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# BCMS LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

## Why be politically active?

Here is what physicians are saying:

- “If we do not work to manage medical legislation, it will be managed for us. Help save our profession.”
- “Policy-making is not a spectator sport. You cannot sit on the sidelines and say somebody else will do it. It doesn’t work that way. You’ve got to be involved and you’ve got to be interested.”
- “You either help govern or you’re governed.”
- “Physicians’ voices must be heard in order to shape proper health care policy.”
- “A physician’s responsibility is to seek changes in those requirements which are contrary to the best interest of the patient.”
- “Physicians can join TEXPAC and make their voices heard.”

Survey after survey shows that the number one reason physicians join the Bexar County Medical Society is to support organized medicine and have a strong political voice. In 2004, BCMS committed to greater participation in the legislative process by naming a director of public affairs, who, as a full-time registered lobbyist

represents the 4,000+ physician members of BCMS.

Working closely with Texas Medical Association, the BCMS public affairs director, the BCMS Alliance (the physician’ spouse organization) and BCMS physician representatives routinely travel to Austin during legislative sessions to meet personally with elected officials. They also represent the Society on various councils and committees:

- Ad Hoc Committee on Medicaid
- Council on Legislation
- Council on Socioeconomics
- Border Health Caucus
- Ad Hoc Committee on Managed Care/Insurance

In addition to participation in state-level activities, physician and Alliance volunteers can take part in the BCMS Legislative and Socioeconomics Committee. The Committee develops, contests, monitors and implements legislative policy pertaining to the practice of medicine at the local, state and federal levels. The Committee also studies, recommends, monitors and engages in activities related to the socioeconomic aspects of medical care, regulations and managed care issues.

The Society as a whole emphasizes critical practice management/legislative issues as a primary area of focus:

- Managed care plans
- Medicare
- Medicaid
- Patient and physician advocacy on state- and federal legislative issues and regulatory affairs
- Reimbursement issues
- Protecting physician and patient rights
- Professional liability reforms
- Paperwork and red tape

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION, CALL  
(210) 301-4395**

6243 West IH-10, Suite 600  
San Antonio, TX 78201  
(210) 301-4395  
Fax (210) 301-2150  
www.bcms.org

