement initiatives.

Poster presentations at NMAFP's 44th Annual Winter Refresher Conference: Luckna Sugerthananthaseyon, MD, "Advanced Care Planning in Our Family Medicine Practice: Increasing ACP During Medicare Annual Wellness Visits"; Himal Panth, MD, "Resources to Promote Advanced Care Planning in Your Practice and Community"; Ranausman Anwar, MD, "Family Medicine Residents Go Back to School for the Block Party: Highlights From Four Years of Providing Free Sports Physicals in Our Community"

These projects highlight our residents' ongoing dedication to quality improvement, preventive medicine, and community engagement.

Community Engagement

Serving our community remains at the heart of our residency mission.

This year, residents actively participated in several outreach initiatives, including: Sports physicals for local high school athletes at Alamogordo Public Schools; Participation in local job fairs for Alamogordo Public School students; Partnership with the local food pantry for the "Healthy Families" Nutrition Education Event; and Continued rural rotations supporting underserved communities throughout Southern New Mexico.

These experiences continue to strengthen our residents' connection with the communities they serve.

Resident Wellness & Team Building

Resident wellness continues to be a major priority within our program.

As in previous years, residents and faculty gathered for a memorable Fall Wellness Retreat at the Inn of the Mountain Gods in Ruidoso, New Mexico. The retreat included: Team-building activities; Mindfulness and wellness sessions; Interactive indoor group activities; Collaborative discussions

focused on residency program improvement and graduate retention.

We strongly believe that caring for ourselves enables us to provide better care for our patients and communities.

Innovation in Patient Care & Documentation

CHRISTUS Health Southern New Mexico successfully implemented the EPIC Electronic Medical Record (EMR) System in March 2026, integrated with Abridge AI technology.

This advancement has significantly improved workflow efficiency, reduced documentation burden, and enhanced resident work-life balance — helping residents complete documentation more efficiently and leave work with fewer pending tasks.

Acknowledgments

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated faculty, preceptors, nursing staff, clinic teams, and community partners who continue to support the growth and success of our residency program.

Your commitment to education, patient care, mentorship, and community service remains the foundation of our program's strength and future success.

UNM Shiprock Family Medicine Residency Program

By Olivia Harris-Belin, MD

Yá't'ée'h from Shiprock!

The UNM Shiprock residents have ramped up their community events including helping at the Shiprock Marathon, mentoring at Eva B. Stokley Elementary where we spoke about our journeys into medicine and played with stethoscopes, jello and ultrasound, and teaching at Tsé Bit A'í Middle School where we each led an activity about mental health and wellness. We've also been increasing our home visits in the surrounding communities of Upper Fruitland, Nenahnezad, in addition to the Shiprock area and striving to get our patients reconnected to healthcare. We also continued our Rez Café discussions at chapter houses and most recently held a culturally sensitive discussion about advanced care planning in the Diné culture. Our PGY-3 Zara completed an addiction medicine rotation at Cenikor in Farmington, while PGY-2 Gus and I are rotating in OB, cardiology, urology, and neurology at San Juan Regional Medical Center in Farmington. We are looking forward to welcoming our rising PGY-2's TK and Quinn to Shiprock in June and meeting our new incoming interns Andrew Honken and Brian Gutman at our upcoming Resident Retreat. Lastly, we will be celebrating Zara's graduation here soon and we wish her well at her new attending job!

Northern New Mexico Family Medicine Residency Program

By Sangmin Choe, MD

The UNM-Santa Fe Family Medicine Program is proud to introduce our incoming class of interns to our colleagues across the state. Selected for their clinical excellence, dedication to full-spectrum training, and alignment with our mission, these six resident physicians bring an inspiring commitment to advancing primary care. We are thrilled to welcome them to the NMAFP community as they begin serving New Mexico's diverse populations:



Sokhna Diouf, MD: University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center College of Medicine. Dr. Sokhna Diouf aims to deliver full-spectrum, longitudinal care with a strong emphasis on community health,

lifespan medicine, and women's advocacy. Her clinical training spans advanced cancer therapeutics research and dedicated volunteer work at community clinics. Fluent in French, Sokhna is committed to using her language skills and cultural sensitivity to build trust, champion patient advocacy, and eliminate communication barriers for underserved populations.



