



NORTHERN OHIO PHYSICIAN

The Voice of Physicians in Northern Ohio

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AMCNO Rolls into Some Fun at Physician Appreciation Night

On Friday March 28th the AMCNO held its annual Physician Appreciation Night at Pinstripes in Beachwood. Physician Appreciation Night, held this year in March in conjunction with National Doctors' Day, is a chance for us to reflect on the year's accomplishments and celebrate the membership. Additionally, we continued our long-standing tradition of presenting annual awards to recognize the significant contributions of physicians and allied professionals in the field of medicine.



Left to right: Colleen Jost, Ann Bacevice, MD, Marie Schaefer, MD, Daniel Napierkowski, MD, and Vanessa Maier, MD

AMCNO Rolls into Some Fun at Physician Appreciation Night

(Continued from page 1)

The first award winner was Dr. Daniel Napierkowski, President of Cleveland Clinic Marymount Hospital, who won the John H. Budd Distinguished Membership Award. This award is given to a physician for their contributions to leading-edge research, exemplary leadership skills, and preserving the professional integrity of practice of medicine. It is the highest honor bestowed by the Academy of Medicine. Dr. Napierkowski was selected in recognition of his steadfast leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. His staff physicians took comfort in his open and constant communication with them during that difficult time.

The second award was Dr. Roopa Thakur, who won the Charles L. Hudson Distinguished Service Award. This award is given to an AMCNO member who has provided a steadfast commitment to the organization and its members and has made noteworthy contributions to the physician community and has held positions of leadership within organized medicine. Dr. Thakur is a board member for the AMCNO as well as the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). She has been a key leader on the issues of lead poisoning prevention and gun safety, and helped form our partnership with Ohio AAP on the Store it Safe gun storage program.

The third award winner was Dr. Vanessa Maier who won the Myra King Merrick, MD Women in Medicine Award. This award is given to a female physician who has made a significant contribution to the medical community and has helped advance the work of women in medicine. This year's winner was Dr. Vanessa Maier. Dr. Maier was nominated in recognition of her role as co-director of the Advocacy and Public Health pathway at Case Western Reserve University's School of Medicine, where students explore the complex role of the physician and the medical profession in the social, legal, economic and political systems that affect the health of populations. Dr. Maier is passionate about the intersection of clinical medicine and public health, promoting collaboration between health and educational systems and expanding access to school-based health centers.





The fourth award winner was Dr. Ann Bacevice who won the Clinician of the Year Award. The Clinician of the Year award is awarded to a physician who exhibits longstanding loyalty and service to one's patients, a devotion to overall well-being of the community, and is highly respected among their peers for outstanding clinical work, and demonstrating an astute, caring, and practical approach to the practice of medicine. Dr. Bacevice is a member of the AMCNO's Northeast Ohio Gun Safety Coalition. An emergency medicine physician, she was overwhelmed by the number of children she saw impacted by gun violence in our community. She decided to do something about it and sought out grant funding to host gun lock giveaway days around her hospital's campus and surrounding community. She also works with her colleagues to train them on how to have productive conversations about gun safety with patients. Her work in this needed space is an inspiration to all.



The final award winner was Colleen Jost, who won the Honorary Membership award. The Honorary Membership award is awarded to a non-physician member of the community who has made significant contributions to the health care profession and/or the health of the community. In her time at the AMCNO as Manager of Special Projects, Colleen exhaustively went through the archives of the AMCNO, first finding them at area institutions, and then dedicating herself to research. She read every edition of the Northern Ohio Physician, formerly the Cleveland Medical Journal, from 1903 to present, and documented key moments in our history, helping us to build our first ever historical timeline. Her work allowed us to create our museum exhibit on 200 Years of Medicine in Cleveland at the Cleveland History Center in conjunction with our Bicentennial year and gala.



Thank you to all the AMCNO members who were able to join us for a fun evening of networking, bowling, and celebrating these physician leaders.



Thank you to all of our members who attended AMCNO's 2025 Physician Appreciation Night!



MEDICINE & LAW LOWER HOUR

Join us for cocktails and conversation featuring a panel discussion on Essential Updates on Navigating Immigration Law
May, 22, 2025

5:30-6:00 NETWORKING
6:00-7:00 PRESENTATION
7:00-7:30 NETWORKING

MODERATOR



Dr. Kristin A. Englund
Past President,
Academy of Medicine of
Cleveland & Northern
Ohio

PANALIST



Michelle Block
Associate General Counsel
Director of Litigation &
Clinical Risk,
The MetroHealth System

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Stacy E. Cozart Martin
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**Kathleen Laskey
Donovan**
Senior Attorney, Legal
Aid Society of Cleveland

**Free
Registration Is
Now Available**

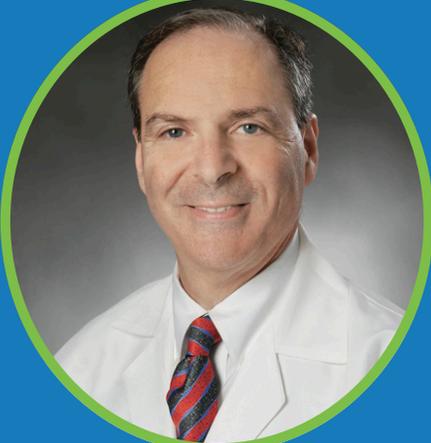


In-Person at the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association
1375 East 9th Street, Floor #2 Cleveland, OH 44114



