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SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE IN THE PRACTICE OF NEUROLOGY

# AAN

## NEWS & NOTES

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## Alabama Legislature: 2021 session begins February 2

The 2021 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature will convene on February 2. The length of the regular session is limited to 30 meeting days within a period of 105 calendar days. Special sessions of the Legislature may be called by the Governor, with the Proclamation



listing the subjects which the Governor wishes considered. These sessions are limited to 12 legislative days within a 30 calendar day span. In a regular session, bills may be enacted on any subject. In a special session, legislation must be enacted only on those subjects which the Governor announces in his proclamation or "call." Anything not in the "call" requires a two-thirds vote of each house to be enacted.

### Where is the Alabama State House Located?

The Alabama State House is located at 11 South Union Street in Montgomery. The House of Representatives chamber is on the 5th floor and the public viewing gallery for the House is located on the 6th floor. The Alabama Senate chamber is on the 7th floor and the public viewing gallery for the Senate is located on the 8th floor.

### Who Can I Call to Find Out what Time the Legislature Meets During a Session?

To find out the times the House and Senate will convene on any given legislative day during the session, you can reach the House of Representatives at (334) 261-0500 and the Alabama Senate at (334) 261-0800.

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## Executive Order provides physicians liability protections from COVID-19

In May, Gov. Kay Ivey issued an Executive Order protecting physicians, their staff, and their practices from lawsuits related to COVID-19. The order provides immunity for treatment that resulted from, was negatively affected by or was done in response to the COVID-19 pandemic or the state's response to the pandemic unless proven by clear and convincing evidence that a health professional acted with wanton, reckless, willful, or intentional misconduct – a standard significantly higher than simple negligence. Importantly, the liability protections in the order apply retroactively to March 13, 2020, and will remain in place until the COVID-19 public health emergency is terminated.

In response to the executive order, **AAN President Amit Arora, MD**, sent a letter to the Governor thanking her for her work in protecting physicians, their staff and patients.

## Alabama Academy of Neurology

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### ABOUT AAN

The Alabama Academy of Neurology is the professional association representing neurologists in Alabama.

AAN is dedicated to:

- Supporting the highest standards of excellence in the practice of neurology
- Improving patient access to quality neurological care;
- Advancing the profession of neurology by supporting principals, policies and practices that seek to improve patient care, and
- Supporting education and advocacy for our profession, our patients and their families.

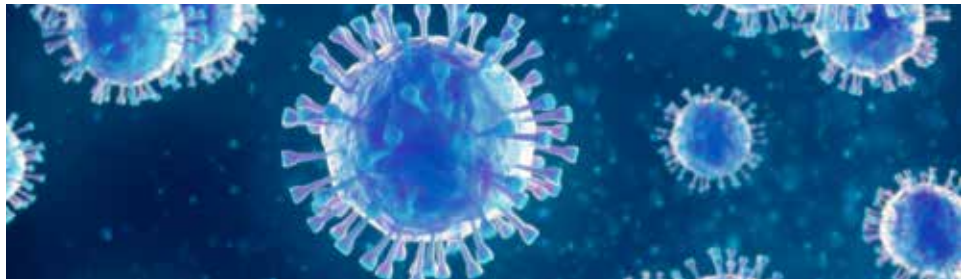


## American Academy of Neurology Annual Meeting

April 17-22, 2021  
San Francisco, CA

The agenda and format are being finalized and more information will be provided as it becomes available. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, the AAN Annual Meeting is currently planned to be in person with a corresponding virtual component.

Registration information will be available soon at [www.aan.com/conferences/annualmeeting](http://www.aan.com/conferences/annualmeeting).



## Medical Association delivers advocacy during COVID-19

*Editor's note: The Medical Association of the State of Alabama, through its wholly owned subsidiary, MASA Services, Inc., provides management services for the Alabama Academy of Neurology. Those services include providing updates on legislative activities that affect the practice of neurosurgery in Alabama.*

*by Niko Corley, Director, Legislative Affairs, Medical Association of the State of Alabama*

While Alabama's neurologists were busy caring for patients during COVID-19, the Medical Association was and remains hard at work advocating for the house of medicine. Time and again, the Association's advocacy efforts have delivered for physicians. Specifically, early on during the pandemic, the Medical Association:

1. Worked with various stakeholders and Governor Ivey to secure [liability protections](#) via an Executive Order for physicians, their staff and their practices against frivolous COVID-19 lawsuits ([summary available here](#));
2. Successfully advocated against multiple dangerous scope of practice expansions proposed by both state and national organizations, which, would have eliminated physician supervision and destroyed the team-based care model, and allowed a patient's prescriptions to be switched without physician authorization and without any notification to the physician or the patient; and
3. Successfully advocated against a proposal to give out-of-state telehealth corporations special treatment that physicians currently living, working, and paying taxes in Alabama do not enjoy.

