

Reinforcing the Foundation

We have an opportunity to think beyond cultivating individual pathways for research career development. We can and must optimize infrastructure that can be tapped into or built to meet the needs of primary care research, engage the potential of the breadth of primary care practices across the United States, and bolster PBRNs with educated and engaged membership. This moment calls for initiatives to address local capacity needs with regional or discipline-wide solutions, PBRN training for practice teams, and raising awareness about how to participate in PBRN research.

Leadership From Primary Care Organizations

If this moment of opportunity is to yield the hoped-for gains in new knowledge to support improved health care, equity, health, and primary care's vital contribution, then primary care organizations, particularly those in family medicine, must take on the mantle of leadership to bring their experience with PBRN "living laboratories" to inform new investment in PBRNs.¹⁰ To realize the potential of PBRNs, many networks will need to step up their data and research infrastructure. It is critical that primary care practice-based research networks be more than recruitment sites for centrally controlled clinical trials. They are sources of the wisdom of what matters most for caring for whole people in the context of their families and communities. That wisdom must be supported if PBRNs are to be successful.

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NEW AAFP PRESIDENT CHARTS ACADEMY'S COURSE AT FMX

Jen Brull, MD, FAAFP, of Fort Collins, Colorado, was installed as AAFP president September 25, 2024 during the Congress of Delegates in Phoenix. A few hours later, she addressed thousands of her peers in a mainstage event at the Family Medicine Experience. Brull offered an early look at the Academy's FY26-FY28 strategic plan, focusing on efforts related to advocacy, physician well-being, payment, and workforce development.

Brull's inaugural address is transcribed below, and you can watch a video that preceded the speech at <https://aafp.widen.net/view/video/ptfvhi47fj/FMX-2024-Dr.mp4?u=ozy2ed>:

Hello, family medicine! What an amazing day to be a family physician!

I am so joyful to be here today with my family. There is a pretty amazing group of people who love and support me sitting right up front, and I know this whole room is full of family—family physicians who share my heart and my passion for finding a path to better health for everyone. We are all in this together: we're taking chances, lifting each other up, and connecting for a better future.

Each of us has a personal map. It traces our journey, marks key destinations, and provides direction to the next place we are headed. You all just learned about my map—and my "pins"—the places and events that brought me to this moment. I am so excited to have arrived at this place and time—this day, and becoming the AAFP president, will always be one of those memorable "pins" on the map of my life.

But this "pin" isn't a stopping point. It's the beginning of a journey we'll take together over the next year. Because what lies ahead isn't about me; it's about all of us and what we can do to shape the future of family medicine. Today, I want to share with you some of the ways we're going to make that happen.

One of the most important responsibilities of your AAFP Board of Directors is the creation of a new strategic plan

every 3 years. This critical work spans more than a year and happens in partnership with senior AAFP staff. We begin by gathering data from multiple sources: our performance against the current strategic plan, insights from our external landscape, and, most importantly, input from YOU, our members.

Over the course of the year, we dive deep into this data, taking the time to consider a breadth of perspectives, the capacity for implementation, the competencies of our team, and the priorities of our profession. We engage in robust discussions, seeking diverse and inclusive input from stakeholders because our strength lies in the broad experiences and voices that make up family medicine. Each viewpoint helps us create a plan that not only sets a clear path forward but also reflects the heart of our mission: serving our members, advancing our profession, and advocating for the patients and communities we care for.

I am thrilled to introduce the AAFP's new strategic plan, launching right around the corner in 2025. This plan was built with YOU at the center. It's ambitious, it's innovative, and over the next 3 years, the AAFP is going to make big things happen for family physicians.

First, the AAFP is committed to elevating family medicine by making family physicians an essential voice in all health care decisions. You will see us amplify our impact by continuing to increase engagement with the media, influence governmental policy through advocacy and direct input, communicate clearly the needs of family physicians to insurance companies, and strengthen patients' understanding of the value family medicine delivers. Through strategic partnerships and influence, we will ensure that the unique insights and expertise of family physicians shape health care discussions at every level. Whether it's policy reforms, payment models, or public health messaging, family doctors will be there. By positioning family physicians as trusted leaders, we not only advocate for the profession but also ensure that the health care system delivers more comprehensive, patient-centered care.

Second, the AAFP is dedicated to enhancing well-being of family physicians by fostering a sense of fulfillment in their work. We will prioritize initiatives that address the challenges of burnout, build supportive practice environments, and promote professional growth. By improving work-life balance, removing administrative burdens, and growing autonomy,

we aim to create spaces where family physicians can not just survive, but thrive. Through a combined training approach to wellness and leadership, we will empower family doctors to find renewed joy and purpose in their calling, and best of all, to help others find this path forward. Together, we will cultivate a health care environment where family physicians feel valued, supported, and fulfilled.

Third, the AAFP is focused on improving systems that support family medicine, ensuring that payment, investment and operating models evolve to meet the needs of both today's health care landscape and today's family physicians. We will champion models that prioritize both patient outcomes and physician sustainability, like value-based care, while also advocating for improvements in existing fee-for-service structures. Whether family physicians choose to practice independently or within employment models, in a traditional practice or in an innovative model like DPC, we will work to ensure that they have access to payment systems and flexible models to enable success. Through these efforts, we will improve the viability of family medicine and enhance access to the compassionate, patient-centered care our communities rely on.

And fourth, the AAFP is focused on strengthening our future by attracting, retaining, and guiding a diverse and inclusive community of family physicians. We know that when doctors look like the communities they serve, patient outcomes are better. We are dedicated to creating pathways for individuals from all backgrounds to not only enter family medicine but to thrive and lead within it. By fostering mentorship, offering comprehensive training, and promoting leadership development, we will ensure that every family physician has the tools and support needed to build a rewarding career. For every member of AAFP, we are committed to nurturing a sense of belonging where your voice is heard, respected, and you are empowered to shape the future of health care.

Putting it all together, it looks like this. The home of family medicine—YOUR home—is going to do some amazing work in the next 3 years. Just like any home, building a brighter future requires everyone's hands and hearts, so bring your energy, your heart, and your fearless spirit, and kick off your shoes and dance!

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