Health Care Law
A Section of the Cleveland
Metropolitan Bar Association

President's Corner by Eric J. B. Shapiro, MD

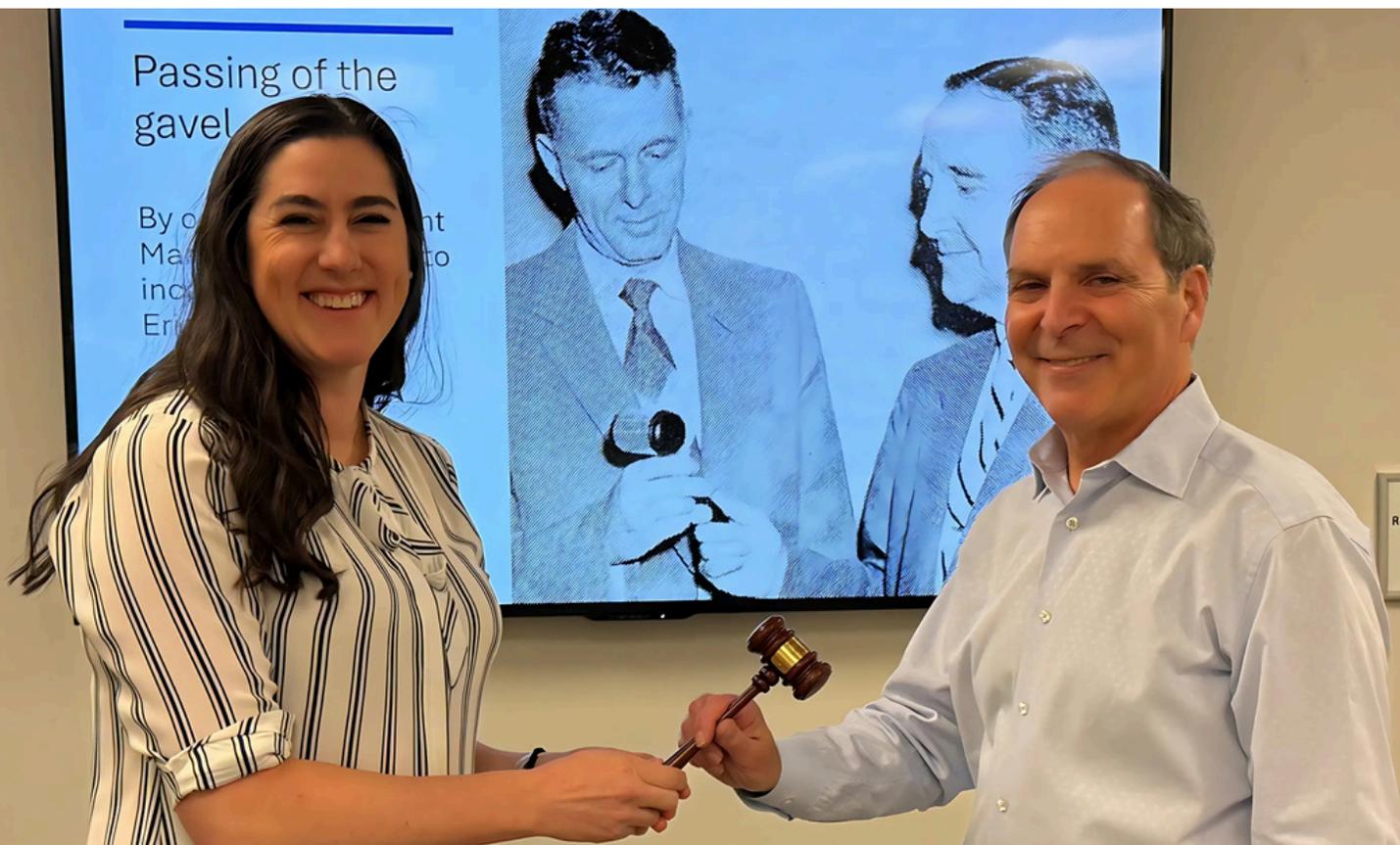


Eric J. B. Shapiro

AMCNO President

After growing up in Cleveland Heights (a quiet place now made famous by the Kelce brothers) I attended the University of Michigan where I majored in English literature. Having realized later than most that I'd someday have to earn a living, in my last few semesters I raced through the prerequisites for medical school. Medicine appealed to me as a way to combine my interests in science and the humanities while allowing me a degree of independence and, fortunately, all that has made for a rewarding career.

After medical school at CWRU I completed residency and fellowship at University Hospitals and have practiced gastroenterology on the east side of Cleveland for 35 years now. My relationships with patients and colleagues have proved deeply rewarding. Looking back the sense that I have been able to contribute in this way provides me with much satisfaction.

