



The Power of Political Action

WYOPAC advocates for the interests of physicians and patients at the state level

BY STEPHEN BROWN, MD, WYOPAC ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR



Election season is upon us and with that comes a lot of activity as Wyoming contemplates candidates for office and weighs important issues to the future of our state. The Wyoming Medical Political Action Committee (WYOPAC) is responsible for the Wyoming Medical Society's political fundraising and candidate support. WYOPAC invites contributions from WMS members and disburses funds to candidates based on their positions on healthcare-related issues.

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If you practice medicine in Wyoming, you can't afford not to be politically engaged. The Wyoming Legislature continues to debate laws that would jeopardize physician autonomy, patient safety, and the ability for Wyoming patients to access healthcare. As Wyoming physicians, we must maintain our political vigilance.

Contributing to WYOPAC will help protect your practice by enabling physician advocates to monitor all legislative races in which prevailing candidates could impact Wyoming physicians and our practice. WYOPAC works to elect physician-friendly candidates at the state level. By physician-friendly, we mean the best candidate for the job regardless of political party. And by work, we mean contribute, raise funds, advise on campaign materials and more. If it needs to be done, our WYOPAC stands ready to help and do it. WYOPAC facilitates relationships between our physician members and elected officials. These relationships are invaluable to the WMS' lobby efforts.

Insurance companies, trial lawyers, and healthcare professionals seeking to expand their scope of practice into what has traditionally been the practice of medicine all know

the power of political action. They have put their money where their mouth is and made headway because of it.

WYOPAC is dedicated to creating a legislative environment that is open and fair when considering the interests of Wyoming physicians and our patients. Our WYOPAC members and WMS staff gather information, interview and support candidates, regardless of party, during the primary and general elections. WYOPAC members review input from physicians and other sources on candidates' backgrounds and their positions on medical issues. Candidates who receive WYOPAC support and funding are "friends of medicine" who have established voting records or positions supportive of WMS legislative issues.

Your help is needed. First, WYOPAC needs financial support to build the necessary reserves to fund our state's healthcare initiatives. When WMS lobbyists engage on tough issues, they're up against well-funded special interest groups who understand the power of political action. Second, it's vital that our membership is engaged with state politics. When our physician members take the time to get to know their local political candidates they are able to provide invaluable insight, feedback, and advice on how these candidates will impact issues that are the most important to the future of medicine in Wyoming. Third, please consider running for office yourself. Wyoming needs the unique expertise of physicians inside the debate on the floors of the Wyoming House and Senate. If you've ever even given running for office a little thought, reach out to me as your WYOPAC chairman or contact our WMS staff.

Your WYOPAC and Wyoming Medical Society dues are separate. WMS does not contribute to or endorse political campaigns. It's also important to remember that WYOPAC separated from the American Medical Political Action Committee (AMPAC) years ago so every dollar contributed to WYOPAC stays in Wyoming rather than a portion automatically going to the AMA to support federal efforts.

To learn more about WYOPAC, become a member, or view the election guide, visit wyomed.org/advocacy/wyopac. 