Elena Flores-Aguirre, MD: University of New Mexico School of Medicine. Dr. Elena Flores-Aguirre is dedicated to practicing full-spectrum family medicine with a career focus on

preventative care, community outreach, and expanding healthcare access in rural areas. Having served as co-president of the Lifestyle Medicine Interest Group, she has experience designing health education classes for Spanish-speaking communities. Elena aims to build meaningful, long-term patient relationships to effectively address regional health disparities.



Jackson Joseph, DO: Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Jackson Joseph plans to practice full-spectrum family medicine in New Mexico with a core

focus on cultural humility and community advocacy. He is highly motivated by the UNM-Santa Fe program's legislative rotation, aiming to actively shape health policies that improve care access. Building on his street medicine background, Jackson's goals include establishing trust and delivering care outside traditional clinical settings.



Maria Evelyn Juarez Parra, MD: University of New Mexico School of Medicine. Dr. Maria Evelyn Juarez Parra aims to practice full-spectrum family medicine, thriving particu-

larly in outpatient, prenatal, and preventative care settings. She is deeply committed to serving patients in her native Spanish, utilizing her skills to serve as an accessible bridge to the healthcare system. Evelyn's professional goal is to provide compassionate, high-quality medical care and fierce advocacy for New Mexico's most vulnerable communities.



Rebecca Touchet, DO: Virginia Tech Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine - Louisiana Campus. Dr. Rebecca Touchet aspires to provide comprehensive primary care to

rural and medically underserved populations. Inspired by low-resource global health rotations, her professional goals focus on delivering humble, culturally sensitive care. Rebecca values the broad scope of family medicine—particularly inpatient care, procedures, and women's health—and is eager to build lifelong, trusting clinical relationships that extend well beyond the examination room.



Nicole Urrutia, MD: University of New Mexico School of Medicine. Dr. Nicole Urrutia is committed to multi-generational, full-spectrum family medicine, bringing extensive

clinical experience from rural clerkships and mobile street medicine teams. Her professional goals center on community leadership and healthcare mentorship. Nicole aims to leverage her experience with local health councils to connect patients with vital behavioral and social resources, ultimately strengthening the multi-generational communities she serves.

Leadership Transition at UNM-Santa Fe Family Medicine Residency: The University of New Mexico-Santa Fe Family Medicine Residency Program will mark an important leadership transition in July 2026, as Dr. Elizabeth Koffler concludes her tenure as Program Director and Dr. Brooke Ersland steps into the role. This transition reflects both a moment of gratitude for transformative leadership and anticipation for continued growth under new direction.

Celebrating Dr. Elizabeth Koffler's Impact: Since assuming the role of Program Director in 2024, Dr. Elizabeth Koffler has guided the UNM-Santa Fe Family Medicine Residency with vision, dedication, and a strong commitment to educational

excellence. During her tenure, she has led comprehensive efforts in curriculum development, program policy, and faculty onboarding, while maintaining full ACGME accreditation readiness across inpatient and outpatient training sites.

Dr. Koffler has been instrumental in strengthening the program's academic structure, including the creation of a hospitalist area of concentration and a billing curriculum designed to better prepare residents for real-world practice. Her work extended beyond curriculum innovation to include directing medical student clerkships, sub-internships, and visiting rotations—further expanding the program's educational reach.

In addition to her educational leadership, Dr. Koffler has remained deeply committed to clinical care, providing comprehensive family medicine services across the lifespan, including obstetrics, pediatric care, women's health, and inpatient medicine. She has also played a key role in resident mentorship, supporting trainees through both their educational journeys and transition to independent practice.

Her leadership has extended into the broader medical community through service on multiple institutional committees and as Chair of the Medical Advisory Committee for the New Mexico Breastfeeding Taskforce. Her contributions have been recognized with repeated teaching awards, reflecting her lasting impact on residents and learners.

Through her steady leadership, Dr. Koffler has helped cultivate a program culture grounded in collaboration, academic rigor, and patient-centered care—one that will continue to shape future generations of family physicians.

Welcoming Dr. Brooke Ersland: We are delighted to welcome Dr. Brooke Ersland as the incoming Program Director beginning in July 2026. Dr. Ersland brings a wealth of experience in graduate medical education, program development, and full-spectrum family medicine.

Currently an Associate Professor at the University of New Mexico Department of Family and Community Medicine, Dr. Ersland provides care across inpatient, newborn nursery, and obstetric settings, while also serving as Inpatient Service Education Director. Her leadership in inpatient education reflects a strong commitment to hands-on, high-quality resident training.