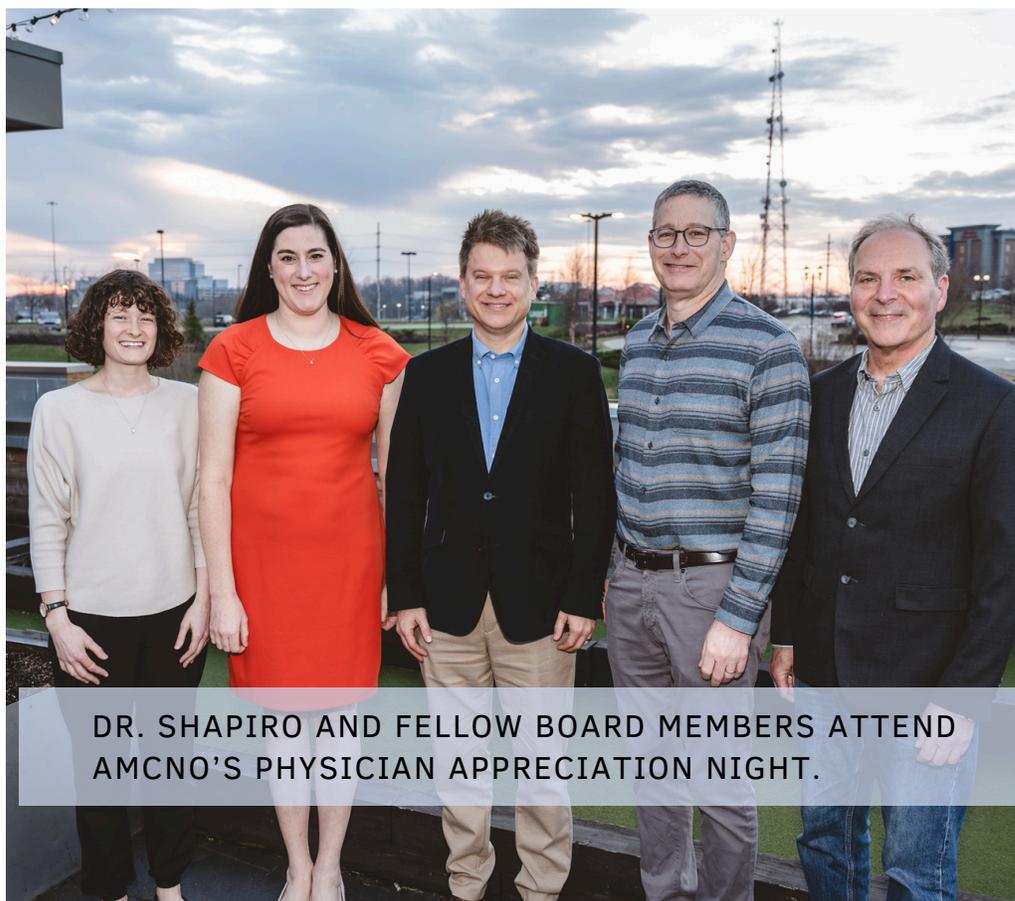


It is a long-standing tradition of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO) for the outgoing President to formally pass the gavel to the incoming President. On April 15, 2025, during the final AMCNO Board of Directors meeting, Dr. Marie Schaefer proudly carried out this tradition by officially transferring the gavel to Dr. Shapiro.

During this time, I've gotten to see my children grow up, launch their own careers and families, and along the way enjoy hiking, skiing, SCUBA diving, reading and dabbling in chess.

The practice of medicine keeps finding new challenges with the constant evolution of societal expectations, hospital systems, insurance models, government changes and the inherent geometrical growth in scientific complexity.

I would like the AMCNO to develop its capacity to represent the interests and needs of physicians in this sometime collaboration and sometime competition for opportunity and resources. We need to hear from and represent more voices so that we can provide our perspective as those in the front lines, uniquely situated to work for better health care for our patients and more sustainable careers for ourselves. As individuals our impact has diminished relative to the growth of the greater world of health care. The AMCNO offers a way to bring the greater force of our organized values into the negotiations that affect us all.



DR. SHAPIRO AND FELLOW BOARD MEMBERS ATTEND AMCNO'S PHYSICIAN APPRECIATION NIGHT.



DR. SHAPIRO MENTORS MEDICAL STUDENTS.



DR. SHAPIRO MODERATES AMCNO'S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS LOWER HOUR.



DR. SHAPIRO PACKS BOXES AT AMCNO'S VOLUNTEER NIGHT AT THE FOOD BANK.

AMCNO VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Food Bank - June 11, 6:00 PM-8:00 PM

MedWish - July 24, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.



Email us today to register for these exciting volunteer opportunities.

vyanoska@amcno.org



Meet the New AMCNO Board Members



John Das, MD
Family Medicine

Dr. John Das is a resident physician at Western Reserve Hospital, where he practices Family Medicine. He is a clinical faculty member at the Northeast Ohio Medical University. In July 2025, he will complete a Sleep Medicine fellowship at Case Western Reserve University/University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center, for which he was selected. He is passionate about providing patients with access to healthcare, in addition to emphasizing the importance of preventative medicine. Training the next generation of physicians is a commitment to which Dr. Das is dedicated; to this end, he serves as physician mentor to medical students at Case Western Reserve University and the Northeast Ohio Medical University. Beyond his medical career, Dr. Das has been dedicated to service in his workplace, community, church, and country. Dr. Das serves as a captain in the US Air Force Reserve. He was invested as a knight of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in 2017 and was awarded the Grand Cross with Collar of the Order of Saint Michael of the Wing in 2023. Additionally, he was bestowed the title of Kentucky Colonel by Governor Andy Beshear in 2023.



Sladjana Courson, DO
Pediatrics

Dr. Sladjana Courson is a pediatrician and associate program director, ambulatory medicine at Akron Children's. She's been practicing since 2000. She earned her medical degree from Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine in Athens, Ohio and completed a residency in pediatrics at Akron Children's. Dr. Courson is certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, as well as a member of the Academic Pediatrics Association. She's also a clinical associate professor of pediatrics at Northeast Ohio Medical University and an adjunct clinical assistant professor of pediatrics at Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine. Professionally, she says busy volunteering on the Clinical Management Committee, the Pediatric Residency Education Committee and the MOC Portfolio Committee. In her free time she has enjoyed being on the board of directors and coaching for Girls on the Run of East Central Ohio.



