

*Tennessee's 112th General Assembly convenes January 12, setting the stage for these important battles your TMA advocacy team has prioritized in 2021.*

## SCOPE OF PRACTICE

TMA is a leader in efforts to preserve Tennessee physicians' ability to supervise patient care and oppose unsafe scope of practice expansion by midlevel healthcare providers. Because of our leadership, advance practice nurses and physician assistants have not succeeded in changing state laws to achieve independent practice in Tennessee, and TMA remains steadfast in advocating for policies that improve and strengthen interprofessional relationships, not weaken them. TMA joined a coalition of medical specialty societies and other healthcare organizations promoting physician-led, team-based healthcare delivery teams as the best model for patient safety and quality of care. Visit [tnmed.org/scopeofpractice](https://tnmed.org/scopeofpractice) for more info.

## BALANCE BILLING

TMA leads a coalition of hospital-based physician specialty organizations in protecting patients from narrow networks created by health insurance companies. State-wide listening sessions are being hosted with SB 001/HB 002 sponsors, Sen. Bo Watson and Rep. Robin Smith, as they offer a physician-friendly balance billing solution. Their bill would only require patients to pay according to their in-network responsibility if they receive a surprise medical bill and would allow out-of-network physicians to pursue fair payment from health insurance companies through an independent arbitration process if the initial payment was unsatisfactory. The bill is based on a successful model used in Georgia. It would incentivize health insurance companies to offer fair, in-network initial payments to out-of-network hospital-based physicians. Visit [tnmed.org/balancebilling](https://tnmed.org/balancebilling) for more info.



## GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION FUNDING

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) ruled last summer that Tennessee must scratch its long-standing formula to fund graduate medical education slots through TennCare. It places millions of dollars and all of Tennessee's residency programs at risk. TMA's priorities will be to obtain a seat at the table for further discussions on resident funding, preserve the additional slots gained in 2019, and advocate for a sensible funding mechanism for the preservation of the existing slots.