Dr. Ersland has an extensive background in residency leadership, including roles as Associate Program Director in multiple programs and leadership in developing new residency programs and curricula. Notably, she has led curriculum development in obstetrics and newborn care, and has played a central role in establishing educational frameworks, competency evaluation systems, and faculty development initiatives.

Her experience also includes directing maternity and newborn services, serving on national committees related to family

medicine obstetrics certification, and contributing to innovations in rural training, including ongoing efforts to develop a rural residency track in New Mexico.

A recognized educator, Dr. Ersland has received multiple teaching awards, including the University of New Mexico ITeach

Award in 2025, and has been consistently acknowledged by residents and students for her commitment to teaching and mentorship. Her work reflects a passion for training physicians who can deliver comprehensive, community-responsive care.

NMAFP E-Newsletters and Updated Website

By Sam Morris, NMAFP Executive Director

Did you know we send a monthly e-newsletter called "Stay In the Know"? These emails are short, quick reads that highlight fellowships and scholarships, grants, new pages on the website, AAFP updates, outside opportunities, and other timely information. They are designed to help you scan what is new in just a few minutes. Please add info@nmafp.org to your address book to ensure you receive them.

Have you visited our website recently? www.familydoctornm.org continues to grow as a resource for family physicians like you. It is updated often with new information, tools, and opportunities. If you have not visited recently, this is a good time to explore what is new. Here are a few examples.

The Events tab highlights CME opportunities, including our upcoming Summer Conference, and other programs offered throughout the year, such as the Med Student Reception.

You can visit the Reference Center tab for things like a Presentation Archive where you can see slides from past conferences. It is a convenient way to revisit sessions, review key points, and share information.

For those navigating repayment or advising students, the Student Loan Information page has information reflecting recent changes in federal programs and resources to help you.

If you are looking for leadership roles, scholarships, research and study opportunities, explore the Outside Opportunities page. It is updated as new items come in and offers a simple way to stay aware of opportunities.

Don't forget to check out our Board of Directors and learn about NMAFP leadership. We hope you will attend a board meeting or get involved with a committee.

There are a variety of ways you can get involved. If you want to stay engaged with legislative efforts, visit the Advocacy page. We share information about our efforts on both a state and national level. It includes weekly updates during the NM sessions and monthly updates on the national level.

The Member Interest Groups page introduces the many communities available through AAFP. Each group offers connection and a place to share ideas with peers who understand your work. The page includes a full directory and links to join the group.

Visit the site, bookmark the pages you use most, and check back often. As our programs grow, the website and our monthly updates remain two of the best ways to stay informed, stay connected, and stay engaged with family medicine in New Mexico. As always, if you have an idea of how NMAFP can better serve you, email me at info@nmafp.org.

Resident and Student Congress Delegates at AAFP's FUTURE

By Sam Morris

Every year AAFP hosts the FUTURE conference, designed for family medicine students and residents. This year's conference is July 30-August 1, 2026 in Kansas City, MO.

Residents and students can have their voice heard by joining the National Congress of Family Medicine Residents or the National Congress of Student Members, which meet during FUTURE. They get to pick national officers and push for issues that matter through these groups.

NMAFP is excited to share that Dr. Kori Gandara has been selected to serve as the New Mexico Delegate at the Resident Congress. Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine students Anamaria Ancheta and Sana Ali will serve as the New Mexico delegate and alternate delegate at the Student Congress. Congratulations!

Our next issue will feature articles about their experiences.

Future NMAFP Events & Dates

- 68th Annual Family Medicine Seminar
August 6-8, 2026
Tamaya Resort and Spa
- Board Meeting
Sunday, August 9, 2026, 8:30 am
Tamaya Resort and Spa
Breakfast Served
- Scientific Advisory Meeting
Sunday, August 9, 2026, 10:30 am
Tamaya Resort and Spa
- 21st Annual Med Student Reception
September 12, 2026, 12:00 pm
Courtyard Marriot Albuquerque
Lunch Served
- Budget Meeting
September 12, 2026, 3:00 pm
Courtyard Marriot Albuquerque
- Board Meeting
Saturday, November 7, 2026, 12:00 pm
Location TBD
Lunch Served
- 45th Annual Winter Refresher
February 20, 2027
Sandia Resort and Casino
- 69th Annual Family Medicine Seminar
June 10-12, 2027
Ruidoso Convention Center