Olivia Safady, MD
Family Medicine

Olivia Safady, MD is a resident physician in Family Medicine at Summa Health Akron City Hospital. She earned her Doctor of Medicine from Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED), where she was part of the Urban Primary Care Pathway. Prior to medical school, she completed a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Health Sciences with a minor in Chemistry from Cleveland State University, along with an Urban Health Certificate. Dr. Safady's passion for urban health and health equity has guided her educational and professional journey. She has served as a Student Trustee on NEOMED's Board of Trustees and was actively involved in multiple student organizations, including the American Medical Women's Association and the AMCNO Future Leaders Council. Throughout her training, Dr. Safady aims to address social determinants of health through advocacy, mentoring, and community service. She has participated in longitudinal care with underserved patients, contributed to public health policy efforts, and mentored aspiring students in STEM and healthcare.

5 Questions with AMCNO Past and OSMA Current President, Dr. John Bastulli

John Bastulli, MD, FASA, is a distinguished anesthesiologist based in Northeast Ohio and is past-president of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland Northern Ohio. He graduated from the Northeast Ohio Medical University in 1983. Dr. Bastulli completed his residency at the University Hospitals of Cleveland and a critical care fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Bastulli is the recipient of many awards in recognition of his outstanding leadership and advocacy on behalf of the practice of medicine and has also earned over a dozen certificates in healthcare management. Dr. Bastulli was the president of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland Northern Ohio in 1998 and has actively participated in various board and committee roles since then. On April 5, 2025, he commenced his term as the president of the Ohio State Medical Association, marking a significant milestone as the first physician from Northeast Ohio in many years and the first anesthesiologist to assume this prestigious position. Dr. Bastulli is guided by his mission to advocate on behalf of the practice of Medicine and to ensure all physicians can provide their patients with reliable access to high quality, physician-led, cost-effective healthcare services.



The AMCNO spoke with Dr. Bastulli ahead of his term to hear more about what organized medicine means to him. *This interview has been edited for length and clarity.*

AMCNO: Let's start with your story, what drew you to medicine, and what do you like about your practice of anesthesiology and medicine?

Dr. Bastulli: My inspiration to pursue a career in medicine stemmed from the role models in my life, particularly my parents. During my childhood, when I needed to go see our pediatrician, I was captivated by their ability to provide compassionate care and support. In high school, I had the opportunity to shadow several physicians, which further ignited my interest in the medical field. My parents were instrumental in this journey, encouraging me to follow my passion for medicine, which they regarded as a noble profession dedicated to addressing the holistic needs of individuals—mind, body, and soul. Their unwavering support motivated me to pursue this path. Upon entering college, I encountered a diverse group of individuals, including medical students, which deepened my commitment to the field. Most importantly, my inspiration has come from my wife Lorene, and my faith.

AMCNO: What drew you to doing advocacy work? You've been involved with the Academy for a long time, and with the OSMA. What was the inspiration there?

Dr. Bastulli: My involvement in organized medicine commenced in 1991 when I was elected to the Board of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland. Subsequently, in 1998, I assumed the role of president of the Academy, becoming the youngest physician to hold this position. During my tenure at the Academy, we were deeply engaged in advocacy efforts. Following my presidency, I took on the role as the Academy's first vice president of Legislative Affairs, and was instrumental in the establishment of our legislative committee and governmental affairs initiatives.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

One significant challenge we encountered during that period was the malpractice insurance crisis of the mid to late 1990s. Many physicians were retiring from practice or leaving the state entirely, while others, including hospitals, were compelled to reduce the level of services they provided due to the exorbitant malpractice premiums, particularly in Northeast Ohio and Cuyahoga County. To address this crisis, we formed a highly effective partnership with the Ohio State Medical Association and achieved our goal of passing legislation to enact tort reform that imposed caps on damages. We were also instrumental in electing judges to the Ohio Supreme Court who would uphold these reforms. These major accomplishments resulted in the stabilization and availability of professional liability insurance. Since then, we have been very effective in fending off all challenges to the above initiatives.

AMCNO: As you're heading into your presidency at this statewide organization, how do you feel about the state of organized medicine now and what are some of your hopes for organized medicine in your term and beyond?

Dr. Bastulli: Organized medicine is currently facing numerous challenges. Physicians in medical practice encounter various pressures; however, I remain optimistic about the future of organized medicine for several reasons. At the Ohio State Medical Association and the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland Northern Ohio, we are fortunate to have a highly competent and dedicated staff that excels in supporting our physician members and leadership.

Furthermore, my optimism is bolstered by the active involvement of young physicians within both organizations. We are fortunate to have significant engagement from our medical students and residents, many of whom are enthusiastic about participating in leadership and advocating for the practice of medicine. Additionally, numerous young physicians in the early to mid-stages of their careers demonstrate a strong commitment to the field. I am confident our organizations are well-positioned for the future as these emerging leaders take on more prominent roles.

AMCNO: My understanding is that you're the first OSMA president from Northeast Ohio in a long time. Does that mean anything to you?

Dr. Bastulli: I am very proud of my involvement in organized medicine, dating back to 1991. It is a significant honor for me to be elected as the president of the Ohio State Medical Association, representing Northeast Ohio for the first time in many years. Furthermore, I am the first anesthesiologist to hold this position.

AMCNO: As we're talking about Northeast Ohio pride, can you share some of your favorites in our area?

Dr. Bastulli: My preferred pastime is playing golf. I am particularly proud of my association with the Academy of Medicine Education Foundation and its annual golf outing, which we established over 20 years ago in memory of Marissa Biddlestone, the daughter of former Executive Vice President Elayne Biddestone, who tragically passed away from cancer. Over the years, this event has proven to be a highly successful fundraiser, enabling us to support ongoing medical education activities and provide medical student scholarships. In addition to golf, I cherish spending time with my three grandchildren, who are nine, seven, and one year old. My wife Lorene and I enjoy traveling, and we always look forward to our family summer vacation on the beach in South Carolina. Additionally, we often escape to Naples, Florida for some relaxation, and enjoy dining out at our favorite restaurant, Michaelangelo's in Little Italy.

