

January 2012 Survey of Texas Students

Research Findings



Physicians Caring for Texans

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TMA Student 2012 Survey

In an effort to enhance efforts and strengthen advocacy measures, the Texas Medical Association surveyed medical students across the state to assess how they perceive TMA activities, programs, and services. A personalized link was e-mailed to 5,105 students; 254 students answered the survey for a response rate of 5 percent. The following are highlights from the analysis.

Biggest Challenge (Q1)

In an open-ended question, students were asked to identify the biggest challenge currently facing Texas physicians. The first-mentioned response is related to low or declining payments (32 percent), especially from the government payers. An additional 7 percent of students report decreasing payments and increasing practice operating expenses as threatening the economic survival of independent practices.

<i>Biggest Challenge</i>	<u>Physicians</u>	<u>Students</u>
	%	%
Low/Declining payments	38	32
Health system reform	11	10
Quality of care/Access	2	9
Physician supply	1	8
Graduate medical education		7
Economic survival	13	7
Un/Underinsured	6	6
Third-party interference	15	5
Managed care/Insurers	2	3
Student loan debt		2
Liability/Tort reform	1	2
Scope of practice	2	1
Health Information Technology	1	
Health care costs	1	1
Medicare solvency	1	
Texas Medical Board	1	
Other	6	9

Ten percent of students report that health system reform is the biggest challenge currently facing Texas physicians; there remains a lot of uncertainty as to the future of medicine. Access and quality of care are concerns for nine percent of students. Similarly, physician supply topped the list of concerns among 8 percent of students. Students report that there are not enough physicians, particularly in primary care and in rural areas, to meet the needs of patients. Students express concerns that this shortage would worsen under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and an expanding Medicaid population would further exacerbate the lack of access to regular and quality care. A concern for students that did not show up in the physician survey was graduate medical education (GME). Students often listed a physician supply problem secondary to insufficient residency slots and funding for GME.

Six percent of students report that uninsured patients are the biggest challenge for Texas physicians. Often students expressed a concern for providing consistent care for these patients and for the underinsured, including Medicare and Medicaid patients.

Third-party interference, particularly interference by the government in medical decisions, was mentioned as a challenge for Texas physicians by 5 percent of students. Three percent of students listed managed care or insurers as administratively burdensome and negatively affecting care and reimbursement.

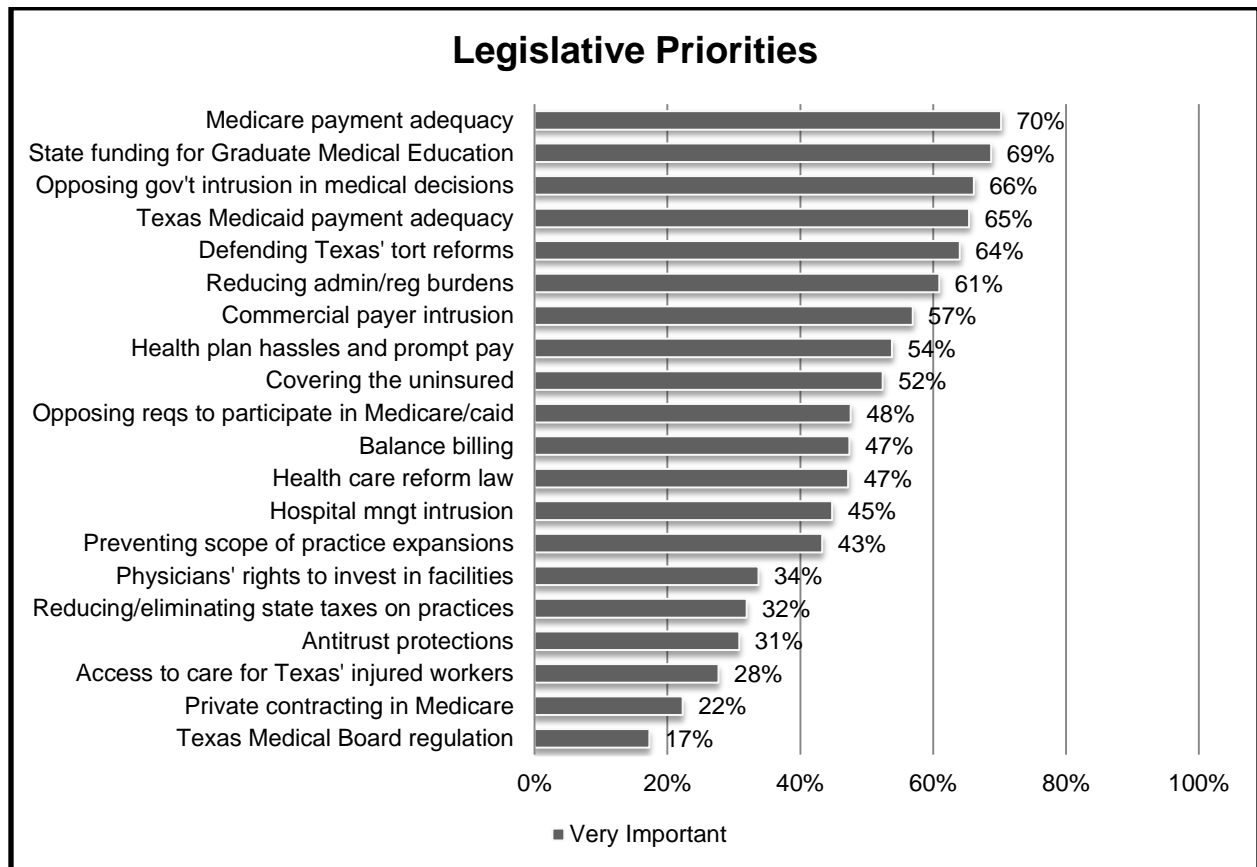
Two percent of students reported tuition debt as a big challenge. Students express concerns that this impacts physician specialty choice and may even dissuade potential students from medical school, therefore contributing to the physician shortage.

Liability or tort reform concerns are listed as a top challenge among 2 percent of students. Students have concerns over the practice of defensive medicine and its contribution to the overall cost of health care. The cost of health care was listed as a concern among 1 percent of the respondents.

Other concerns that students listed are administrative or regulatory burdens and public health issues.

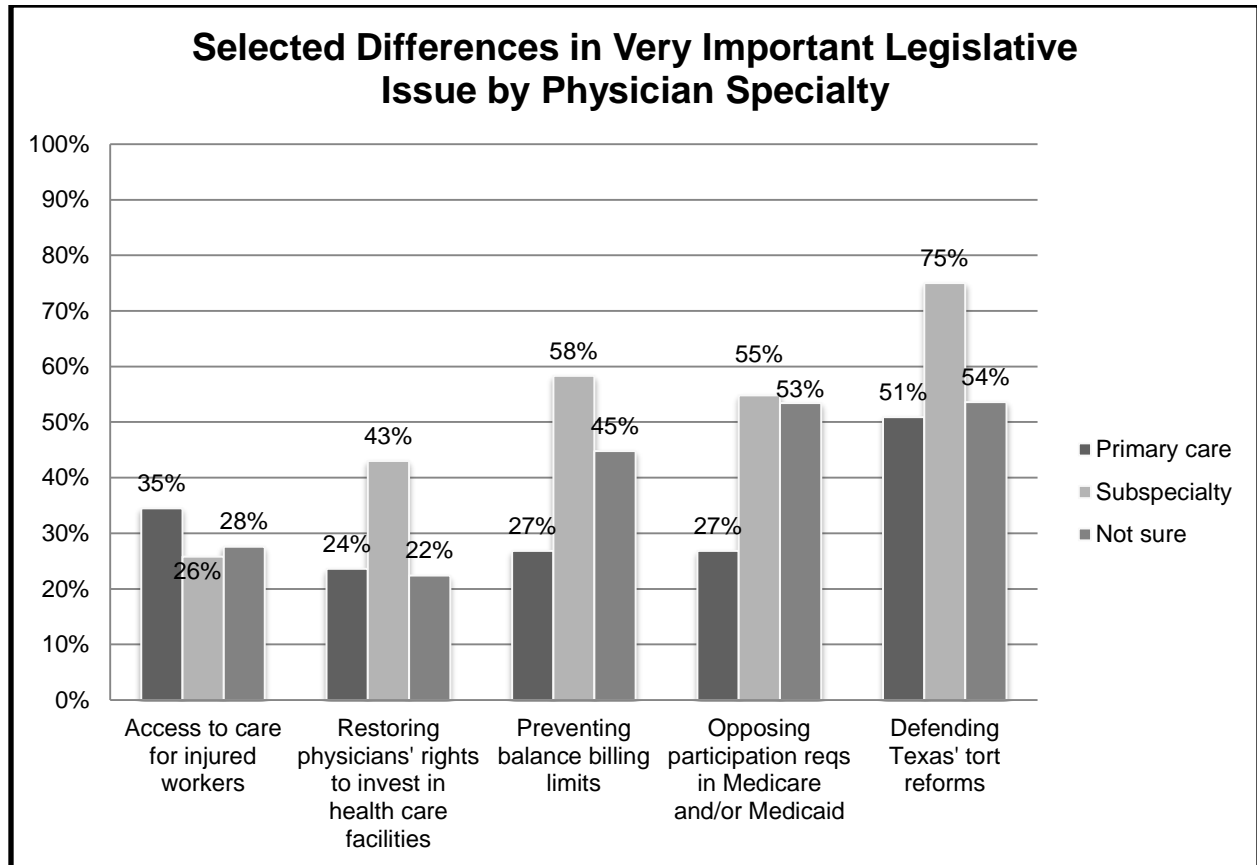
Legislative Priorities (Q2)

The top legislative priorities for medical students are Medicare payment adequacy (70 percent), state funding for GME (69 percent), opposing government intrusion in medical decisions (66 percent), Texas Medicaid payment adequacy (65 percent), defending Texas's liability reforms from efforts to nullify or overturn them (64 percent), and reducing administrative and regulatory burdens in medical practice (61 percent).



