

Physician-led, team-based care has proven effective in delivering safe, quality, accessible health care, leading to better health outcomes for all Kentucky patients. This approach ensures that three very important elements of care – access, quality, and cost – are always at the forefront.

Access to healthcare is a critical part of living a healthy life, and all Kentuckians stand to benefit from physician-led, team-based care in their communities. With 94% of Kentucky's 120 counties facing a primary care shortage, we must advance thoughtful policies that grow the physician workforce while freeing up existing physicians to focus more on patient care. The solution for greater access to care is not to expand scope of practice laws for non-physician providers.¹

Quality care makes a difference when it comes to health outcomes—and physicians can help lead the way. With more than a decade of education and training, physicians are highly qualified to oversee, direct and ensure safe medical procedures, surgeries and overall care. Research from the Mayo Clinic shows that patient referrals from physicians ranked higher in quality than referrals from other providers because physicians were able to better articulate clear questions, provide clinical information and help patients understand and feel confident in their health. A study published in October 2022 by the National Bureau of Economic Research, found that services provided by a non-physician provider group to patients within the Veterans Health Administration, resulted in higher medical resource utilization and less favorable patient outcomes. Cases treated by these non-physician providers had lengths of stay that were 11% longer and ED costs that were 7% higher. In addition, these non-physician providers were associated with a 20% increase in 30-day preventable hospitalizations compared to physicians.²

Kentuckians are most comfortable with a highly trained physician overseeing their healthcare. A recent (Dec. 2022) statewide survey conducted for the KMA by an independent polling organization found that Kentucky patients overwhelmingly trust and want physician-led, team-based care.

Further physician-led, team-based care can help control costs within our health care system. Recent studies from a health care clinic in Hattiesburg, Mississippi and Stanford University found that care delivered under the guidance and oversight of a highly trained physician led to fewer emergency room visits, fewer hospital admissions and readmissions, shorter hospital stays, and overall lower health care costs.^{3,4}

KMA **supports** physician-led team-based care that ensures access, quality, and cost are always at the forefront.

(Data below collected in a December 2022 statewide survey conducted for the KMA by an independent polling organization)

80% of Kentuckians say physician involvement in their treatment and diagnosis decisions is very important

86% of Kentuckians say physician involvement in medical procedures and surgeries is very important

73% of Kentuckians say that expanded scope of practice would make procedures less safe, and only **10%** of Kentuckians say expansion of scope of practice laws will help patients

3 in 4 of Kentucky's rural voters oppose non-physician providers performing certain medical services and procedures (e.g., anesthesia services, eye surgery, etc.)