AMCNO: As someone who's held a lot of leadership positions, what advice would you give to somebody looking to get involved with boards or organized positions?

Dr. Bastulli: Become active and become an advocate. When I was elected to the board of the Academy in 1991, I thought, well, I'll spend two years on the board, and that will be just about it. Well, here I am. I was encouraged by those that went before me. I always say that I had the ability to stand on the shoulders of giants, both within the Academy, leaders in the Academy that were nationally recognized, as well as at the Ohio State Medical Association.

So, I would say, become an advocate and familiarize yourself with the items that are of interest to the practice of medicine. Like, what are the barriers to care? Well, we need the Medicare fix. We need to be certain that there's adequate funding for Medicaid. We must deal with regulations and legislation and, of course, insurance reforms. We hear it every day from our physicians about the barriers to care - prior authorization, down coding, retroactive denials. So, I'd say, become aware of the issues—and lead from your experience.



Congratulations to our 2025 Scholarship Recipients



Trevena Anton
Northeast Ohio
Medical University



Omer Ashruf
Northeast Ohio
Medical University



Devin Barzallo
Case Western Reserve
University School
of Medicine



Elizabeth Beran
Ohio University Heritage
College of Osteopathic
Medicine



Vissy Elad
Northeast Ohio
Medical University



Erica Fleming-Hall
Case Western Reserve
University School
of Medicine



Lauren Noftz
Ohio University Heritage
College of Osteopathic
Medicine



Diamanta Panford
Northeast Ohio
Medical University



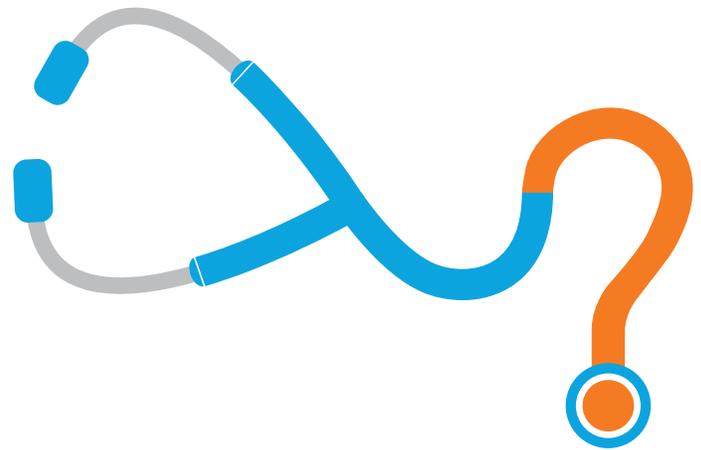
Megan Sharpe
Case Western Reserve
University School of
Medicine



Michaela Stamper
Northeast Ohio
Medical University

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SWING FOR STUDENTS TOPGOLF FUNDRAISER

August 21, 2025 - 6-9 pm

GOLD BAY SPONSOR \$5,000

- Logo recognition prominently displayed on: Slideshow in private event space, monitors in each bay, website event page, event e-mail blasts, social media posts, press releases sent to local media outlets, company name mentioned during event announcements.
- 2 golf bays (12 golfers and 4 spectators).
- All players in your group will enjoy: Fajita Fiesta Buffet, non-alcoholic beverages and 2 drink tickets for the bar.

SILVER BAY SPONSOR \$2,500

- Logo recognition prominently displayed on: Website event page, monitors in each bay, event e-mail blasts, social media posts, press releases sent to local media outlets, company name mentioned during event announcements.
- 1 golf bay (6 golfers and 2 spectators).
- All players in your group will enjoy: Fajita Fiesta Buffet, non-alcoholic beverages and 2 drink tickets for the bar.

BRONZE BAY SPONSOR \$1,000

- Logo recognition prominently displayed on monitors in each bay.
- 1 golf bay (6 golfers and 2 spectators).
- All players in your group will enjoy: Fajita Fiesta Buffet, non-alcoholic beverages and 2 drink tickets for the bar.

FOOD SPONSOR \$750

- Name/Logo recognition prominently displayed at the buffet table and on monitors in each bay.
- 1 golf bay (6 golfers and 2 spectators).
- All players in your group will enjoy: Fajita Fiesta Buffet, non-alcoholic beverages and 2 drink tickets for the bar.

BEVERAGE SPONSOR \$500

- Name/Logo recognition prominently displayed at the bar and on monitors in each bay.
- Naming rights on specialty event cocktail.
- 1 golf bay (6 golfers and 2 spectators).
- All players in your group will enjoy: Fajita Fiesta Buffet, non-alcoholic beverages and 2 drink tickets for the bar.

LEADERBOARD SPONSOR \$250

- Name/Logo recognition on monitors in each bay.
- Admission for 2 golfers which includes 3 hours of play.
- All players in your group will enjoy: Fajita Fiesta Buffet, non-alcoholic beverages and 2 drink tickets for the bar.

COUPLE \$150

- Admission for 2 golfers which includes 3 hours of play.
- All players in your group will enjoy: Fajita Fiesta Buffet, non-alcoholic beverages and 2 drink tickets for the bar.

INDIVIDUAL \$100 \$75- Resident Rate \$50- Med Student Rate

- Admission for 1 golfer which includes 3 hours of play.
- Includes: Fajita Fiesta Buffet, non-alcoholic beverages and 2 drink tickets for the bar.

SPECTATOR \$50

- Includes: Fajita Fiesta Buffet, non-alcoholic beverages and 2 drink tickets for the bar.