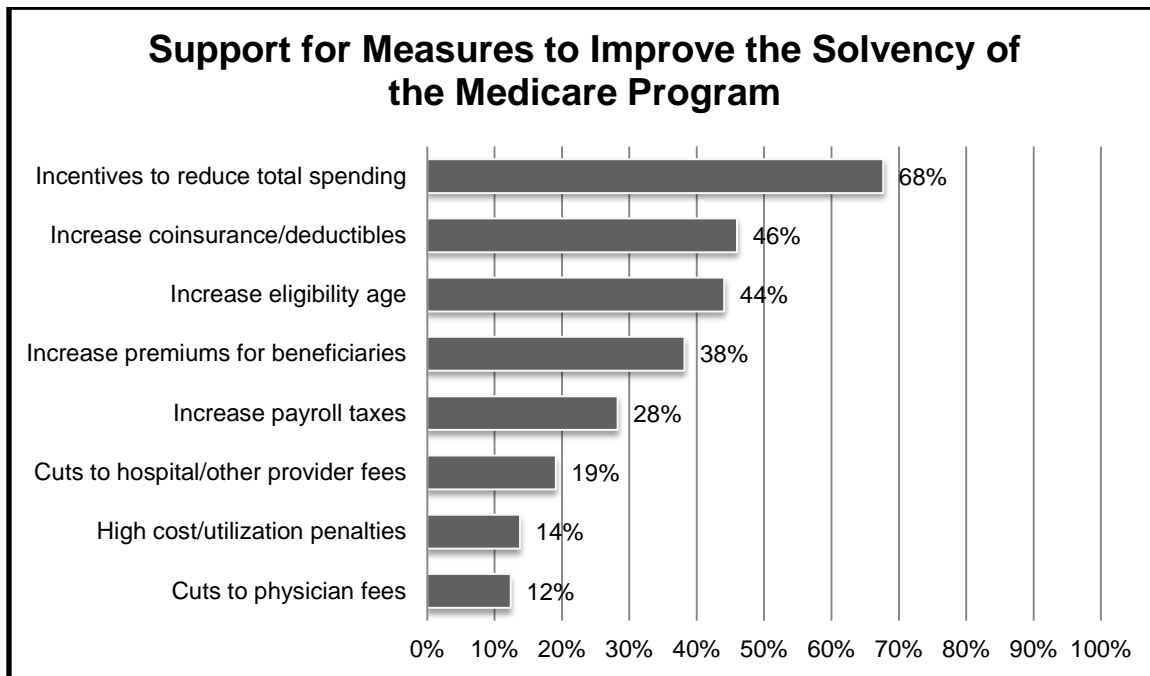
Also considered a high priority by a majority of students is opposing commercial payer intrusion in medical decisions (57 percent), health plan hassles and prompt pay (54 percent), and covering the uninsured (52 percent).

Students who intend to go into a subspecialty are most likely to report defending Texas' tort reforms as the most important legislative issue (75 percent). Further, they are more likely to rate preventing balance billing limits (58 percent) and opposing proposals to make participation in Medicare and/or Medicaid a condition of licensure (55 percent) as very important in comparison with other students.

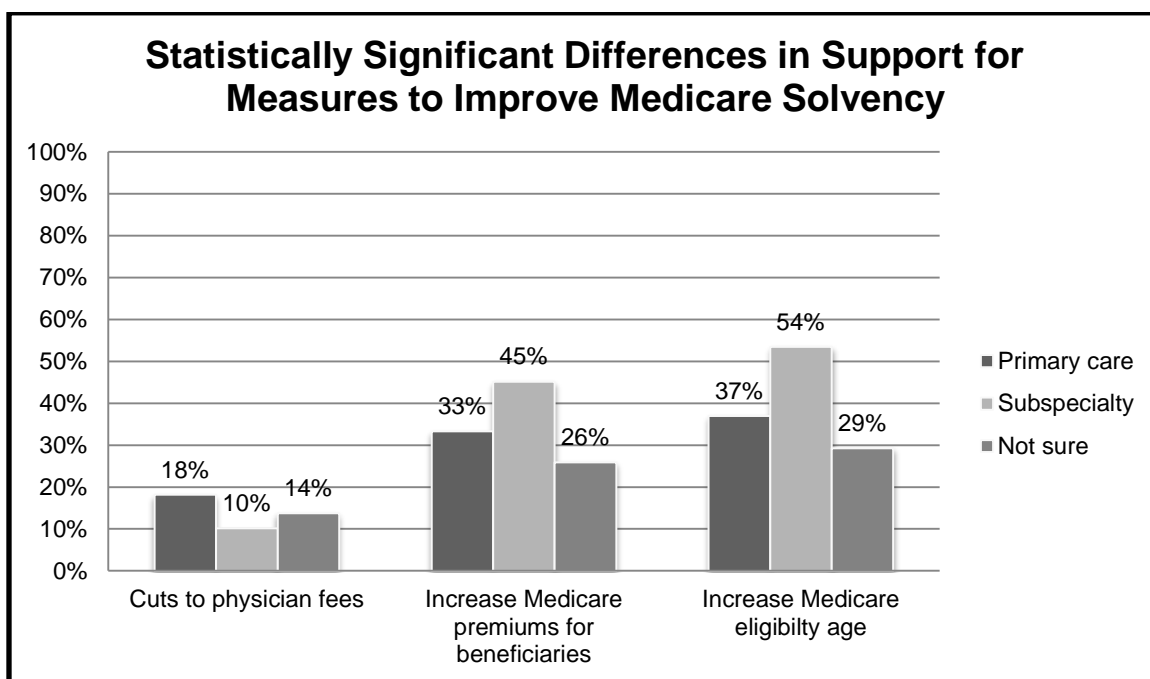


Efforts to Improve Medicare Solvency (Q3)

The majority of students support incentives to physicians and hospitals to reduce total Medicare spending (68 percent) in order to improve the solvency of the Medicare program.



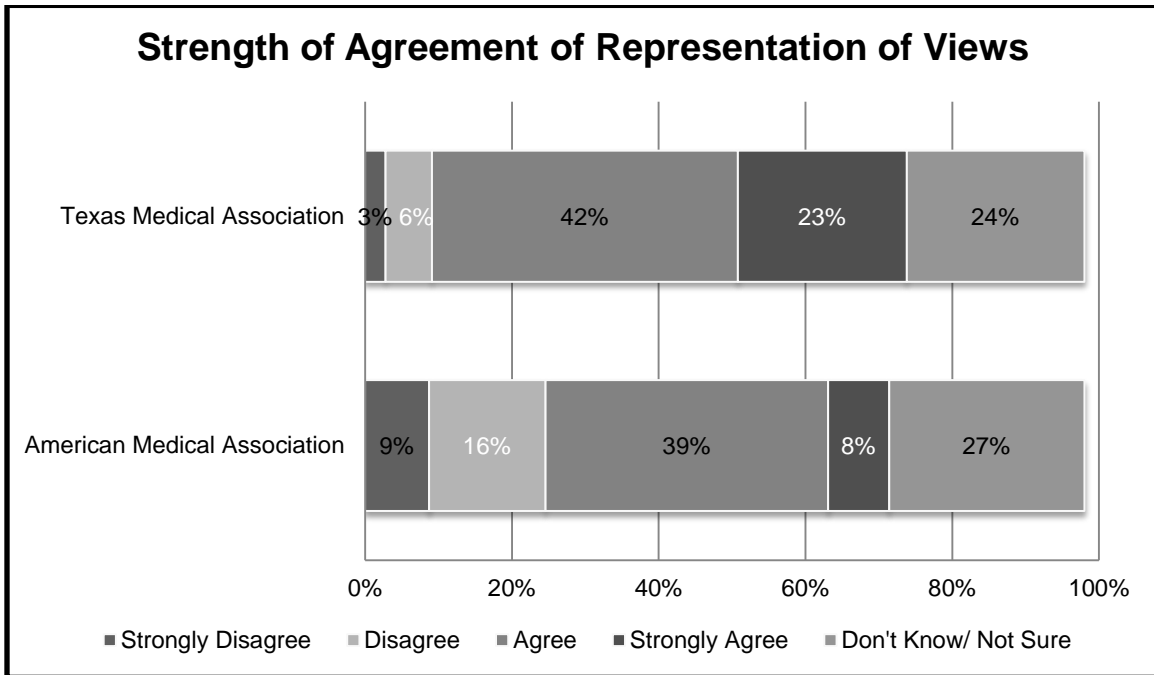
There is a statistically significant relationship between students' intended specialty and support for measures to improve the solvency of Medicare.



Students who intend to enter a subspecialty are more likely than other students to support increases in Medicare eligibility age (54 percent) and premiums for beneficiaries (45 percent) in order to improve the solvency of the Medicare program.

Representation (Q4)

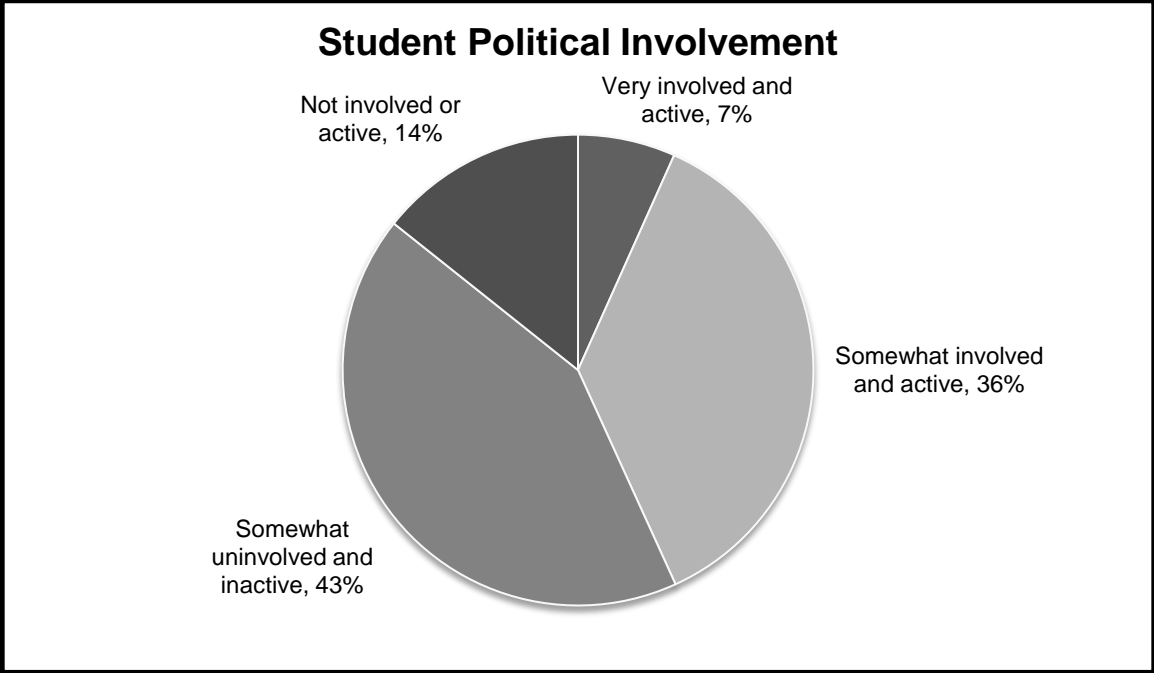
Students agree or strongly agree that TMA represents them and the viewpoint of future physicians like them (65 percent). Forty-seven percent of students agree or strongly agree that the American Medical Association represents them and the viewpoint of students like them.



