

# **Advocacy: Our Patients, Our Practices, and Our Specialty**

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**Immediate Past President**

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Clinical Professor

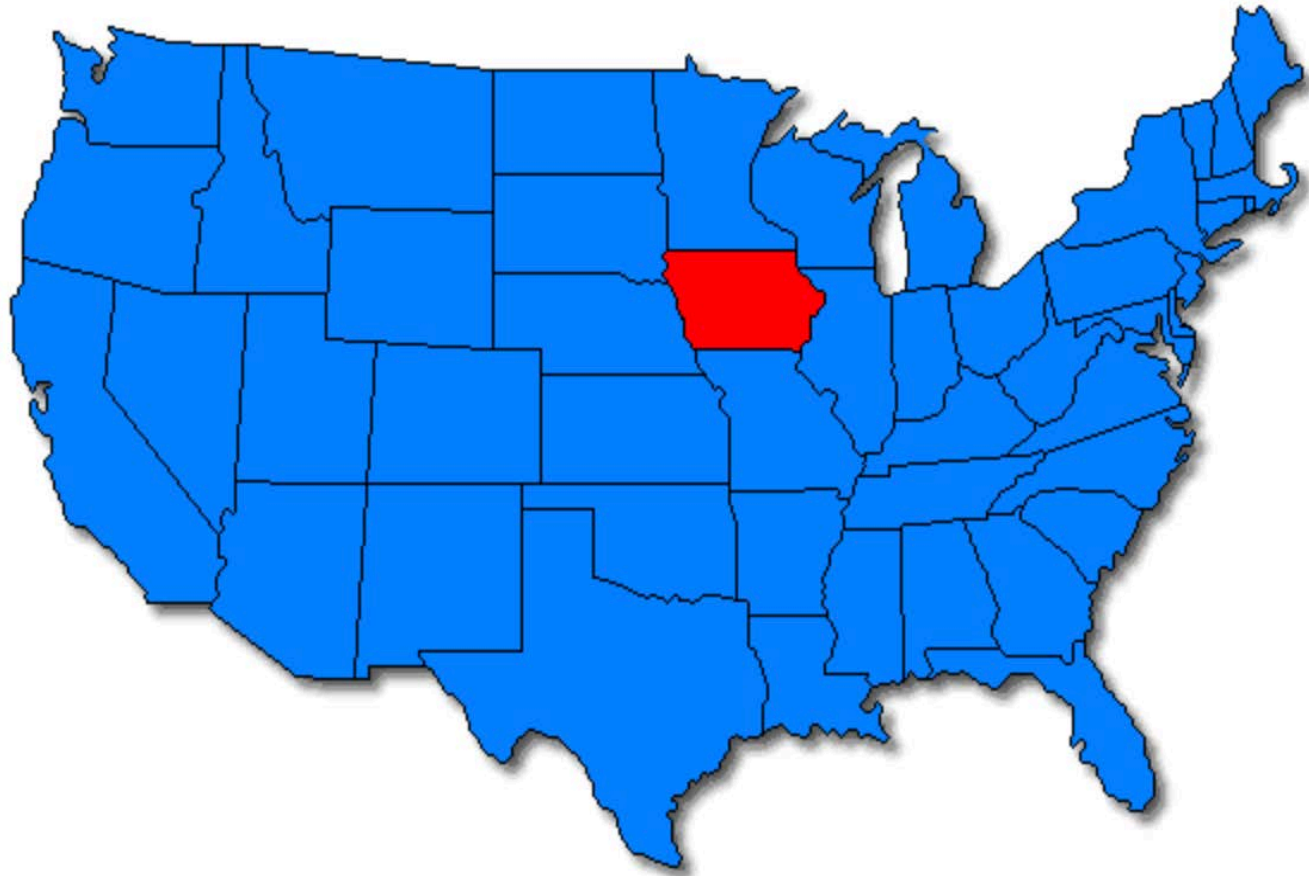
THE University of Iowa

Iowa City, Iowa

# Disclosures

- I have no disclosures

# Iowa





# Why must we be involved in advocacy?

- Policies made at the local, state, and federal levels influence the way we practice and the care our patients receive
- Policies are most often made by people not in clinical practice
- Health care policies often affected by competing interests unrelated to health and science (e.g., budgetary restrictions)

**It is the physician's responsibility to advocate for the patient in the legislative process.**

# Advocacy: Legislative Truths

## 1. Facts don't vote.

Lawmakers vote their own individual political calculus. Seldom are facts alone sufficient to get votes; political facts may be.

## 2. Communication is key.

Requires personal contact with key Members of Congress and staff from respected, active individuals back home.