2026-2027 NMAFP Slate of Officers

- NMAFP Members will vote for their 2026-2027 Officers during the 68th Annual Family Medicine Seminar.
- See pages 10-11 for information on how to register for this conference and earn up to 21 CME.
- On Friday, August 7, there will be a call for nominations and voting will take place during the afternoon break. We will announce the results at the Awards Dinner and Dance. After the plated three-course meal, honored guest Jen Brull, MD, will induct the new NMAFP Officers.
- President** Molly McClain, MD, MPH will automatically move to the position of **Immediate Past President**.
- President-Elect** Clea Lopez, MD will become **President** by automatic ascension.
- Nominations are:
President-Elect: Alicia Gonzales MD
- Secretary-Treasurer:** Kristy Riniker, MD, MPH
- Vice President:** Meredith Barlow, MD

Building the Rural Physician Pipeline: A High School Student's Perspective from New Mexico

By Ishana Reddy Sarakanti, Hobbs, New Mexico

I was born in Santa Fe and have completed all of my schooling in New Mexico. Growing up here has given me a strong connection to our communities, but it has also shown me the healthcare challenges many rural families face.

As a high school student in Hobbs interested in medicine, I have learned that the problem in rural New Mexico is not a lack of motivated students. The real issue is limited access to mentorship, exposure, and structured opportunities.

I had the opportunity to do clinical shadowing in India, where I observed patients traveling long distances for care and struggling to access specialists. What surprised me was seeing similar challenges in rural New Mexico. In both places, healthcare workforce shortages directly affect patient care and access.

Students in rural communities often have fewer opportunities to explore medical careers. Many shadowing experiences depend on personal connections rather than organized programs. Exposure to different specialties can also be limited.

I am grateful to Nor-Lea Hospital District for allowing students like me to observe clinical care. Experiences like these are valuable, but more structured programs would make an even greater impact. Rural hospitals and clinics could help students by offering scheduled shadowing rotations, mentorship opportunities, and summer programs focused on healthcare careers.

Physicians can also play an important role. Even small efforts—allowing a student to shadow, sharing career experiences, or offering guidance—can encourage students to pursue medicine. Early exposure helps students better understand the realities of healthcare and strengthens their commitment to serving their own communities in the future.

There are already positive efforts underway in New Mexico, including university outreach and rural clinical rotations. Expanding these programs and making them more consistent could help strengthen the long-term physician pipeline.

Some practical steps include:

- Creating structured summer health-care programs for high school students
- Expanding mentorship opportunities with rural physicians
- Strengthening school science and health career clubs
- Increasing partnerships between hospitals and universities
- Providing better education about scholarships and medical career pathways
- Students from rural communities are more likely to return and practice in those same areas. Investing in rural students today is one of the best ways to improve healthcare access in the future.

As someone born and educated in New Mexico, I hope to become a physician and eventually give back to the communities that shaped me. Rural students are motivated and capable. With the right support and opportunities, we can help strengthen the future healthcare workforce in rural New Mexico.

21st Annual Med Student Reception

Saturday, September 12, 2026, 12:00–3:00pm

Moderated by Dr. Kristy Riniker



RSVP online:
www.familydoctornm.org/msr
Or scan the QR code

Courtyard by Marriott
5151 Journal Center Blvd NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109

The Med Student Reception provides a setting for medical students to have access to and communicate in small groups with New Mexico family medicine physicians and residents. Enjoy a free lunch buffet and cash bar. Students are seated with physicians to allow in-depth small group discussions throughout the afternoon guided by table topics and guest presentations. Student badges indicate what school they attend and their year, and physician badges indicate their career path of choice.

Doctors: Recruiting experience consistently shows there is nothing more powerful for a student, contemplating his or her future in medicine, than to hear from and connect with an experienced physician. Please volunteer for a fun and interesting afternoon of developing our future family medicine physicians.

Students: Are you on the fence about whether family medicine is right for you? Are you unsure where your medical education journey will take you? Are you simply curious about the family medicine field? Please join us for a fun and informative afternoon where you can learn about the family medicine field.