There are no statistically significant differences between students with different specialty intentions and their rating of TMA or AMA's representation of them and students like them.

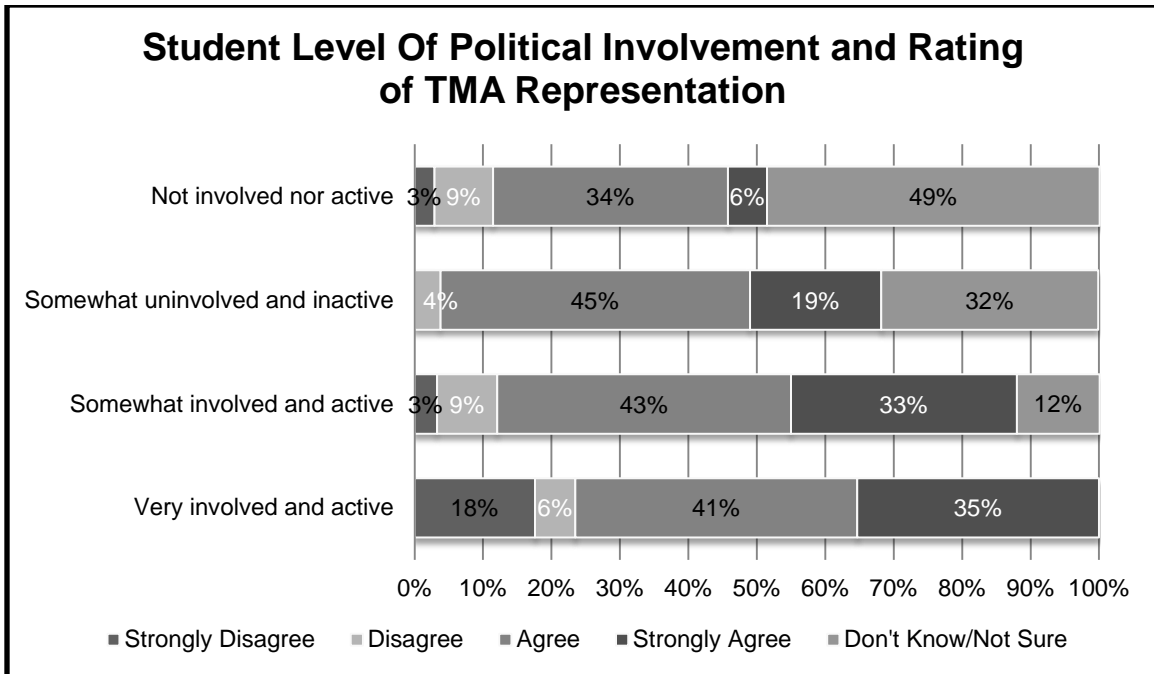
Student Political Involvement (Q5-6)

Forty-three percent of students reported they are somewhat uninvolved and inactive in advocating legislative policy issues affecting patients, physicians, and the health care industry. Students reported following issues on a periodic basis. A little more than one-third of students (36 percent) described their current level of activity as somewhat involved and active, following issues on fairly regular basis, and responding occasionally to requests to assist with some issues.



There is no difference between students of different specialties and their level of involvement and activity.

There is a statistically significant relationship between the level of involvement and activity in advocating legislative policy issues affecting patients, physicians, and the health care industry and the degree to which students rate TMA as representing them and the viewpoint of future physicians like them.

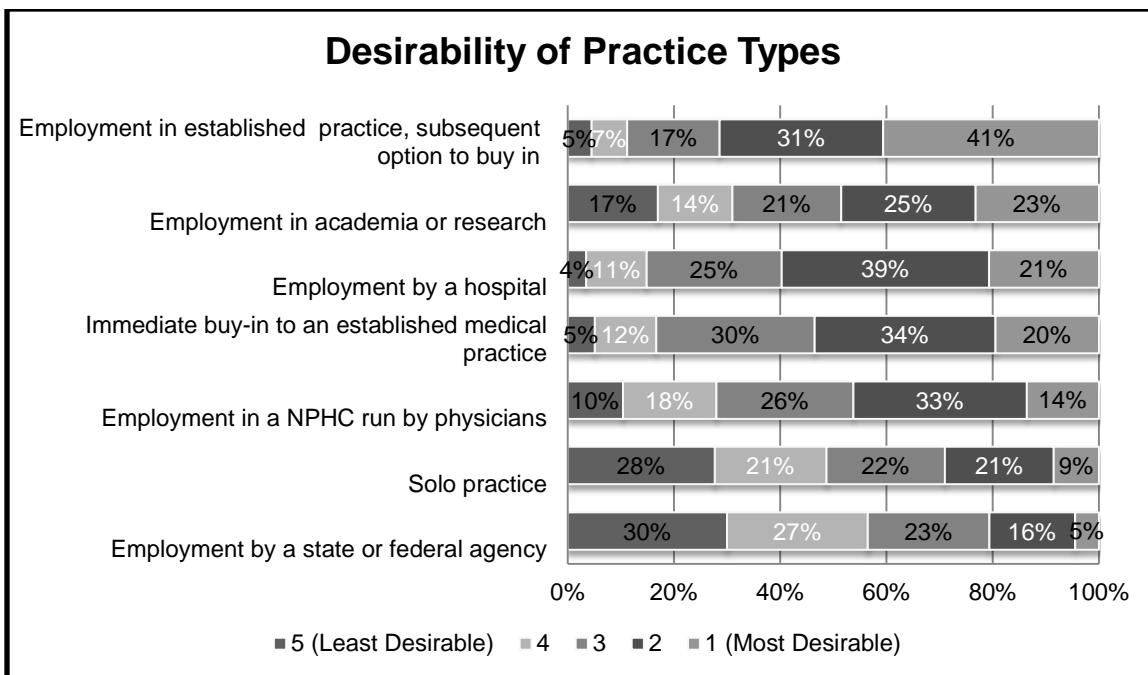


Students who are neither involved nor active at this point are most likely to report they don't know or are not sure if TMA represents them and their viewpoint. Not surprisingly, the more active and involved in advocating legislative policy a student is, the more likely the student is to strongly agree that TMA represents them.

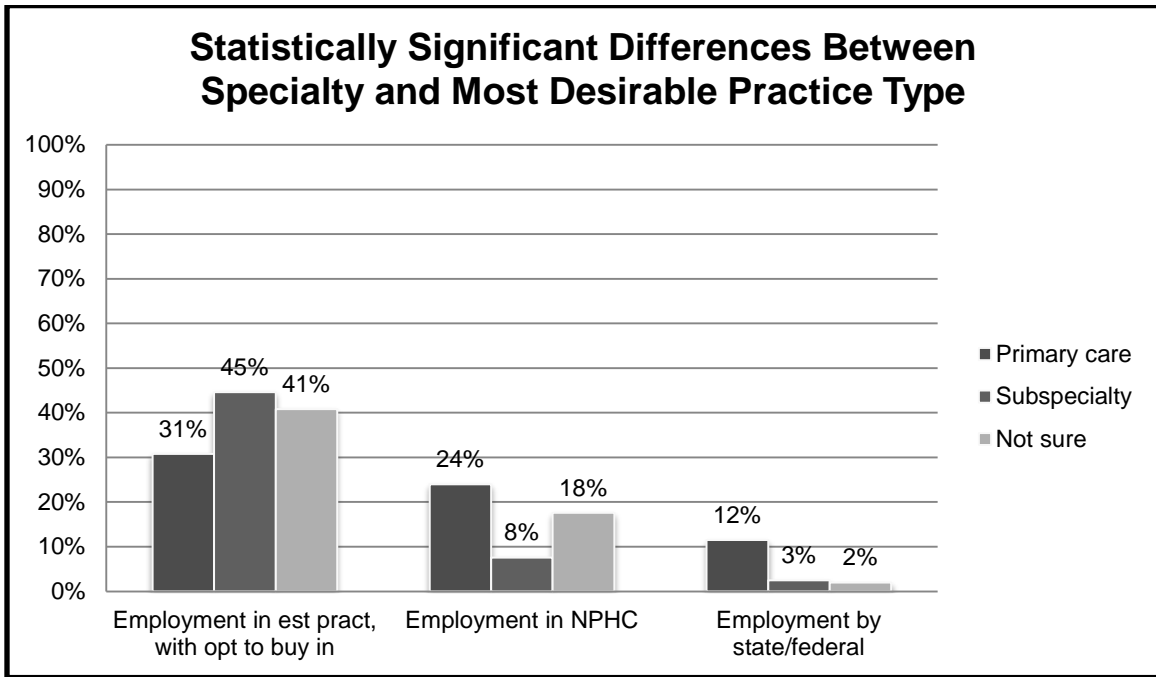
Forty-four percent of students report that they would like to get more involved and are interested in learning more about TMA.

Desirability of Practice Types (Q7-8)

The most desirable practice type for students' first medical practice is employment in an established practice, with a subsequent option to buy in to ownership (41 percent). This is consistent with previous surveys in which physicians were asked the most desirable practice type for most new physicians.

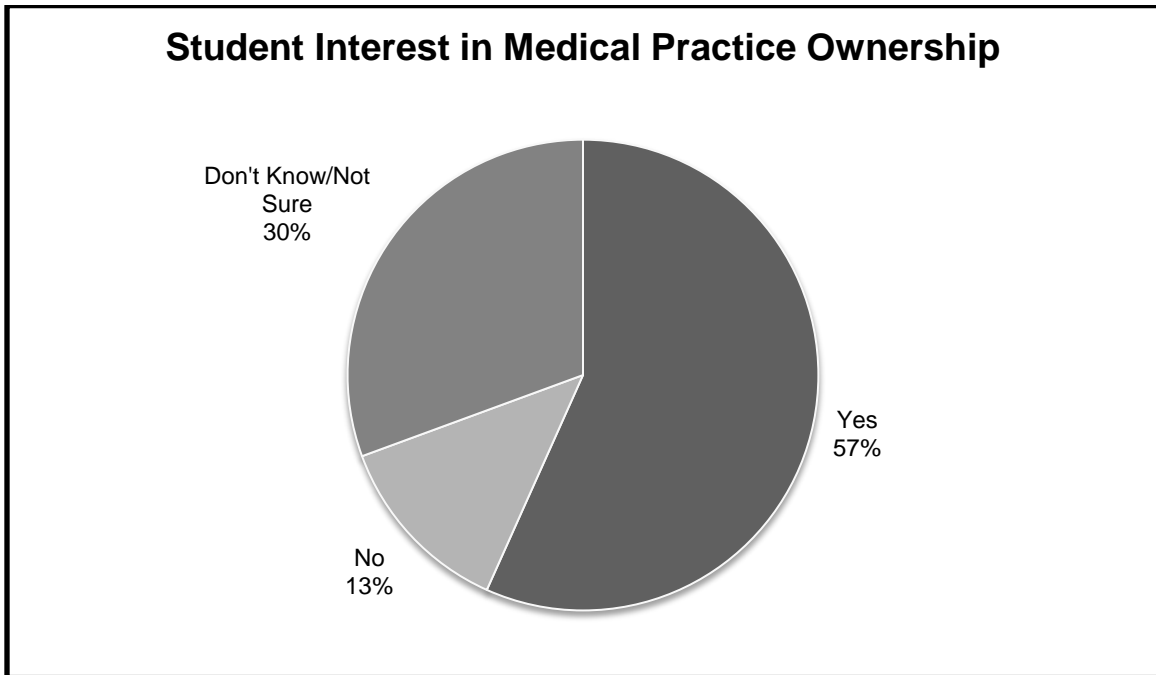


There are statistically significant differences in most desirable practice types by students' intended specialty.