REGISTER NOW

Checks can also be mailed to:

AMEF

6111 Oak Tree Blvd. S., #150
Independence, OH 44131

All proceeds of the event will benefit the Academy of Medicine Education Foundation, a 501c3 tax-deductible organization which provides scholarships to area medical students.

Questions? Call (216) 520-1000

AMCNO to Work with OSMA on Historic Insurance Reform Bills

The Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA) has introduced a package of insurance reform bills in Columbus. The AMCNO will work closely with the OSMA to fight for passage of these important pieces of legislation, which were all enthusiastically endorsed by AMCNO's Legislative Committee.

Bill Number	Subject
House Bill 220 – Prior Authorization (Rep. Heidi Workman, R-Rootstown)	Strengthens existing prior authorization law by ensuring retroactive denials only occur in the event of non-covered benefits or lack of coverage, requiring identification of clinical peer in adverse determinations, prohibiting insurers from charging for appeals, and requiring insurers to account for dosage adjustments.
House Bill 219 – Network Adequacy (Rep. Kellie Deeter, R-Norwalk)	Would require the Ohio Department of Insurance to create network adequacy standards for commercial plans.
House Bill 214 – Prior Authorization “Gold Card” (Rep. Kevin Miller, R-Newark)	Would create a system that rewards healthcare providers who consistently receive a prior authorization approval rate for a specific service or treatment in a 12-month period by establishing a “gold card” exemption from prior authorization requirements.
Senate Bill 166– No Fees for EFTs (Sen. Nathan Manning, R-North Ridgeville)	Would prohibit insurers from imposing any charge, fee, or other payment requirement (including through withholding from payment), on any healthcare provider for electronic fund transfers or remittance advice transactions.
Senate Bill 165 – Automatic Downcoding (Sen. Susan Manchester, R-Waynesfield)	Contains prohibitions on downcoding, including prohibitions on limitations on reimbursement for time spent with patients. Would also strengthen Ohio’s prudent layperson standard in order to protect Ohioans from unexpected medical bills due to their insurer denying claims for emergency care after the care has been provided.
Senate Bill 164– Transparency in Health Plan Use of AI (Sen. Al Cutrona, R-Canfield)	Would require insurer transparency in their use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in prior authorization determinations, specifically by requiring insurers to disclose use of AI.
Senate Bill 162– Takebacks/Clawbacks (Sen. Bill Blessing, R-Colerain Twp.)	Would change Ohio’s current 24-month insurer takeback timeframe, decreasing it to the same timeframe given to a provider to submit a claim, and prohibit insurers from changing these timeframes during a contract period.
Senate Bill 160 – Non Medical Switching (Sen. Terry Johnson, R-McDermott, and Sen. Beth Liston, D-Dublin)	Would prohibit insurers from non-medical switching, or making mid-year drug formulary changes which force patients to undergo abrupt and unwarranted treatment changes.

AMCNO Future Leaders and Board Members Advocate in Columbus

With the 136th General Assembly now in full swing, AMCNO has been spending significant time in Columbus and in the district meeting with our legislators.

In February, Future Leaders Council members Shivani Agarwal and Umida Burkhanova attended the Ohio Suicide Prevention Fund's Advocacy Day, discussing with legislators what we can do to help address the youth mental health epidemic. The following day, AMCNO Board Member Dr. Lilian White joined AMCNO staff in meetings with NE Ohio legislators to discuss the work of the organization's Gun Safety Coalition.

In April, Future Leaders Council members Shivani Agarwal, Shamone Gore Panter and Pete Jordanides attended the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Advocacy Day to discuss the importance of childhood vaccinations, lead abatement funding, and the Store it Safe lethal means storage program. AMCNO Board Member Dr. Sladjana Courson of Akron Children's Hospital also attended.

AMCNO also discussed legislative priorities with legislators including HB 8, legislation which would require coverage for biomarker testing. See our testimony on HB 8 [here](#).



Left to right: Lilian White, MD, and Shavini Agarwal



Left to right: Umida Burkhanova, and Shavini Agarwal



Left to right: Pete Jordanides, Shamone Gore Panter, Ph.D, DO, Shavini Agarwal, and Sladjana Courson, DO



Left to right: Lilian White, MD, Shavini Agarwal, Jen Johns, Representatives Terrence Upchurch (D- Cleveland), Sean Brennan (D-Parma) and Darnell Brewer (D-Cleveland)



Left to right: Jen Johns, Senator Nathan Manning (R-Avon), Shivani Agarwal and Lilian White, MD.

Cleveland City Council Passes Smoke Shop Legislative Package

On April 14, Cleveland City Council passed the Smoke Shop legislative package creating a strong tobacco retail licensing program and establishing regulations on smoke shop locations.

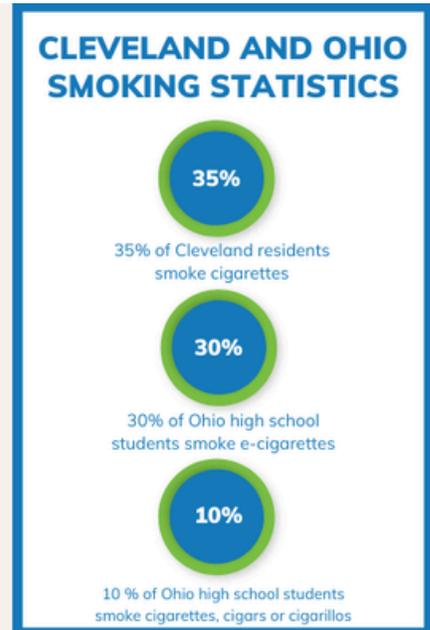
AMCNO is part of the Campaign to End Tobacco Targeting Cleveland, a coalition of community-based organizations and residents who pushed for passage of the legislation.