Courtyard by Marriott Albuquerque



Courtyard by Marriott Albuquerque

68th Annual NMAFP Family Medicine Seminar

August 6-8, 2026 • Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa

Dr. Molly McClain, Scientific Program Chair



Register online at www.familydoctormn.org/summer-seminar or scan QR



Thursday, August 6, 2026

8:00 a.m. Registration, Exhibits Open,
Exhibit Hall (Breakfast on your own)

8:50 a.m. Introduction & Welcome
Molly McClain, MD, MPH, Scientific
Program Chair

9:00 a.m. "Pediatric Dermatology: A
High-Yield Overview for Primary Care"
Aimee Smidt MD, FAAD, FAAP

10:00 a.m. "Updates from the NM
Department of Health"
Miranda Durham, MD

11:00 a.m. "Guiding Patients through
Cardio-renal-metabolic Conditions:
The Essential Role of Primary Care
Providers"
Yasmin Bains, DO

12:00 p.m. Lunch – Exhibit Hall

1:00 p.m. "Infectious Diseases for
Everyday Practice"
Natalie Mariam Salas, MBCh

2:00 p.m. "E-cigarettes: An Overview
for the Primary Care Provider"
Mario F. Perez MD, MPH, ATSF

3:00 p.m. Break – Exhibit Hall

3:30 p.m. "Eating Disorders: More
than Meets the Eye"
Kristina Sowar, MD

4:30 p.m. "Thriving Together: Aligning
Work, Values, and Well-being"
Jen Brull, MD, AAFP Past Board President
& Honored Guest

5:30 p.m. At Leisure

6 - 8 p.m. Welcome Reception Plated
Dinner and Town Hall with Jen Brull, MD,
AAFP Past Board President & Honored
Guest; Announcement of the NMAFP
Candidates for Office 2026-2027 - Exhibit
Hall

Friday, August 7, 2026

8:00 a.m. Registration, Exhibits Open,
Breakfast - Exhibit Hall

9:00 a.m. "Updates in Dementia
Diagnosis and Treatments"
Ann Garcia, MD

10:00 a.m. "Practice of Medicine
in a New Era in New Mexico: Systems
Approach to Accessing Guidelines,
Practice, Access, Coverage, Leadership
and Engagement"
Dion Gallant, MD

11:00 a.m. "Medicine for New Mexico:
Primary Care Advocacy"
Representative Marianna Anaya

12:00 p.m. Lunch – Exhibit Hall

1:00 p.m. "Identification and
Treatment of Alcohol Use Disorder"
Valerie Carrejo, MD

2:00 p.m. "Pain Management &
Opioids: A Patient Centered Approach"
Carol Havens, MD

3:00 p.m. Break – Exhibit Hall

3:30 p.m. "Maintaining Passion as a
Family Physician"
Leslie Hayes, MD

4:30 p.m. "Pediatric Otolaryngology
Pearls for Primary Care Providers"
Karen Hawley, MD

5:30 p.m. At Leisure

6 - 10 p.m. Awards Plated Dinner &
Dance with Jen Brull, MD, AAFP Past
Board President & Honored Guest;
Induction of NMAFP 2026-2027 Officers,
Entertainment by DJ Pete - Exhibit Hall

Saturday, August 8, 2026

8:00 a.m. Registration
Breakfast - Exhibit Hall

9:00 a.m. "Healing Across Worlds:
Traditional Navajo Medicine in Modern Care"
Jaron Kee, MD

10:00 a.m. "Cancer Survivorship for
Primary Care"
Amy Gundelach, RN, MSN, AG-CNS-BC,
OCN; Monique Montes de Oca, MSW, LCSW;
Harmony Bowles, PharmD, BCOP; Kelly
Dunn, RDN, CSO, CNSC, LD; Gilbert Heredia,
MD; and Laura McGough, Ph.D.

11:00 a.m. "Recent Hot Topics in the
Literature"
Daniel Waldman, MD

12:00 p.m. Lunch – Exhibit Hall

1:00 p.m. "CGM in Primary Care: From
Data to Decisions"
Eden Miller DO, D-ACD, D-ABOM

2:00 p.m. "Cryosurgery Tips, Techniques
and Hands on Workshop for Your Clinical
Practice"
Daniel Stulberg, MD and Sarah Friedberg, MD

3:00 p.m. Break – Exhibit Hall

3:30 p.m. "Caring for Families Affected
by Substance Use"
F. Sevy Gurule, MD

4:30 p.m. "Integrating Substance Use
Disorder (SUD) Treatment into your
Practice: Tips & Best Practices"
Valerie Carrejo, MD