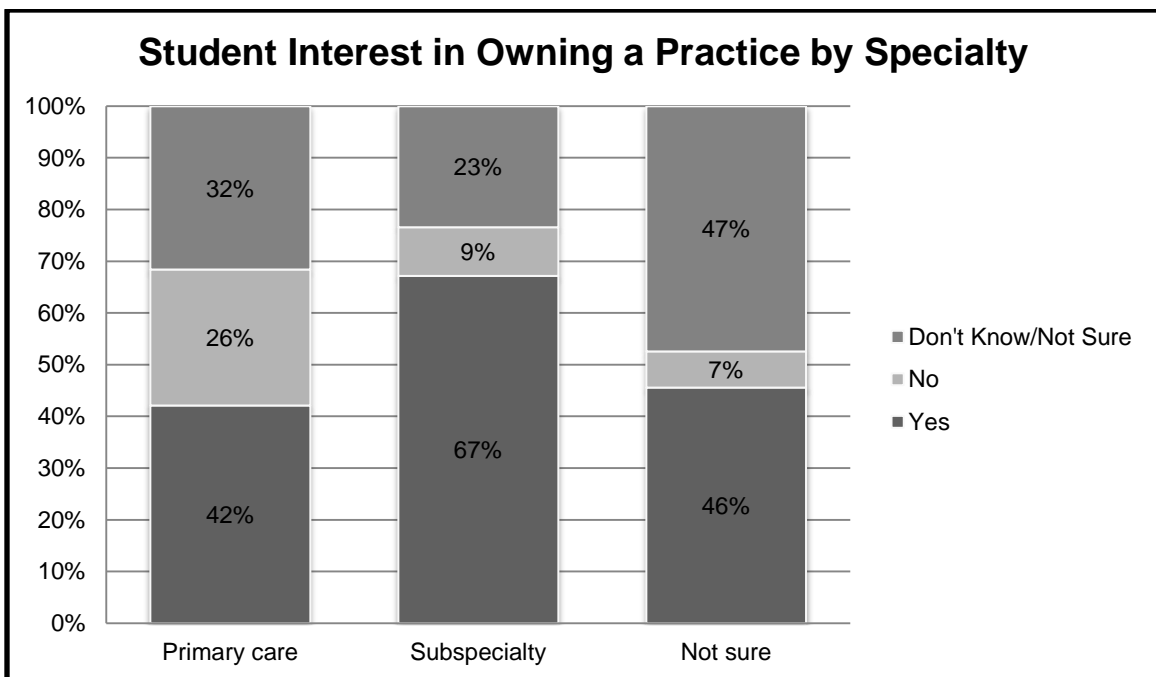


Students intending to enter a subspecialty are most likely to rate employment in an established physician practice with a subsequent option to buy-in as most desirable (45 percent). Although a minority, students intending to enter primary care are more likely than other students to rate employment in a nonprofit health corporation (NPHC) run by physicians and employment by a state or federal agency as the most desirable first practice (24 percent and 12 percent, respectively).

Fifty-seven percent of students are interested in owning or co-owning a practice at some point in their medical career.

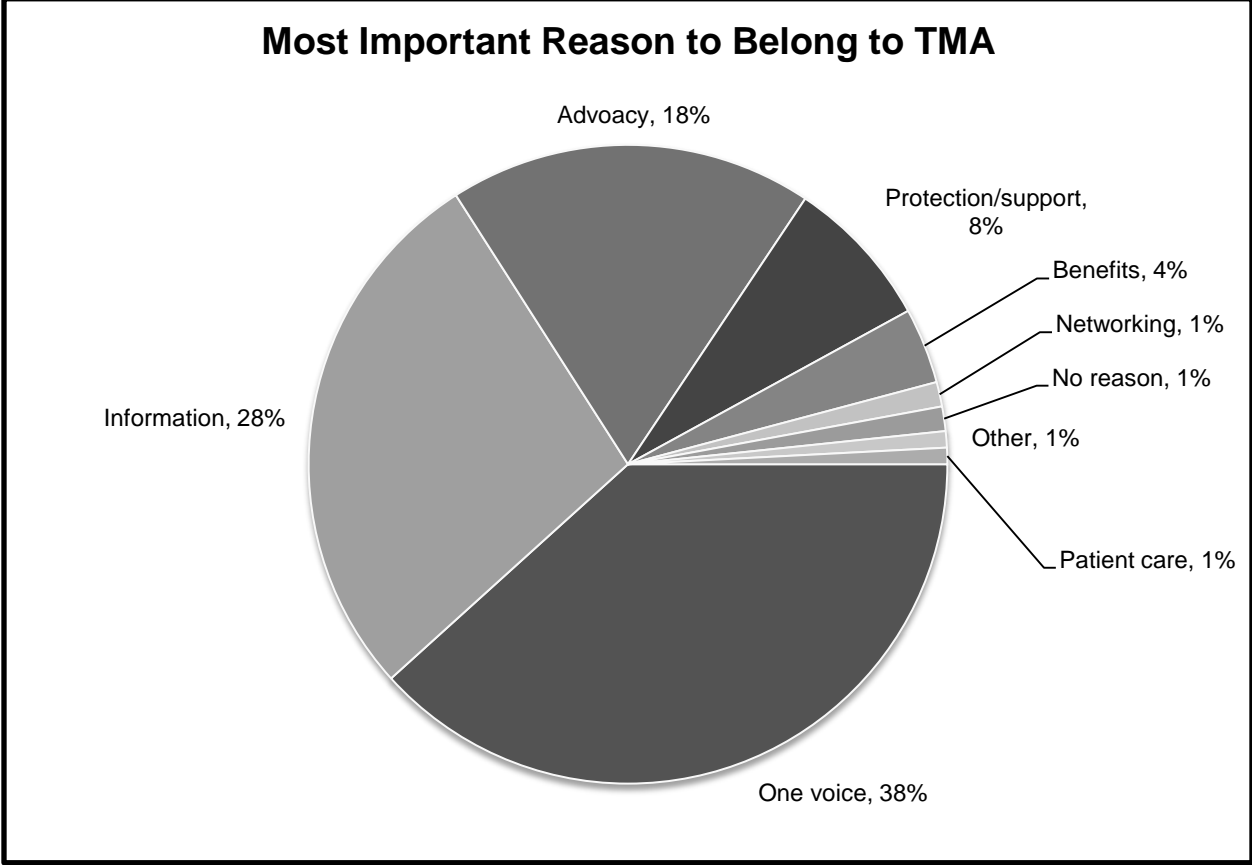


Students intending to enter a subspecialty are most likely to report an interest in owning or co-owning a medical practice at some point in their career (67 percent).



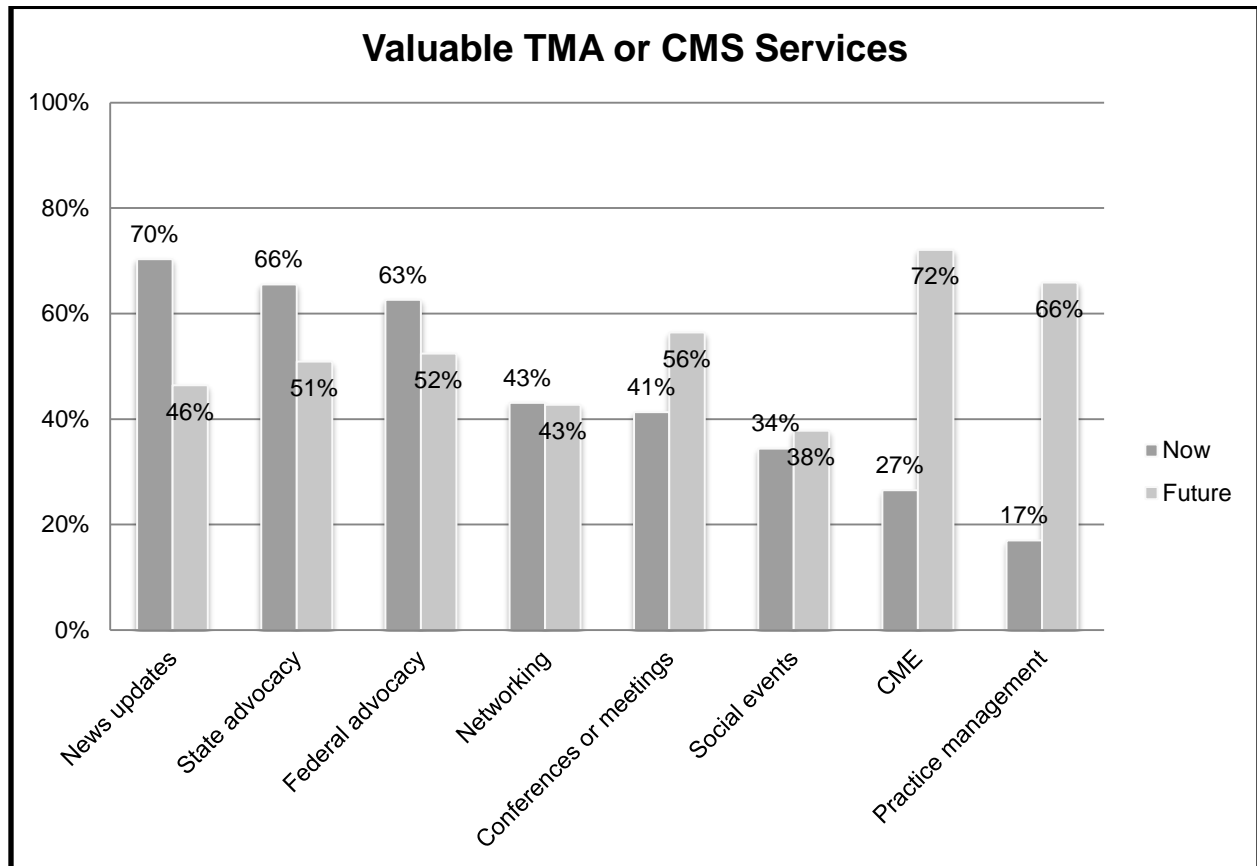
Student Membership (Q9)

In an open-ended question, students were asked to identify the most important reason for belonging to TMA. The first-mentioned response showed that 38 percent of respondents listed a single, unified voice as the most important reason for belonging to TMA. Twenty-eight percent of students stated information as the most important reason, and 18 percent specified advocacy. A small but significant group (8 percent) report protecting and supporting physicians (4 percent) and benefits or services including continuing medical education (CME; 4 percent). A small group of students list networking and patient care as the most important reason to belong to TMA (1 percent). One percent of students reported that there is no reason to belong to TMA.