## 3. The power of presence.

Public policy is made by those who bother to show up.

# Advocacy Wisdom

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.

Sir Edmund Burke

**New President**  
**New Congress**  
**New Challenges for Women's**  
**Health**



# How Do I Get Involved?

[www.acog.org/advocacy](http://www.acog.org/advocacy)

**My Presidential Initiative  
All In for Advocacy**

# **ACOG's Government Affairs**

## **[acog.org/Advocacy](http://acog.org/Advocacy)**

- **Learn about Issues**
- **How Your Member of Congress Voted**
- **Email Your Member of Congress**



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 Survey now open [GO ▶](#)

2016 ACOG Annual Meeting

New Due Date Calculator



**ACOG Meetings & Events**

- Annual Meeting
- Annual District Meetings
- Coding Workshops
- Postgraduate Courses
- CME Overview

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- Full Meeting Calendar

 **2016**  
 Annual Clinical and Scientific Meeting



**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN**

**Physician Guidelines & Reports**

**Practice Bulletins** [View All](#)

- Feb 2016: External Cephalic Version
- Jan 2016: Premature Rupture of Membranes

**Committee Opinions** [View All](#)

- Feb 2016: Optimizing Support for Breastfeeding as Part of Obstetric Practice
- Feb 2016: The Obstetric and Gynecologic Hospitalist

**Task Force Reports** [View All](#)

- Apr 2014: Neonatal Encephalopathy and Neurologic Outcome
- Apr 2014: Neonatal Brachial Plexus Palsy

**ACOG News**

▼ Announcements

- ACOG Statement on USPSTF Recommendations for Depression Screening
- Ob-Gyns Encourage Reproductive Life Planning
- Ob-Gyns Support Breastfeeding Decisions for All Mothers
- ACOG Reinvents the Pregnancy Wheel. Launches New Due Date App.
- ACOG Releases Interim Guidance on Care of Obstetric Patients During Zika Virus

**Green Journal**



Access the Green Journal, an official publication of ACOG: TOC and abstracts (open access) and articles (ACOG members).

## Advocacy

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### Medicaid to Medicare / Primary Care Pay Bump

States have an important role to play in improving women's access to primary care. Learn how to include ob-gyns in your state's Medicaid pay bump.

[Learn More](#)



### ACOG Legislative Priorities

At the beginning of each year ACOG's Government Relations Committee decides on ACOG's top legislative priorities. The Government Relations department updates this site with the latest information regarding these issues.

[Learn More](#)



### Congressional Leadership Conference

Information about the 34th Annual Congressional Leadership Conference (CLC)

[Learn More](#)



### Ob-GynPAC

Ob-GynPAC is ACOG's federal political action committee (PAC) and an integral part of the ACOG's efforts to win legislative and political victories for our specialty. Ob-GynPAC is the only national PAC in Washington, D.C., representing ob-gyns before Congress. Ob-GynPAC educates Members of Congress about issues that are important to our specialty and helps elect candidates to the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate who support us on our issues.

[Learn More](#)



### State Legislative Activities

Learn more about Ob-Gyn issues on the state level and what ACOG is doing about them.

[Learn More](#)



### ACOG Advocacy Awards

All-in For Advocacy



Do your part! Help protect and advance ob-gyns in the legislative arena.

**Complete your advocacy profile today!**

All-in For Primary Care



States have an important role to play in improving women's access to primary care. Learn how to include ob-gyns in your state's pay bump.

<http://www.acog.org/m2m>

Leadership Conference

SAVE THE DATE

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## Government Relations and Outreach



Find out more about the latest legislative news, ACOG's Congressional Leadership Conference, and testimony submitted on behalf of ACOG.

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#### From ACOG Government Affairs

Enjoy our Free Email Newsletter on Issues Affecting You and Your Patients

Each week when Congress is in session, we issue *ACOG News*, an email newsletter for ACOG members. Read breaking news from Capitol Hill, the White House, and the States, on issues affecting your practice and your patients. Get the inside scoop on votes. Want to have your say and affect outcomes? Contact lawmakers quickly and easily, with our Action Alerts. For more in-depth analysis, enjoy our Quick Links to ACOG documents and multiple health policy resources.