“We know that 90% of adult smokers begin while in their teens or earlier; two-thirds of them go on to become regular, daily smokers before they reach the age of 19. Currently, Ohio does not have a comprehensive compliance approach to enforce the minimum legal sales age of 21. Tobacco Retail Licensing (TRL) has become an essential tool to combat youth addiction and reduce illegal sales. Without a comprehensive statewide licensing requirement, it is up to local authorities to act. The creation of a comprehensive TRL in the city of Cleveland will undoubtedly protect youth,” said James Meerdink of the American Heart Association.

While this legislation is a step in the right direction, it does not address the flavored tobacco product and e-cigarette ban the coalition also supports. AMCNO will continue to work with its partners in the region to do all it can to stop youth from accessing these harmful products.

Tobacco use remains a serious public health concern in Ohio. According to the American Heart Association, nearly 19% of Ohio high schoolers report current e-cigarette use and over 22,000 Ohio youth try cigarettes for the first time each year.

Find more information about the Campaign to End Tobacco Targeting Cleveland at www.ClevelandEndsTargeting.org.



Statistics provided by:
Campaign to End Tobacco Targeting

NORTHERN OHIO PHYSICIAN

THE ACADEMY OF MEDICINE OF CLEVELAND & NORTHERN OHIO

6111 Oak Tree Blvd., Suite 150, Cleveland, OH 44131-2352
Phone: (216) 520-1000 • Fax: (216) 520-0999

Team: Jen Johns, Valerie Yanoska, Sam Zern

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Ms. Valerie Yanoska, 6111 Oak Tree Blvd., Suite 150, Cleveland, OH 44131-2352
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Start with your hospital: Dr. Poojajeet Khaira's safety advocacy began in her own workplace

Dr. Poojajeet Khaira is a third year psychiatry resident, American Psychiatric Association Leadership Fellow and Area IV Resident-Fellow Member Deputy Representative, Chair of the Resident-Fellow Member Committee and Social Media Committee at the Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association, and an alumna of the AMCNO Future Leaders Council – but before all that, she was an intern at a Northeast Ohio hospital.

“[My current work] really stemmed from being able to advocate for my peers at my hospital,” Dr. Khaira said.

When Dr. Khaira began her psychiatry residency, she and her resident colleagues worked to ensure there would be a designated resident space in their hospital and to better streamline the medicine and psychiatric integration in the setting. Through that work, she was able to gain confidence in her own knowledge and ability to advocate. So when her hospital saw an increase in patient violence against staff, Dr. Khaira was primed to speak out, and was appointed to the hospital's safety review committee.

“Safety is my biggest passion, safety in medical education,” Dr. Khaira said. “Because of my passions that started my hospital with concerns about safety, that kind of became my driving force with what I do in [the American Psychiatric Association].”

As part of her passion for safety, Dr. Khaira pushed the APA to consider resolutions on assessing safety curriculums across the country, pushing ACGME to add safety training to psychiatry residency requirements, and to create a resource document on safety. In February 2025, the resource document was approved and published by the APA, and is now [available online](#).

While some of the other initiatives are still moving through the specialty society, Dr. Khaira already worked to get an interdisciplinary safety training mandated at her hospital for staff. That training, she said, has helped residents, nurses, and other staff members feel more confident handling safety events collaboratively.

“If you don't have that basic safety, you can't do your job,” Dr. Khaira said. “If you don't feel safe on the unit, that does translate into how you treat your patients. So, it's necessary.”

She said her program recently started psychiatric morbidity and mortality conferences to help improve care and safety.

“My own residency is really trying to emphasize that it's also important to recognize good catches and where things could have gone wrong, but they didn't, and to recognize people who are catching them,” she said.

Dr. Khaira's work comes at a time when psychiatric medicine is under attack from high level politicians, including Health and Human Services Director Robert F. Kennedy Jr. The AMCNO previously spoke against the appointment of Kennedy, citing misinformation he has spread about vaccinations and psychiatric medications.

In her own practice, Dr. Khaira says she worries about stigma that hurts patients seeking care.

“I feel like there's already so many barriers to care and we're always fighting stigma,” Dr. Khaira said. “I have so many patients coming in and telling me their family doesn't believe in mental health, and that's why there's been all these delays in their care or that's why they never received care as a child. It saddens me a lot that government officials are saying this, because it just adds to the naysayers and the people who are already against this and adding to the stigma.”

Nonetheless, Dr. Khaira continues to advocate for the safety of providers and patients, through work in her hospital, her specialty societies, and in conversations with lawmakers

“I felt like I didn't know anything, I'm just an intern, but I quickly realized that the legislature knows a lot less,” she said. “We think that we don't have any power, we think why should we be speaking, maybe it's not like time for us, or we don't want to step on anyone's toes. But the thing is, we do have a lot of power, we do have experience and what would be wrong with sharing our own experiences?”



Informatics Impact: Dr. David Kaelber harnesses big data to improve patient experience, clinical outcomes

When Dr. David Kaelber was an internal medicine resident at MetroHealth in Cleveland in the early 2000s, Epic Systems, now the holder of 78 percent of patients' medical records in the United States, was a small company that MetroHealth had been on the early edge of adopting. As a med-peds trainee, Dr. Kaelber became familiar with the system, and began to wonder how he could combine his prior academic background in engineering with his medical training and the emergence of electronic health records.

During a 2 a.m. call shift, Dr. Kaelber said he spoke with a resident who told him about the burgeoning field of medical informatics, which Dr. Kaelber knew would be perfect for his interests.

"This is all before informatics was an official medical specialty," Dr. Kaelber said. "So I went to Boston for two years and did sort of an unaccredited program – because there were no accredited programs – in clinical informatics."