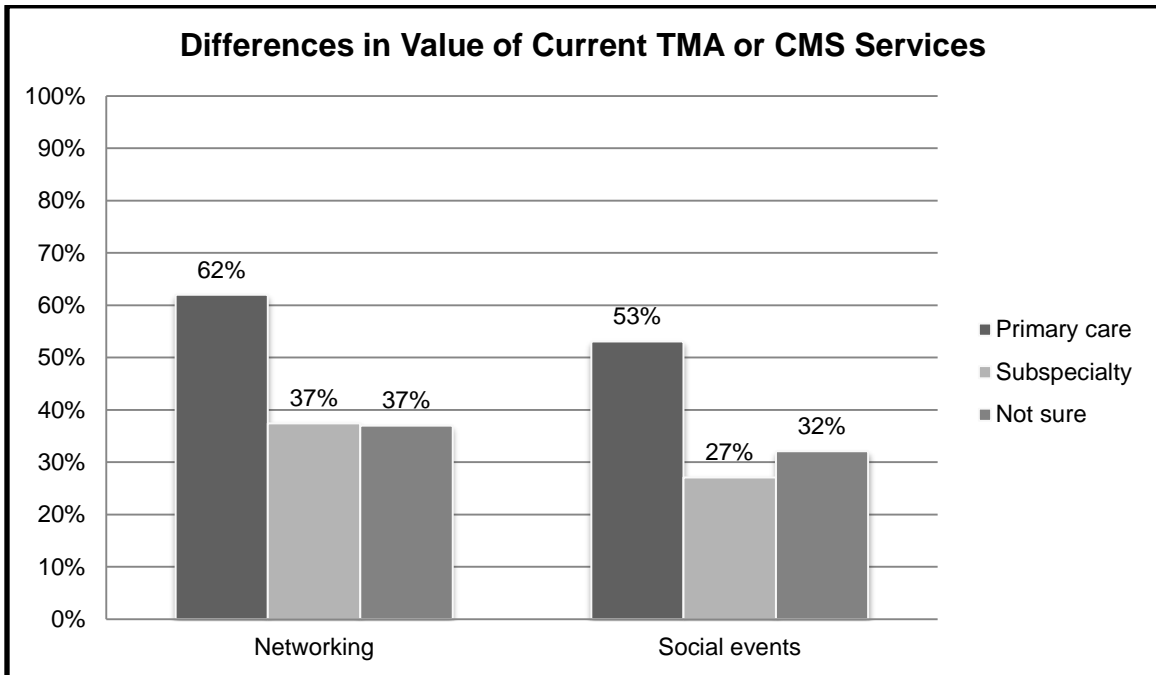
Valuable Services (Q10)

Students were asked to indicate which TMA or county medical society (CMS) services are valuable to them now and which ones will be valuable to them in the future. Currently, students find news updates about advocacy, regulatory compliance issues, and health care reforms most valuable (70 percent). This is followed by state (66 percent) and federal advocacy (63 percent). These findings are consistent with the open-ended question in which students listed the single most important reason to belong to TMA.



Although a majority of students believe they will continue to value state and federal advocacy in the future (51 percent and 52 percent, respectively), students believe training or education for physicians on practice management (CME) and practice management training for practice staff will be more valuable to them in years to come (72 percent and 66 percent, respectively). Some 56 percent of students listed conferences or meetings for education and networking as valuable in the future.

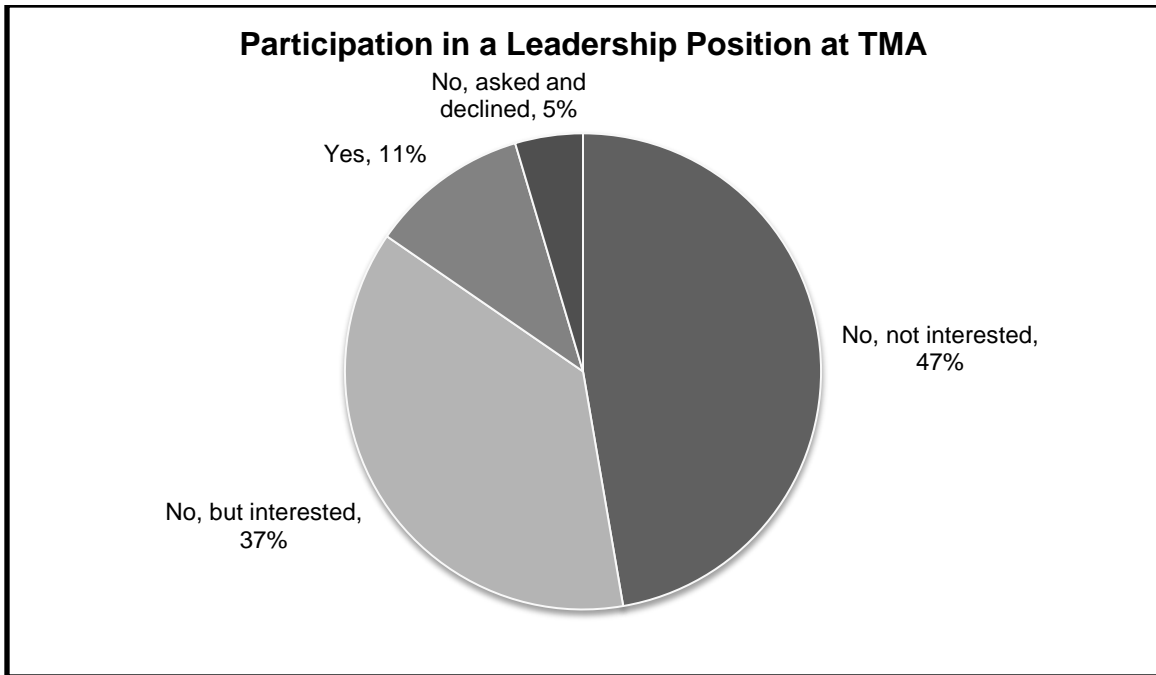
There are differences by intended specialty and the value of TMA or CMS services.



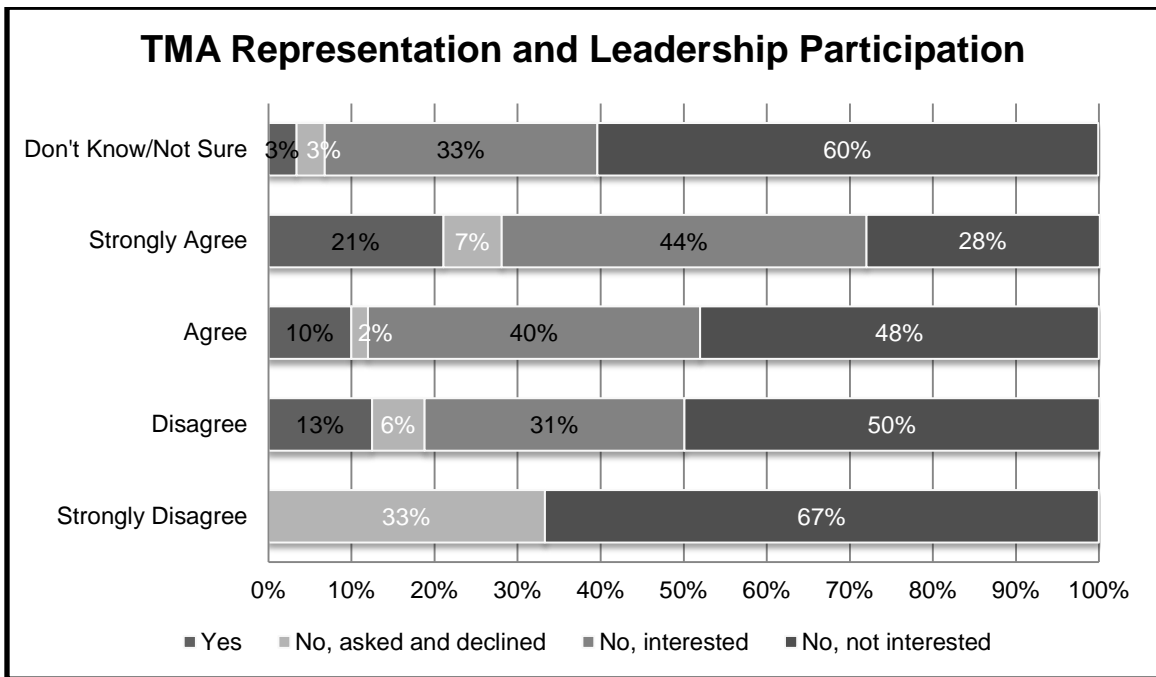
Currently, students intending to specialize in primary care report online networking opportunities with other students or physicians and social events are valuable (62 and 53 percent, respectively).

Leadership Positions (Q11)

Forty-seven percent of students have not participated in a leadership role at TMA (e.g., delegate, or council or committee member) and are not interested in doing so. Thirty-seven percent of students reported that they have not participated in a leadership position but are interested and would like the opportunity.

