

# ADVOCACY IN POLICY: How Clinicians Can Drive Systemic Change in COPD

## Why Now?

- Fifth leading cause of death**
- 1 in 10 Americans have COPD**
- 1.8 million hospitalizations each year**
- More than 20% readmitted within 30 days**
- \$30 billion in annual costs, rising to \$60.5 billion by 2029**

## The COPD Policy Gap

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, is one of the leading causes of death in the United States, yet it remains underrecognized and underprioritized in national health policy. Despite the growing burden of disease, COPD lacks the coordinated federal attention given to many other chronic conditions.

### This policy gap contributes to:

- Delayed diagnosis and underdiagnosis
- Less patient education and support services
- Inconsistent access to evidence-based treatments
- Limited public awareness and prevention efforts

Policy decisions surrounding reimbursement, access, screening and public health investment directly influence patient outcomes and the ability of clinicians to deliver appropriate care.

## Why Policy Matters for Patient Care

Health policy influences nearly every stage of the COPD care continuum, from screening and diagnosis to treatment access and long-term disease management.

Coverage, reimbursement and public health infrastructure dictate access to screening and appropriate treatment. These challenges can delay or restrict access to:

- Diagnostic testing
- Supplemental oxygen
- Pulmonary rehabilitation
- Smoking cessation support

Administrative barriers can also increase clinician burden and contribute to fragmented patient care.

Without consistent clinical input, policy decisions may fail to reflect real-world patient needs and can unintentionally widen disparities in care access and outcomes.

## Clinicians as Policy Leaders

Clinicians play a critical role in translating scientific evidence into meaningful health policy. Their frontline experience provides policymakers with essential insight into patient barriers, care gaps and real-world treatment challenges.

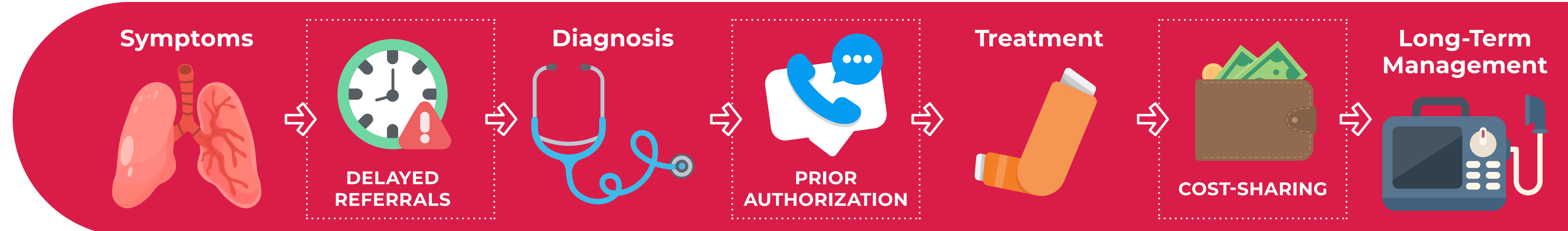
### Clinician advocacy can help:

- Advance policy solutions
- Elevate patient-centered care priorities
- Inform coverage and reimbursement decisions
- Support research and public health investment

Advocacy may include engagement with state and federal policymakers, health agencies, professional societies, payers and community organizations.

“COPD is treatable, but only if policies ensure patients can access the appropriate care they need.”

Sarah Hoffman, Director, COPD Action Alliance



## Turning Advocacy into Outcomes

Strong clinician engagement in health policy can drive measurable improvements across the COPD care continuum such as:

- Greater public awareness of COPD and its symptoms
- Elevation of COPD as a national health priority
- Earlier diagnosis and intervention
- Increased access to treatment
- Reduced hospitalizations and exacerbations
- Improved patient quality of life

Advocacy is essential to ensuring that scientific progress translates into meaningful improvements for people living with COPD.

Clinicians have the expertise, credibility and patient perspective needed to shape policies that improve care delivery and outcomes nationwide.



## Where Advocacy Has Impact

Clinician engagement can influence policy across multiple levels of the health care system.

LEGISLATION	REGULATION	PLAN POLICIES
Shapes state and federal funding priorities	Influences agency guidance and implementation	Removes access barriers
Supports national COPD strategies	Improves coverage standards	Aligns care with evidence-based treatments
Expands public health initiatives	Strengthens quality measures	Reduces delays in treatment

## The Role of the COPD Action Alliance

The COPD Action Alliance, or CAA, is a coalition of nearly 30 member organizations committed to improving the lives of people affected by COPD. CAA and its members are dedicated to supporting grassroots advocacy efforts, increasing awareness and improving policy around COPD and the COPD community.



[COPDActionAlliance.org](https://COPDActionAlliance.org)

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