5:30 pm End of Continuing Medical
Education Presentations, Free Raffle

Sunday, August 9, 2026

8:30 a.m. BOD Meeting

10:30 a.m. Scientific Advisory
Committee Meeting

68th Annual NMAFP Family Medicine Seminar Registration Form

Online registration available at www.familydoctormn.org/summer-seminar

Please Print Clearly

Questions? Email or call Sam: info@nmafp.org, (505) 292-3113

Name _____

Designation ☐ MD ☐ DO ☐ PhD ☐ NP ☐ PA ☐ RN ☐ PharmD

AAFP ID# _____

Address _____

C/S/Z _____

Phone _____

Email _____

	Before July 9	After July 9
☐ AAFP Member Practicing Physician	\$925	\$975
☐ Non-Member Practicing Physician	\$1100	\$1150
☐ PhD	\$925	\$975
☐ NP/PA/RN/PharmD	\$750	\$800
☐ Retired Physician	\$725	\$775
☐ Family Medicine Resident	Free (\$25 refundable deposit)	
☐ Medical Student	Free (\$25 refundable deposit)	
☐ Yes, I want to sponsor a resident or student	\$75	

Register before July 9, 2025 to receive an early bird discount!

You must use the coupon code **TAMAYA26EB** during checkout to get the discount.

Scan to Register



MEAL INFORMATION

Tamaya Resort and Spa brings a refined approach to food and beverage with a philosophy rooted in healthy people, healthy planet, and healthy communities. "Food. Thoughtfully Sourced. Carefully Served." reflects the care and intention behind every menu.

Registered attendees will enjoy buffet style breakfasts on Friday and Saturday, buffet style lunches each day, and afternoon breaks with a snack. Thursday and Friday evenings feature a three course plated dinner and programming that highlight the strength of our community.

Thursday's Welcome Reception Dinner and Town Hall kick starts the seminar. Enjoy time with colleagues as you hear updates from our chapter leadership, meet our candidates for office, and take part in a structured town hall for meaningful conversations.

Friday's Awards Dinner and Dance is an evening of celebration. Watch our 2026-2027 officers be inducted and honor this year's award recipients, including the Physician of the Year. End the night on the dance floor with entertainment with DJ Pete from Ruidoso.

Your conference registration includes free meals for yourself. Select the meals you will join us for to help decrease food waste.

THURSDAY: ☐ Lunch ☐ Break ☐ Dinner
FRIDAY: ☐ Breakfast ☐ Lunch ☐ Break ☐ Dinner
SATURDAY: ☐ Breakfast ☐ Lunch ☐ Break

Dinners are a three course plated meal. Please select your meal choice if you are joining for dinner.

Thursday Dinner Selections

- ☐ Sel de Soleil Dusted Chicken Breast, Green Peppercorn Demi Glace, Basil-Artichoke Smashed Potatoes
☐ Eggplant Cutlet, refried black beans, cabbage slaw, heirloom tomato, cilantro vinaigrette (vegan and gluten free)

Friday Dinner Selections

- ☐ Grilled sirloin steak, brown butter mushrooms, chipotle potatoes au gratin
☐ Herb roasted salmon filet, fennel and roasted tomato cream, parmesan orzo
☐ Tofu steak marsala, mushrooms, shallots, marsala sauce with brown rice and seasonal vegetables (vegan and gluten free)

We hope you and your family will join us at the dinners. Your ticket is free. Do you need to purchase any extra tickets for family or friends? If so, how many? (Please note children 5 and under are free.)

_____ Thursday Plated Dinner - \$50

_____ Friday Plated Dinner - \$50

_____ Thursday Child Dinner - Free

_____ Friday Child Dinner - Free

Guest #1 Meal ☐ Chicken ☐ Vegetarian
Guest #2 Meal ☐ Chicken ☐ Vegetarian
Guest #3 Meal ☐ Chicken ☐ Vegetarian
Guest #4 Meal ☐ Chicken ☐ Vegetarian

Guest #1 Meal ☐ Steak ☐ Salmon ☐ Vegetarian
Guest #2 Meal ☐ Steak ☐ Salmon ☐ Vegetarian
Guest #3 Meal ☐ Steak ☐ Salmon ☐ Vegetarian
Guest #4 Meal ☐ Steak ☐ Salmon ☐ Vegetarian