He sought out a fellowship that specialized in coming up with the value proposition for health information technology, which would help him develop the skills he wanted in order to show health systems that electronic health records are able to provide clinical value.

"Unfortunately, in medicine, they never really teach you about the business healthcare," he said. "So to be able to combine my clinical stuff with my technical stuff and now some business stuff, that seemed really cool."

Despite training in Boston, which he said was seen as the place to be for medical informatics at the time, Dr. Kaelber noticed that many of the health systems there and around the country were still using homegrown EHR systems.



"I understand you can do a lot more with homegrown electronic health records, but that, to me, that did not seem like where the puck was going," he said. "I was just fortunate that I wanted to go to a place with a commercial electronic health record and really get the electronic health record to work for everybody."

He interviewed back at MetroHealth, where they not only trusted him because he'd completed his residency in the program, but trusted his judgement on the future of commercial electronic health systems even more. They offered him a position as Chief Medical Impacts Officer right out of fellowship and tasked him with helping install Epic across inpatient and outpatient settings.

At MetroHealth, Dr. Kaelber has been able to realize much of his vision for informatics. His team now consists of more than 40 people, supports rotations for medical students, coordinates certificate programs with Case Western Reserve University, and combined across MetroHealth, University Hospitals, and the Cleveland Clinic, has the largest fellowship program in the country for clinical informatics.

In his career thus far, Dr. Kaelber has published more than 175 abstracts and manuscripts. As part of the team on so many publications, he credits the learners that he works with and the things they are doing with academic informatics.

"I've tried to help develop these tools give them to the community," Dr. Kaelber said. "A lot of what I'm doing is working with research teams where I'm helping to provide the tool and the expertise about the tool, but then they're bringing their clinical expertise, they're bringing their clinical questions, and it's like a chocolate peanut butter thing we're getting together."

As technology has become inseparable from health care, Dr. Kaelber's hope is that more physicians are able to learn how to make the electronic health records work for their practice of medicine. Like learning how to use a stethoscope or take a pulse, he says that understanding data as part of health is integral to medicine.

Ultimately, Dr. Kaelber's passion for big data is about scale. He still sees patients as a med-peds physician on Mondays, but spends the rest of the week working on informatics. That way, he's able to see in clinic how the electronic health records work he does is impacting patients, and work to improve all user experiences.

"I probably could individually see 30,000 patients in a career, or something like that," Dr. Kaelber said. "And then I think, with all the things I can do with the electronic health record –we just had our 400,000th patient sign up for MyChart -- so now I'm thinking in my technology operational role at Metro there, I'm helping hundreds of thousands of patients. I don't know all those patients, I haven't met all those patients, but I know that that's the impact."

AMCNO Future Leader Council Members Share Match Day Stores

On March 21st, over 43,000 medical students across the country matched into residency. Three of the AMCNO Future Leaders shared their Match Day experiences.



Eija Kent

Medical School
*Case Western Reserve University
School of Medicine*
Residency Program & Specialty
*Brown University Women & Infants
Hospital, OB/GYN*

Q: What was the most fun part of Match Day 2025?

A: Getting to open my envelope surrounded by all my family and friends!

Q: Any fun plans before residency starts?

A: I'm getting married and hopefully sneaking in a quick honeymoon!

Q: Favorite thing about the program and/or specialty you matched into?

A: I was really drawn to Brown's commitment to advocacy. As the only OB/GYN residency in the state of Rhode Island, the residents and attendings are heavily involved with legislation and frequently testify (the hospital is a ~10 minute drive from the state house). OB/GYN as a field is inherently advocacy oriented and I am very excited to continue my education under the guidance of some incredible mentors!



Michaela Stamper

Medical School
NEOMED
Residency Program & Specialty
Cleveland Clinic, Neurology

Q: What was the most fun part of Match Day 2025?

A: Successfully couples matching with my partner and celebrating with our families.

Q: Any fun plans before residency starts?

A: Vacationing in Spain and Portugal!

Q: Favorite thing about the program and/or specialty you matched into?

A: Neurology is so intellectually exciting, and I am excited to always be challenged. Also, the CCF program feels like a family to me - I rotated there and loved everything about it from the faculty to the residents to the program structure itself. I know it's a place where I can accomplish anything I set my mind to. Also, as someone who has worked a lot in the NEO community already, I am so excited to stay here and keep giving back this area that has done so much for me.



Asif Uddin

Medical School
NEOMED
Residency Program & Specialty
*MetroHealth/Case Western
Anesthesiology*

Q: What was the most fun part of Match Day 2025?

A: Opening my envelope surrounded by my family and realizing I'd be staying right here at home in Cleveland. It was such a full-circle moment—celebrating with the people who've supported me from day one, knowing I'll be giving back to the community that raised me.

Q: Any fun plans before residency starts?

A: I'm traveling to Europe for the first time—excited to explore a few new cities, try some great food, and just enjoy the time off before residency starts.

Q: Favorite thing about the program and/or specialty you matched into?

A: As someone who was born and raised in Greater Cleveland, it means a lot to be training at MetroHealth—an institution that plays such a vital role in our region. I'm passionate about serving the people of Northeast Ohio, especially those who rely on us most. Anesthesiology gives me the chance to be there for patients in some of their most vulnerable moments, and I'm honored to grow into that responsibility right here at home.



AMCNO
6111 Oak Tree Blvd. South
Ste. 150
Cleveland, OH 44131-0999

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

AMCNO Staff delivered care packages to AMCNO Members on Doctors' Day!



Stay connected to learn about upcoming events, current advocacy initiatives, and latest news.