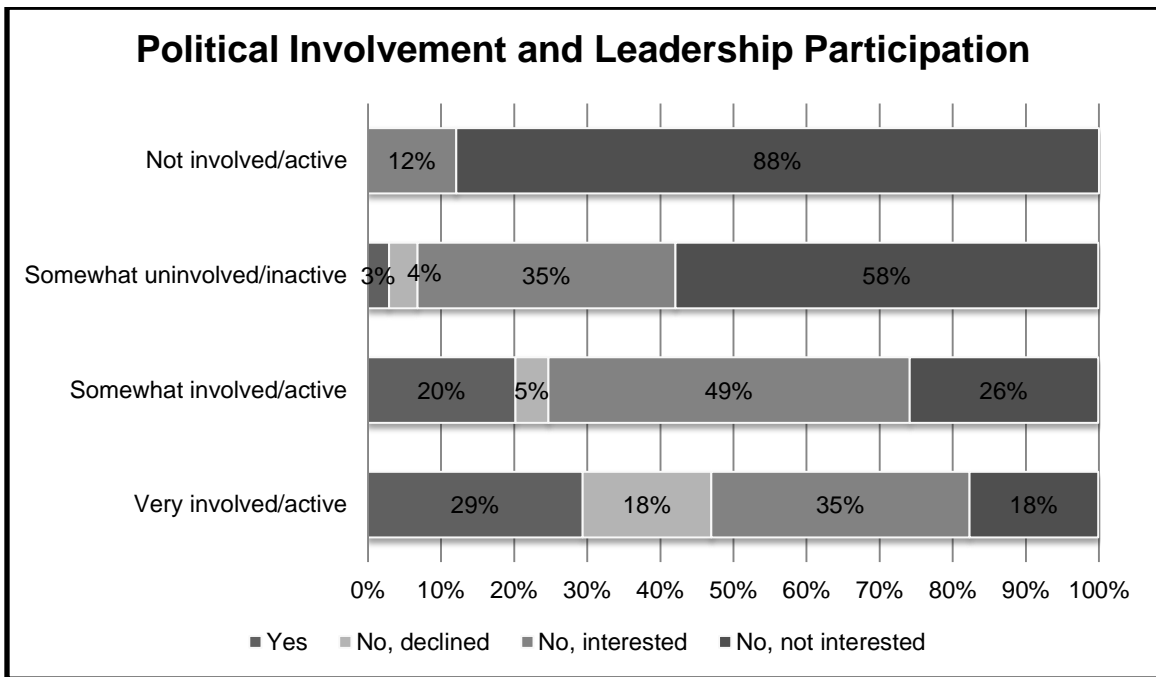


There is a significant relationship between the strength in which students agree TMA represents them and the likelihood in which they have participated in a leadership position at TMA.



Students who strongly disagree that TMA represents them are most likely to not have participated in a leadership position at TMA and are not interested in doing so (67 percent). This is followed by students who are unsure if TMA represents them (60 percent) and students who disagree TMA represents them (50 percent). Students who strongly agree TMA represents them and their views are most likely to have participated in a leadership position (21 percent) or are interested in the opportunity (44 percent).

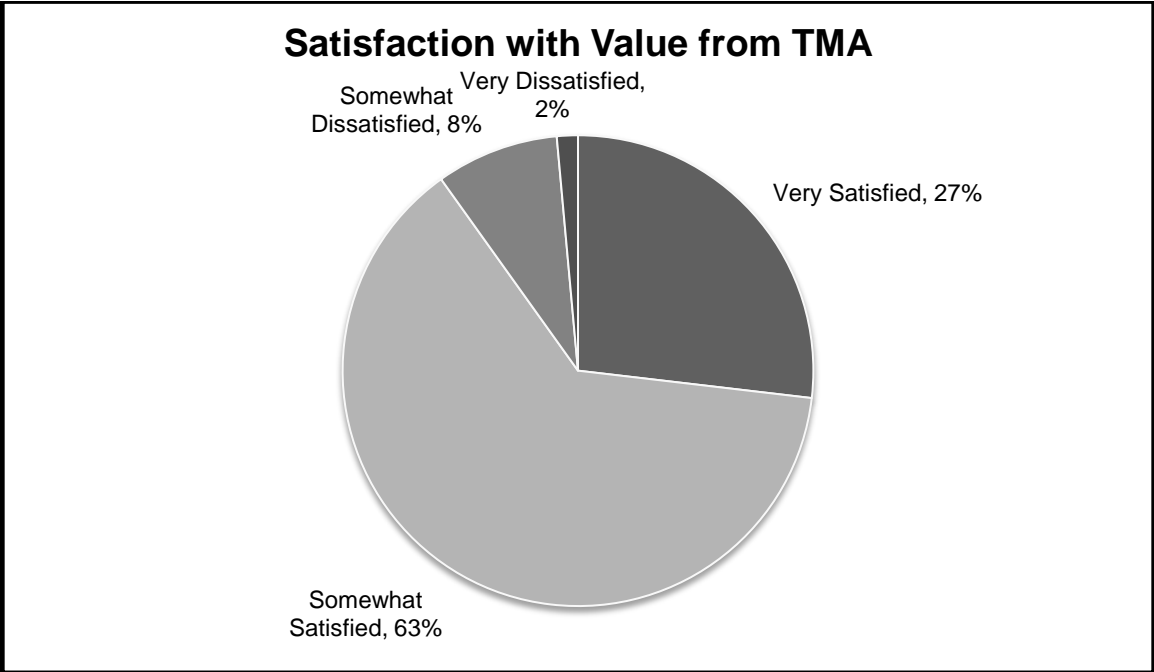
Students who are not involved in legislative advocacy are also least likely to be interested in participating in a leadership position at TMA (88 percent) followed by students who are somewhat uninvolved and inactive (58 percent).



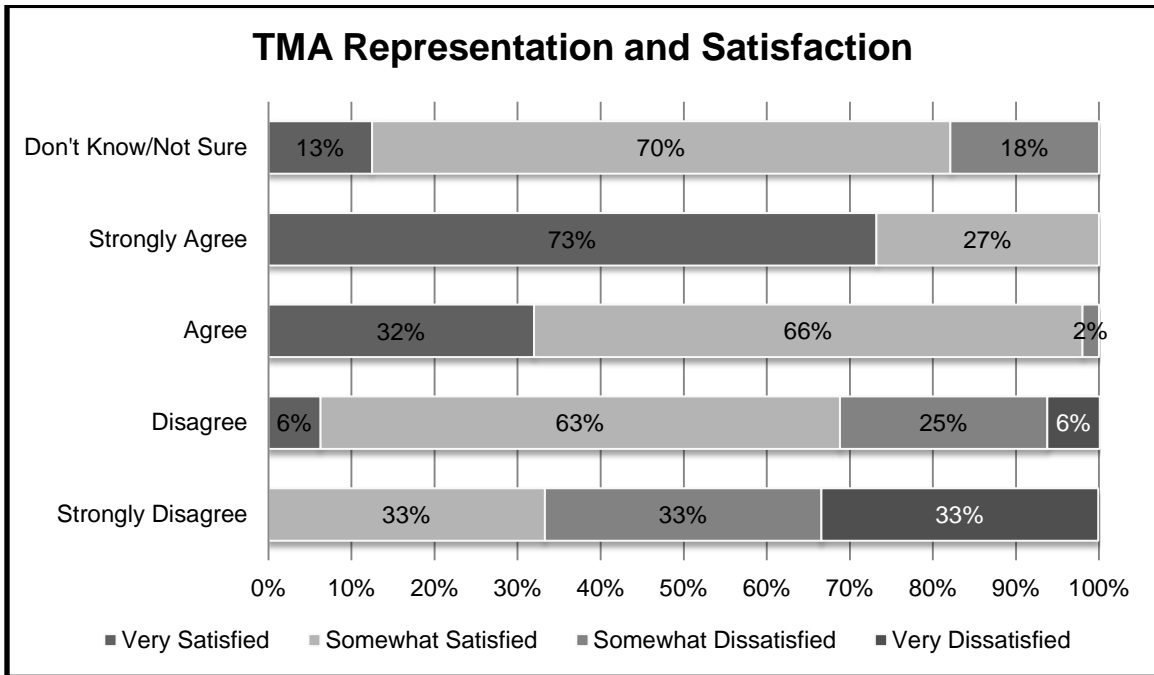
Students who are very involved and active are most likely to currently serve in a leadership position or have done so in the past (29 percent). Students who are somewhat involved and active are most likely to report they are interested in doing so (49 percent).

Satisfaction (Q12)

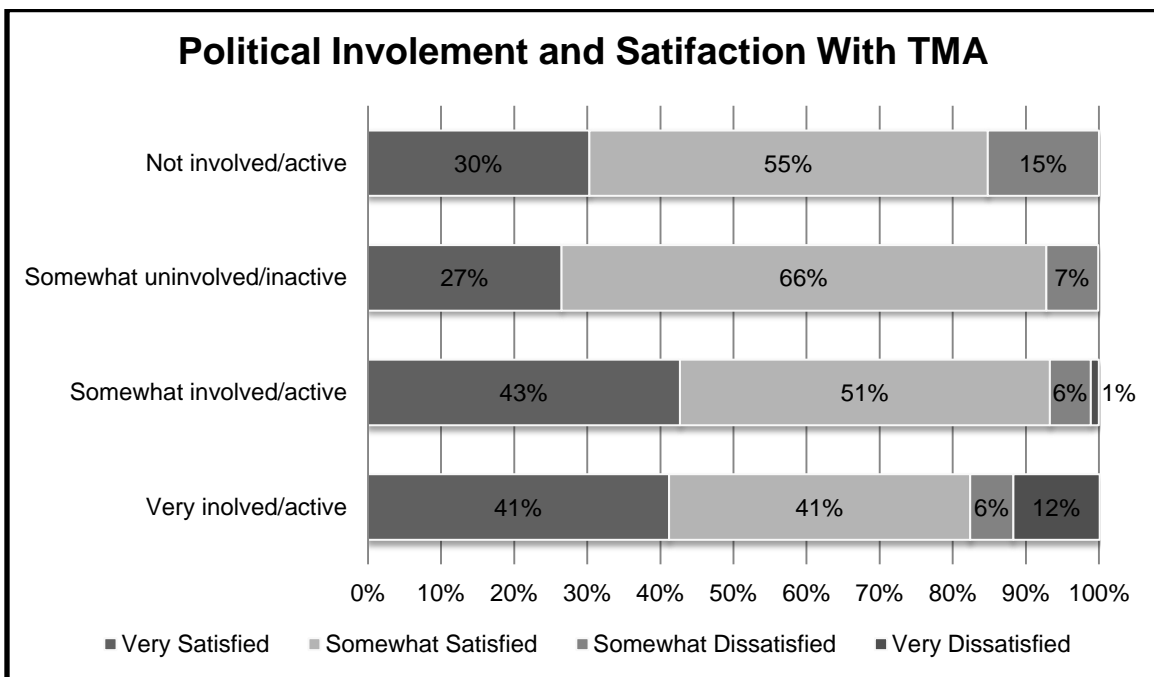
Overall, students are somewhat satisfied (57 percent) or very satisfied (27 percent) with the value they receive from TMA.



