

## When it Comes to Healthcare Policy, Elections Matter

With the first round of primaries behind us and Super Tuesday – the day 16 states hold their primaries – in the rear-view mirror, we are officially in election season. While the Presidential election is gaining most of the attention, there are elections up and down the ballot across the country that matter for healthcare practitioners, from U.S. Senators to Governors to state legislators and even local elected leaders. Nearly every elected official plays a pivotal role in shaping health policy, and those decisions directly influence health care providers and practices across all professions.

The 2024 elections could determine the future of patient access to care if policy makers make it harder to provide affordable medical malpractice insurance by raising the cost of medical malpractice judgements. Overturning hard-won medical liability reforms and limitations on non-economic damage awards will result in rising medical liability insurance costs, which in turn can drive up costs for care, making it harder for providers to stay in practice and leading to less access for some of our most vulnerable neighbors.

Another policy trend we see nationwide is efforts to increase how long a plaintiff has to file a lawsuit after an injury occurs, known as the statute of limitations. Longer exposure periods can result in a higher claim frequency and cost, in addition to the ongoing efforts to raise malpractice judgements. Many state legislatures are also seeking to greatly expand the pool of potential plaintiffs in wrongful death actions against practitioners which will result in significant increases in lawsuits and costs.



Beyond these policy issues, there are other implications that impact the overall ability to provide care outside of the medical liability realm. Reimbursement for publicly funded healthcare programs is influenced by elected officials. In many states, the reimbursement rates for the care doctors provide Medicare and Medicaid patients falls well short of the actual cost of care. Public health is another area where elected officials have influence. We only have to look back to the COVID pandemic to understand how the decisions of our elected leaders impacted the health of their communities.

The combination of these decisions, led by officials who will be voted in or out of office this year, will undoubtedly have an impact on increased liability exposure, geographic disparities in access, potential reduced quality of care, and an overall strain on the finances of our health care system.

Beyond state and federal candidates, elections at the local level are critical as these positions often are the first step for many elected officials who may ultimately pursue higher office. No matter what level of government, it is crucial that we actively participate in the election process, and that starts by knowing the candidates and their vision for healthcare.

Personal injury lawyers' associations have been incredibly successful over the years in recruiting their members or allies to run for elected office, creating a more challenging environment for doctors, dentists, advanced practice clinicians/providers, nurses, and other health care professionals to make decisions in the best interest of their patients. This is why it is imperative that we elect leaders who are committed to supporting medical liability reform and to safeguarding access to patient care.

We can help prevent dangerous legislative and regulatory actions from being enacted by elevating pro-healthcare candidates by voting, donating to their campaigns, and providing public endorsements. TDC Group will always engage in elections as part of the services we provide on behalf of our members, and the power of our membership can make an impact.

You can give to [DOCPAC](#), state and federal political action committees sponsored by TDC Group that supports candidates for elective public office that will advocate for and defend medical liability reforms in their respective states and in Congress. You can engage in your own community by taking action, getting to know your elected officials, and voting on election day.

Elections up and down the ballot matter, and we can help shape the policy landscape by supporting candidates who share our values of safeguarding patient access to care.

TDC Group is here to give you the support the healthcare community needs.

[Learn more about DOCPAC and how to get involved.](#)

