



EMERGENCY



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

2025–2026 STATE AND FEDERAL ACCESS AGENDA

Core Principles & Priorities

Ensure access to high-quality care for all Pennsylvanians by:

- Growing, diversifying, and protecting the health care workforce.
- Supporting payments that sustain hospital care in communities.
- Protecting access to adequate health care coverage.
- Fostering a regulatory structure that supports modern care delivery.
- Addressing social needs that affect Pennsylvanians' health.

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Health Care Workforce

Patients' access to care depends on a robust health care workforce. Staffing shortages remain a top challenge across the entire health care sector, both statewide and nationally. Lack of staff in every care setting makes it increasingly difficult to move patients throughout the continuum and threatens access to care at every level. It is essential to prioritize policies that help hospitals attract and retain health care professionals essential for serving our communities.

Workforce Recruitment

Increase the number of health care educators and programs by using and incentivizing the existing workforce.

- Attract health care practitioners through loan repayment and grant opportunities in rural and underserved areas.
- Expand the number of students nursing education programs can serve by making targeted investments in existing, quality programs.
- Support flexibility to innovate and deploy local staffing models by preventing workforce mandates.
- Increase diversity of the health care workforce by expanding access to career pathways.
- Address provider shortages by increasing the number of J1 visas and residency slots.

Workforce Retention

- Support advanced and quality care delivery by allowing providers to practice at the top of their license.
- Promote wellness and burnout-mitigation programs through programming and funding.
- Allow technology to support flexibilities—such as remote patient monitoring and telehealth—that enable clinicians to focus on care, extend staff capacity, improve access to behavioral and maternal health, and decrease costs.
- Keep providers in Pennsylvania, support recruitment of maternal health practitioners, and protect access to care by improving the commonwealth's medical liability climate.
- Support childcare options for health care employees by ensuring access to funding and capital.

Workplace Safety

- Help hospitals operate safely for staff and patients and appropriately support our security professionals through state and federal regulatory relief.
- Expand federal protections for health care workers by passing the SAVE Act, which makes assaulting a health care worker a federal felony and funds safety initiatives.

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Stability

Hospitals—and the care they provide—are in jeopardy. More than half of Pennsylvania’s acute care hospitals operated at a loss last year, while another 15 percent posted margins below what is considered sustainable. Record inflation, rising drug prices, and surging staffing expenses have pushed the cost of delivering care well beyond payments from government and private insurers. It is essential to align payments with the actual cost of care and eliminate outdated regulatory requirements that have no bearing on patient safety.

Financial Stability

- Protect and enable investment in the health care infrastructure by aligning Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement with the cost of providing care and reducing administrative burdens.
- Invest in behavioral health access by ensuring reimbursement rates are sufficient to sustain the services, programs, providers, and facilities needed to avert and treat crisis.
- Protect community access to affordable and life-saving drugs through the 340B program.
- Establish a sustainable payment model for rural hospitals.
- Address payor practices that delay and limit access to care.

Regulatory Stability

- Support 21st century health care and embrace flexible care models and technology by updating Pennsylvania’s hospital regulations.
- Ensure a consistent regulatory and compliance environment by setting clear and concise expectations for hospitals in every region.

Health Improvement and Innovation

Communities nationwide are grappling with complex issues such as behavioral health access, the opioid crisis, geographic and racial health equity, and social needs that affect health. Pennsylvania can lead the way with bold initiatives that tackle these critical challenges statewide. It is essential to support policies that enable hospitals to innovate and address community health needs.

- Enable hospitals to streamline, modernize, and advance care delivery through innovative models.
- Bolster access to maternal health care statewide by increasing primary and postpartum care, providing community-based support, expanding home visiting programs, and diversifying the cadre of well-qualified professionals who provide maternal care.
- Address hospital capacity challenges through coordination between regulators and lawmakers.
- Address discharge barriers for behavioral health and the aging population by supporting policies that free up acute care facilities and get patients into appropriate care settings.
- Help keep patients healthy and out of the hospital by supporting policies to address social needs that affect health, including access to transportation options and EMS.