May we share your name, city, and state with our exhibitors and sponsors? Exhibitors help make this seminar possible. Only your name and city and state will be shared. No contact information will be provided. ☐ Yes ☐ No

_____ Total from above Want to pay with a credit card? Register online at www.familydoctormn.org/summer-seminar
Or mail form and check to: Educational Fund of NM Academy of Family Physicians, PO Box 6098, Albuquerque, NM 87197

HOTEL INFORMATION

Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa sits on the Santa Ana Pueblo between Albuquerque and Santa Fe, surrounded by open sky, cottonwood trees, and views of the Sandia Mountains. The resort offers a quiet setting with easy access to walking trails, outdoor pools, golf and horseback riding. You can explore Pueblo culture at the onsite Cultural Center and relax at the Tamaya Mist Spa. The property provides a comfortable and welcoming base for you and your family with spacious rooms, private patios or balconies and amenities throughout.

Tamaya is located at 1300 Tuyuna Trail, Santa Ana Pueblo, NM 87004. A temporary discounted nightly rate of \$259, \$10 resort fee, and free parking has been arranged until July 9, 2026. After this date, rooms will be on a space-available basis.

Make a reservation by calling (505) 867-1234 or 877-803-7534 or scan the QR code.





The Roadrunner

is published quarterly by the New Mexico Chapter for the purposes of informing members and those interested in Chapter activities.

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Molly McClain, MD, MPH, Editor
Samantha Morris, Executive Director

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Government Affairs Committee Update

By Steve Lucero

Your Government Affairs Committee remains committed to advancing policies that support family physicians and improve healthcare outcomes across New Mexico. During the interim we actively meet with legislators and key stakeholders in preparation for the 2027 Legislative Session. These ongoing discussions are helping to strengthen relationships and identify priorities that will shape the Academy's healthcare policy efforts in the years ahead. As the committee builds momentum, Dr. Kristy Riniker and Dr. Rebekah McCann are growing into their leadership roles as incoming Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, of the Government Affairs Committee, bringing energy and a strong Family Medicine voice to healthcare policy conversations under the mentorship of current chair, Dr. Rick Madden.

The Academy also extends a warm welcome to Edward Tabet-Cubero, Lobbyist for the NMAFP, who has already begun making meaningful contributions to the organization's legislative efforts alongside retiring lobbyist Steve Lucero. Through his early work establishing new relationships with policymakers and leg-

islators, Edward is helping to expand the Academy's presence and influence at the state level. He is setting up coffees with family physicians and their legislators to establish relationships during the interim. Please email info@nmafp.org to schedule yours.

The AAFP Nationally and the NMAFP locally have been working diligently to ensure evidence based vaccine information and access. The AAFP 2026-27 Vaccine Schedule, supported by ACP and IDSA was released in March. The AAFP Vaccine Evidence Review Council is working with the AAP Committee on Infectious Diseases, Summit Adult Vaccination Recommendation Review and Vaccine Integrity Project in collaboration with the AAP, ACOG, AMA and IDSA to prepare for the 2026-27 respiratory season. HB 156 was signed this legislative session which allows NM DOH to provide payment for immunizations as recommended by professional organizations such as the AAFP and AAP, not limited to ACIP and the CDC.

We recognize that administrative burden is a factor in physician wellness and takes away from the time we spend with our patients, and we are proud that SB 20 was passed which states that after insurance approves a prior authorization for a chronic maintenance drug, a renewal prior authorization is not required more

than once every three years. The bill also states prior authorizations shall be granted for prescription drug determinations not made within three business days and coverage for a medication approved by the FDA for treatment of an autoimmune disorder, cancer, rare disease, or serious mental illness or SUD may not be subject to prior authorization except in cases when a generic is available.

We have been working with the Primary Care Council, Department of Health, Health Care Authority, NM Primary Care Association, NM Primary Care Training Consortium, and HealthInno to ensure the voices of frontline family physicians are part of the decision making process for ensuring technological innovations and funding streams are utilized for the physician-patient relationship and patient care. Additionally, we are continuing work on a multitude of healthcare improvement issues with legislators.

There are many ways you can get involved, from meeting with your legislators to participating in our Doc of the Day Program to being a regional liaison to contacting us with priority concerns and more. Check out our website at www.familydoctornm.org/advocacy and join us for our next meeting at the Summer Conference on Saturday, August 8 during lunch. Email info@nmafp.org to RSVP.