As an ACOG member, you receive our free newsletter by email, as well as breaking news alerts from Capitol Hill. If you're not already reading *ACOG News*, just sign up



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**All-in For Advocacy**

**ALL-IN FOR ADVOCACY**



# ACOG News

from ACOG Government Affairs

## HEADLINES

[A Message from ACOG  
President Mark S.  
DeFrancesco, MD, MBA](#)

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Scope of Practice at AMA](#)

[Ob-GynPAC in Strong  
Position](#)

[ACOG at White House to  
Promote Smoke-Free  
Public Housing Rule](#)

[Louisiana Becomes the  
Latest State to Expand  
Medicaid](#)

[ACOG Urges Court to Deny  
Texas Abortion Restrictions](#)

[USPSTF Finalizes Breast  
Cancer Screening  
Guidelines](#)

[ACOG Backs New USAID  
Administrator](#)

January 14, 2016



## A Message from President Mark DeFrancesco, MD, MBA

### *Home Birth News*

Is home birth ever a safe choice? What conditions make home birth a safe option? These are issues that ACOG, our members, our patients – and yes, the media and lawmakers – are asking.

Last month, we saw two important contributions to this discussion.

First, the American College of Nurse-Midwives issued its **updated clinical bulletin on home birth**. In it, ACNM identifies patient risk criteria that preclude a home birth, suggesting instead, a planned hospital birth. The new risk criteria include: previous stillbirth or neonatal death related to intrapartum event, primary postpartum hemorrhage requiring additional procedures, prior cesarean birth, and shoulder dystocia with resulting injury.

The New England Journal of Medicine published an **article by Dr. Snowden and colleagues at Oregon Health and Science University**. Data from Oregon's newly revised birth certificates, that now distinguish planned out-of-hospital births and planned hospital births, more accurately compare risk rates in both settings. In case you missed it, **we reported** on the findings in December.



# ACOG News

- **Free Weekly**
- **President's Message**
- **Key Legislative and Political Developments**
- **How to Influence the Debate**
- **Links to prewritten letters to send to you Member of Congress**

Good Morning, Thomas Gellhaus

February 1, 2016

## Leading the News

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### **WHO To Hold Emergency Meeting On Zika As Fear Grows In Brazil.**

[ABC World News](#) (1/31, story 8, 0:25, Muir) reported that the World Health Organization on Monday will hold an emergency meeting to discuss the Zika virus, “which they now say is spreading explosively.” There are now 37 reported cases in 12 US states. [NBC Nightly News](#) (1/31, story 6, 2:25, Holt) said the meeting will be on whether to declare Zika a global health emergency. NBC added that officials in Brazil are “struggling” to raise awareness about the virus, while more than 20,000 cases have been confirmed in Colombia.

[Reuters](#) (1/31, Boadle) reports that with Zika raising concerns about microcephaly, physicians worry the outbreak could lead to an increase in illegal and dangerous abortions in Latin America. Meanwhile, many women can’t afford insect repellent to combat the spread of the virus, so the Brazilian government is planning to provide repellent to tens of thousands of poor pregnant women, while also using its military to eradicate mosquitoes from the country.

***Fauci Doubts Effective Zika Virus Vaccine Will Be Available This Year.*** The [New York Times](#) (1/29, Thomas, Subscription Publication) reported that disease experts and public health officials have warned that the Zika virus, which is “swiftly spreading across the Americas,” may infect millions by the end of the year. Yet, vaccine development may take as long as a decade. Government researchers are working on “at least two approaches to a vaccine;” one is a DNA vaccine method based on a previously studied West Nile virus vaccine that creates “virus-like particles when it is placed into cells,” and the other is a live virus vaccine. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Dr. Anthony S. Fauci said that “while these approaches are promising, it is important to understand that we will not have a widely available, safe and effective Zika virus vaccine this year and probably not even in the next few years.”



# AMA Morning Rounds

Today's medical news prepared *exclusively* for you

AMA  
AMERICAN MEDICAL  
ASSOCIATION

In affiliation with  
BulletinHealthcare

Good Morning **Dr. Thomas Gellhaus**. Here are today's top stories.

Monday, February 1, 2016

## Leading the News

### Administration to expand Medicaid outreach, enrollment efforts

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/31, Radnofsky, Subscription Publication) reports that of the 30 million people who remain uninsured, as many as 6 million are eligible for care through Medicaid but have not enrolled. The Journal notes that moving forward, Medicaid sign-ups will be key to reducing the uninsured rate, and the Administration plans to expand a national campaign aimed at enrolling low-income children to include adults and will provide \$32 million in grants this spring for outreach and enrollment efforts.

## AMA Wire®

Your destination for news and information impacting the medical community



### Advocacy News: What EHRs need: Physicians offer solutions at town hall

How can electronic health records (EHR) and regulations be designed to positively affect you in your practice? With the meaningful use program reportedly on the cusp of change, physicians gathered in Seattle for a town hall meeting to discuss both the difficulties and benefits of EHRs while also citing ways that they can be improved. Find out what your colleagues on the West Coast had to say. [Read more](#) at *AMA Wire®*.