Students who strongly agree TMA represents them are very satisfied with the value they receive from TMA (73 percent).

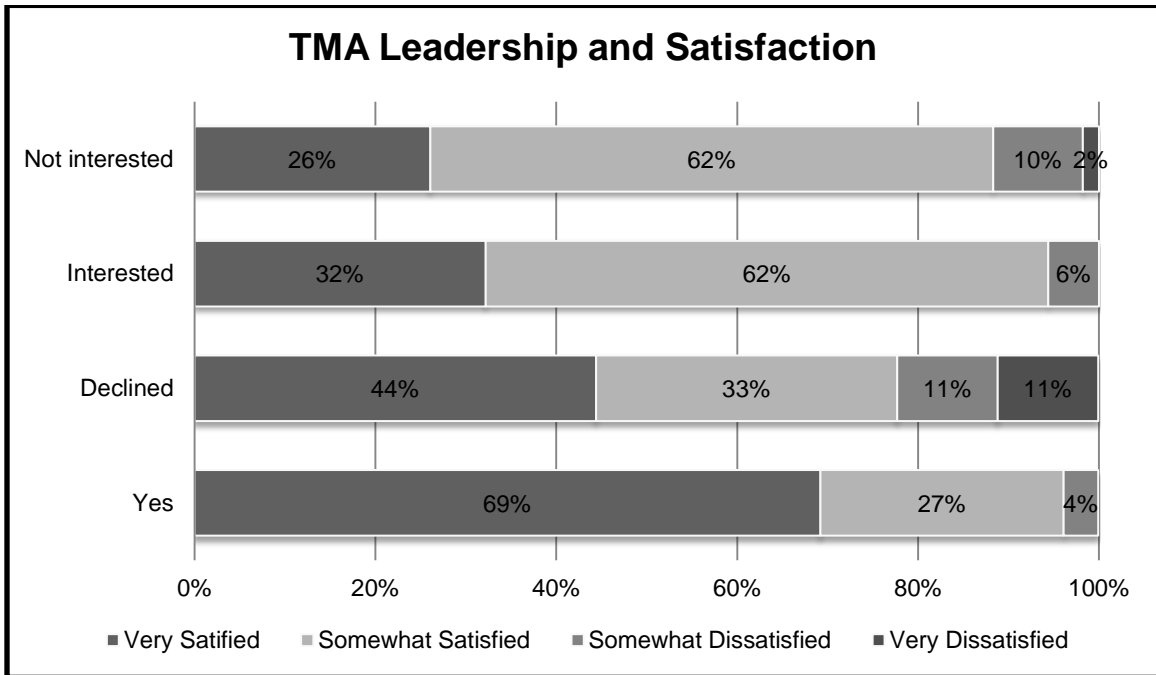


There is also a statistically significant relationship between students' level of political involvement and their level of satisfaction with TMA.



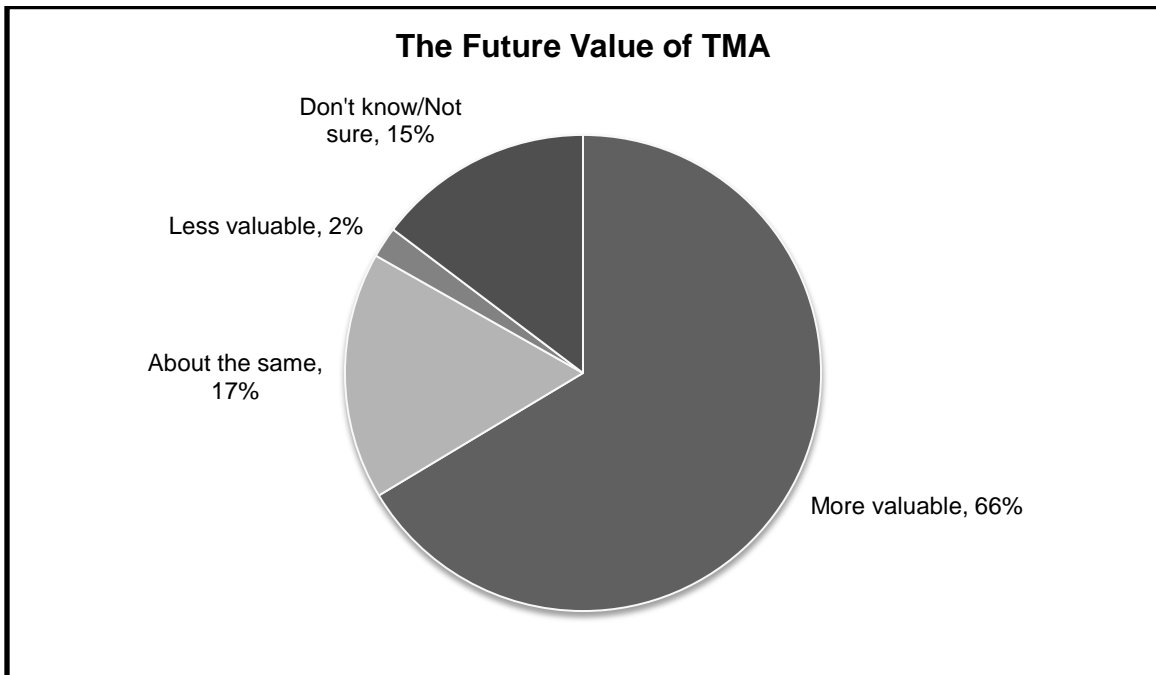
Students who are very or somewhat involved in the legislative process are most likely to be very or somewhat satisfied with the value they receive from TMA.

Students who currently serve or have served in a leadership position at TMA are most likely to feel very satisfied with the value they receive from TMA (69 percent).

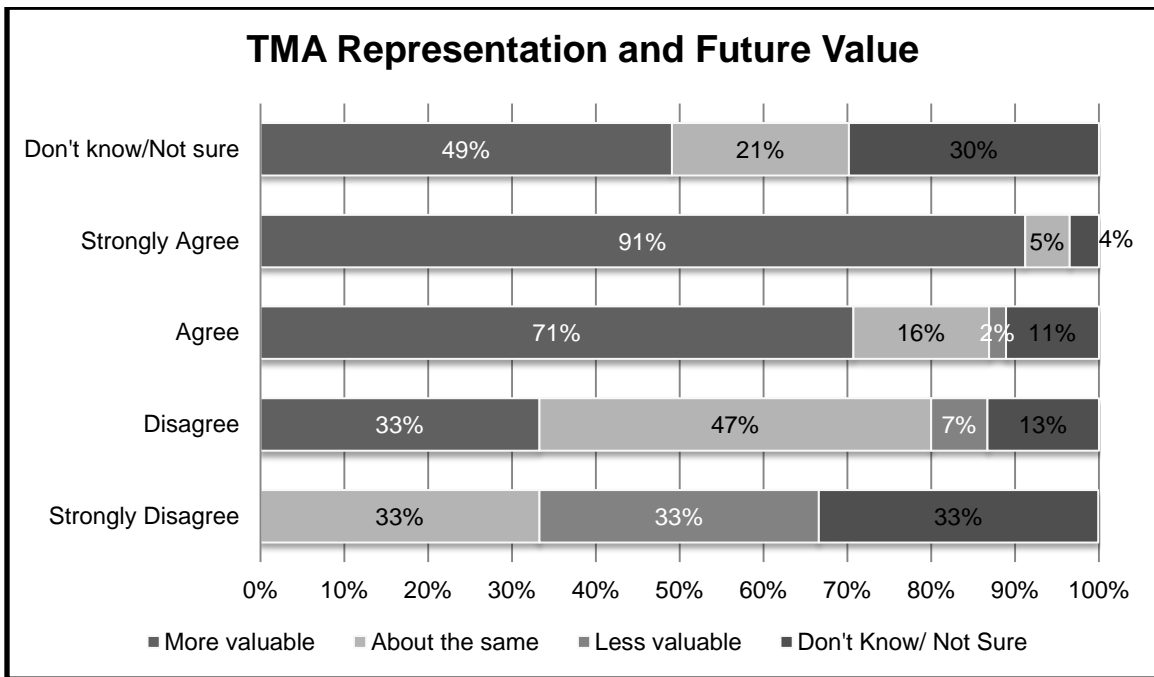


The Future Value of TMA (Q13)

Considering the recent and continuing challenges affecting medicine, students reported that TMA will be more valuable to them in years to come (66 percent).

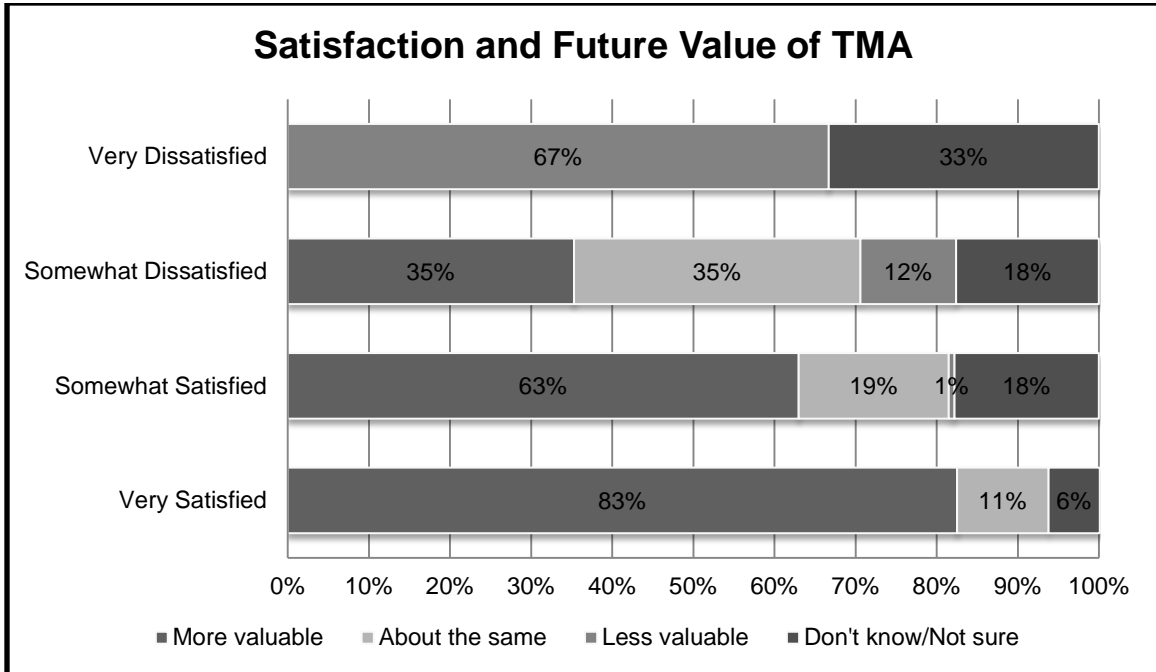


The overwhelming majority of students who strongly agree or that TMA represents them also believe their membership will be more valuable in the future (91 percent and 71 percent respectively).