### Advocacy News: How medical liability reforms will be advanced, challenged in 2016

The existing medical liability system continues to drain health care resources that could be devoted instead to improved quality of care and access for patients—all while putting many physicians at unnecessary emotional, reputational and financial risk. Thankfully, positive medical liability reform efforts will continue this year to address both existing and developing issues. [Read more](#) at *AMA Wire*.

# ACOG Action Alerts

- **On Specific Issues**
  - **Call Your Congressman **Now!****
  - **Email your Congressman Now!**
- 42,000+ ob/gyns!!**
- It is EASY!! ACOG does all the work**

Dear Dr. Gellhaus :

The US Senate's first order of business in 2017 is a vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA). While the law is not perfect, this action, especially without a clear replacement plan, will roll back the landmark women's health gains that have benefited our patients. [We need your help](#) to make sure your Senators know what's at stake. In 2010, ACOG did not support passage of the ACA. However, if the ACA is repealed now, millions of women stand to lose:

- **Guaranteed maternity coverage.** Before the ACA, 62% of women in the individual market did not have maternity coverage.
- **Prohibition on pre-existing condition exclusions.** Before the ACA, women could be denied coverage because they had been the victim of domestic violence or had a C-section.
- **Direct access to an ob-gyn.** Before the ACA, many women needed a referral from another physician to see her ob-gyn.
- **Prohibition on gender rating.** Before the ACA, women were charged as much as 85% more than men for the same coverage.
- **No-copay coverage for women's preventive services.** More than 55 million women are benefiting from access to these preventive services, including gyn cancer screenings, vaccines, and contraception.

Does the ACA need to be fixed? Absolutely. But can we risk these hard fought gains without a good alternative? No, we can't.

ACOG works well with, and is respected by, Republicans and Democrats because our legislative and political work is based on what is best for our patients and our practices, not political ideology. [Take action today.](#) Let's not turn back the clock on women's health!

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Gellhaus, MD, FACOG  
President, ACOG

# Tell the Senate to Vote NO on ACA Repeal!

Congress wants to roll back landmark women's health advances, tell them we cannot go back!



The new Congress is about to begin and their first order of business is an attempt to dismantle the Affordable Care Act (ACA), jeopardizing affordable coverage and access to care for millions of women. **Tell your Senators to vote NO on ACA repeal** and take an important step toward preserving landmark women's health insurance gains.

The Affordable Care Act isn't perfect, in fact, ACOG didn't support its passage in 2010. But we cannot walk back on the women's health protections that we fought so hard for. We need your help to make sure your Senators know what's at stake – if the ACA is repealed, millions of women stand to lose vital benefits, including maternity coverage, access to contraception and

...  
[Continue Reading](#)

## Message 1 - Charles Grassley, ...

\* Message Subject:

Don't Roll Back Landmark Advances in Women's Health

Dear [Recipients],

\* Your Message:

As your constituent and an ob-gyn, I ask that you vote NO on repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Recipients

U.S. Senate

Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA)

Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA)

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We're proud to support our adolescent transgender patients with sensitive and comprehensive care! [acog.org/About-](http://acog.org/About-)



**\* Your Closing**

Sincerely,

**\* Your Name**

Tom Gellhaus, MD  v

Welcome back, tgell5@aol.com. [Not You?](#)

**\* Prefix**

Dr.

**\* First Name**

Thomas

**\* Last Name**

Gellhaus

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**OB-GYN PAC**  
lobbying + politics = results

# Political Action Committee

An organization that pools contributions from members and donates those funds to help elect or defeat candidates.

**Cardinal Rule of PACs:  
Bigger = Stronger**

# Ob-GynPAC is



- ✓ ACOG's political action committee
- ✓ the **ONLY** federal political action committee representing our specialty
- ✓ **bipartisan**
- ✓ **your voice on Capitol Hill and the statehouses**



# OB-GynPAC is ACOG's Political Action Committee

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- **What do we do?**
- **Provides Access to Discuss and Educate Our Members of Congress and Others**
- **We do not buy votes!!!**







- Advocacy is telling a story to create a clear picture of a legislative bill or regulatory action
- Real world implications can trump legislative priorities and party politics
- Legislators' want to hear from their constituents – access is gained by relationships and dollars . **WE ARE THE EXPERTS TO TELL THAT STORY**
- Duty to protect our patients in and **OUT** of the exam room

# Advocacy

**Just say YES!**

# Thank you!

## Go Hawkeyes!