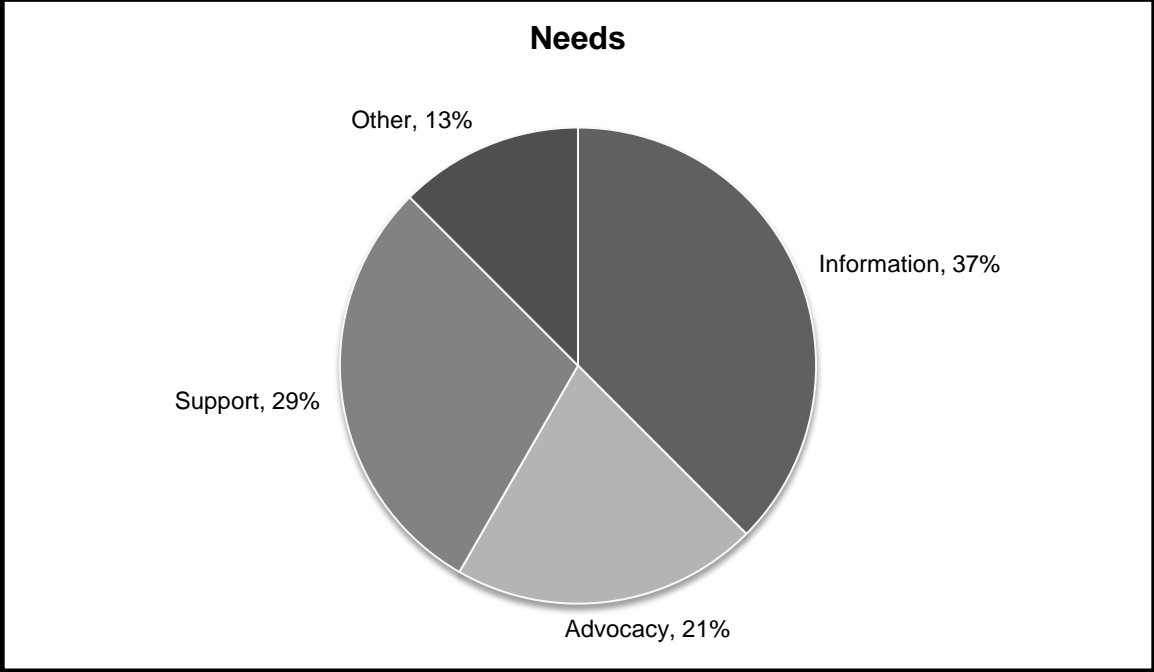
There is not a statistically significant relationship between students' political involvement and their perception of the value of TMA in years to come. Further, there is not a statistically significant relationship between the likelihood a student is involved in a leadership position at TMA and their belief in the value of TMA in the future.

Students who are very or somewhat satisfied with the value they receive from TMA believe it will be more valuable to them in years to come (83 and 63 percent respectively). Students who are very dissatisfied with the value they receive from TMA believe it will be less valuable to them (67 percent).



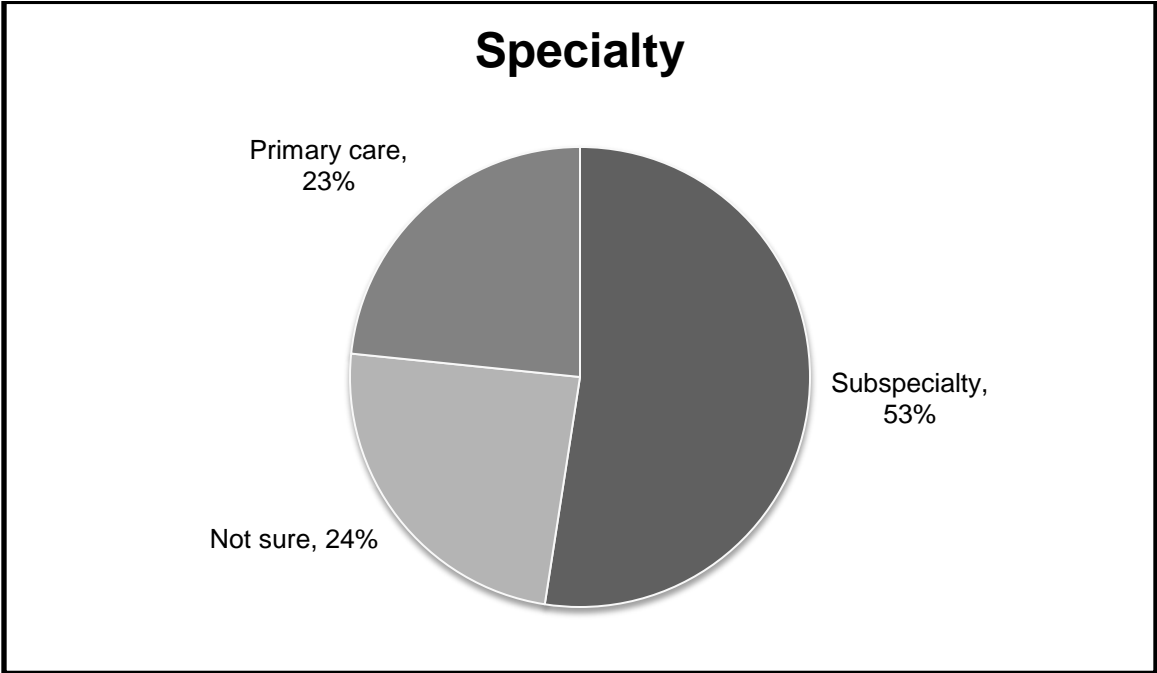
Opportunities (Q14)

Students were asked in an open-ended question what else they need from TMA. Thirty-seven percent of students have information requests, including a better explanation of the issues in a less time-consuming manner. Twenty-nine percent of respondents reported that they need more support from TMA, especially in health plan contracting. Twenty-one percent of students specified that advocacy issues were concerns for them or requested better advocacy results. Finally, 13 percent of students have other requests from TMA including more networking opportunities and more involvement from medical schools at conferences and meetings.



Specialty (Q15)

Student respondents were asked if they intend to go into primary care or a subspecialty service. The majority (53 percent) of respondents plan to enter a subspecialty.



APPENDIX - Survey Instrument

TMA Student Benefits and Services Survey

The Texas Medical Association is conducting this survey to assess how medical students perceive TMA activities, programs, and services. Please help us enhance our efforts and allocate resources so we can strengthen the services and advocacy measures you value.

All responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Thanks for your participation!

1) In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge currently facing Texas physicians?

2) What legislative, legal, and regulatory issues are most important to you as a future physician? [Random]

	Not at all Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Defending Texas' tort reforms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opposing government intrusion in medical decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opposing commercial payer intrusion in medical decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opposing hospital management intrusion in medical decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medicare payment adequacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easing restrictions on private contracting in Medicare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Revising or eliminating some provisions of the new health care reform law	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Covering the uninsured	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restoring physicians' rights to invest in health care facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reducing administrative and regulatory burdens in medical practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Antitrust protection for physicians	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Texas Medicaid payment adequacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Texas Medical Board regulation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reducing or eliminating state taxes on physician practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preventing government-imposed price controls or balance billing limits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preventing scope of practice expansion for non-physicians	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing state funding for Graduate Medical Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to care for Texas' injured workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opposing requirements to participate in Medicare or Medicaid as a condition of licensure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify: _____)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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3) Would you support or oppose the following measures to improve Medicare solvency?

	Support	Oppose	Don't Know
Increase Medicare eligibility age	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase Medicare premiums for beneficiaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase Medicare coinsurance and/or deductibles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase Medicare payroll taxes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cuts to physician fees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cuts to hospital or other provider fees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Incentives to physicians and hospitals to reduce total Medicare spending	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Penalties to physicians and hospitals who have high Medicare cost or utilization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other _____ (specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4) In my opinion, the following organizations represent me and the viewpoint of future physicians like me.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Texas Medical Association (TMA)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
American Medical Association (AMA)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5) Which of the following responses best describes your current level of involvement and activity in advocating legislative policy issues affecting patients, physicians, and the health care industry?

- I am very involved and active. I communicate with legislators in advocacy efforts. (Skip to question 7.)
- I am somewhat involved and active (follow issues on a fairly regular basis) and respond occasionally to requests to assist with some issues. (Skip to question 7.)
- I am somewhat uninvolved and inactive, but follow issues on a periodic basis.
- I am not involved or active at this point.

6) I would like to get more involved and I'm interested in learning more about the TMA/AMA.

- Yes
- No

7) Thinking about your FIRST medical practice, please rate the desirability, in your opinion, of the following practice types

	5 (Least Desirable)	4	3	2	1 (Most Desirable)	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Solo practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Immediate buy-in to an established medical practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment in an established physician practice, with a subsequent option to buy in to ownership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment by a nonprofit health organization run by physicians	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment by a hospital	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment by a state or federal agency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment in academia or research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8) Are you interested in owning or co-owning a practice at some point in your medical career?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/ Not Sure

9) What is the single most important reason to belong to the Texas Medical Association?

10) Please indicate which of the following TMA or county medical society services you find valuable, now or in the future (Please check all that apply.)

	Now	In the Future	Don't Know/ Not Sure
Advocacy for patients and physicians in the Texas legislature and in Texas regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advocacy for patients and physicians in Congress and in federal regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training or education for physicians on practice management (CME)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice management training for physicians' practice staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-line networking opportunities with other students or physicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conferences or meetings for education and networking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
News updates regarding medical practice including advocacy, regulatory compliance issues and health care reforms.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify: _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11) Have you participated in a leadership position at TMA (e.g., delegate, council or committee member)?

- Yes, I am currently serving or have served in a TMA leadership position.
- No, although I have been asked, I had to decline the commitment.
- No, although I am interested and would like the opportunity.
- No, I would not be interested.

12) How satisfied are you with the value you receive from TMA?

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

13) With recent and continuing challenges affecting medicine, will TMA be more or less valuable to you in years to come?

- More valuable
- About the same
- Less valuable
- Don't Know/ Not Sure

14) What else do you need from TMA?