Currently, the Medical Association's COVID-19-related advocacy is focused on four key areas, identified through the Association's [COVID-19 Impact Survey](#):

1. COVID-19 grant program for medical practices – the Association worked successfully with the Ivey Administration and the Alabama Department of Finance to create a simple process for medical practices to be reimbursed for COVID-19 related expenses.
2. Expanding PPE and testing availability – the Association secured PPE sources and created a straightforward program for medical practices to purchase much-needed medical supplies. The Association continues to monitor availability of PPE and cleaning supplies. Regarding testing, while result backlogs continue in some areas, the Association is working toward solutions on the issue with state stakeholders.
3. Ensuring telemedicine access remains – the Association has long advocated for payment parity for telemedicine services provided by physicians. The Association, through its Third Party Task Force, has petitioned Blue Cross Blue Shield and others to keep these policies in place. As well, the Association is engaged with other stakeholders in advocating for expanding broadband availability across Alabama to increase access to telemedicine for patients.
4. Enacting "Safe Harbor" legislation – the Association worked with various stakeholders to craft critical legislation to protect medical practices from COVID-19-era frivolous lawsuits. At present, the Association is advocating for its passage before the Legislature and has asked Gov. Ivey's Administration to maintain the State of Emergency (and thereby the existing executive order liability protection) in place until the legislation is enacted.

For more information, visit [www.alabamamedicine.org](http://www.alabamamedicine.org). 

# AAN 2020 Members

## Regular Members

Amit Arora, MD, Neurology Consultants of Huntsville, PC, Huntsville  
 Aruna Arora, MD, Neurology Consultants of Huntsville, PC, Huntsville  
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 Olga Bogdanova, MD, Neurological Specialists, PC, Gadsden  
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 John Hinton, MD, Diagnostic and Medical Clinic, Mobile  
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 Brian Hogan, MD, Alabama Neurology and Sleep Medicine, Tuscaloosa  
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### ◆ Matthew S. McLean, MD, Mobile

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Ozgur Oztas, MD, Coastal Neurological Institute, Mobile

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Daniel C. Potts, MD, FAAN, Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center, Tuscaloosa

Leah Sanchez, MD, Central Alabama Child Neurology, PC, Montgomery

Sharman R. Sanders, MD, Anniston Orthopedic Associates, Anniston

Sara Shashy, MD, Neurology Consultants of Montgomery, Montgomery

Seth Spotnitz, MD, Neurological Specialists, PC, Gadsden

David Standaert, MD, PhD, UAB Department of Neurology, Birmingham

James Strong, MD, Grandview Medical Group Neurology, Birmingham

Stephen Suggs, MD, FAAN, Baptist Health Neurological Clinic, Montgomery

### ◆ Frank Thomas, MD, Simon Williamson Clinic, Birmingham

Ashish Vyas, MD, Baptist Health Neurological Clinic, Montgomery

### ◆ Ray Watts, MD, UAB Department of Neurology, Birmingham

## Retired Members

Susan Boston, MD, Montevallo

Stephen Bryan, MD, Eclectic

Samuel Harvey Chastain, MD, Birmingham

Fernando Franco, MD, Hoover

Alexandre Todorov, MD, FAAN, Neurology Clinic, PC, Northport

### ◆ Richard Hull, MD, Huntsville

◆ *New Member*

Renew online at [www.tinyurl.com/AAN2021](http://www.tinyurl.com/AAN2021)

## Alabama Legislature, continued

### House Health Committee Members

Rep. Paul W. Lee (R-District 86) Chairman  
 Rep. Laura Hall (D-District 19), Ranking Minority Member  
 Rep. Matt Fridy (R-District 73)  
 Rep. Jeremy Gray (D-District 83)  
 Rep. Wes Kitchens (R-District 27)  
 Rep. Craig Lipscomb (R-District 30)  
 Rep. Joe Lovvorn (R-District 79)  
 Rep. Rhett Marques (R-District 91)  
 Rep. Arnold Mooney (R-District 43)  
 Rep. Becky Nordgren (R-District 29)  
 Rep. Ed Oliver (R-District 81)  
 Rep. Neil Rafferty (D-District 54)  
 Rep. Chris Sells (R-District 90)  
 Rep. Pebbin Warren (D-District 82)

For more information on the Health Committee visit the [Alabama House of Representatives website](http://Alabama House of Representatives website).

### Senate Healthcare Committee Members

Sen. Jim McClendon (R-District 11), Chairman  
 Sen. Larry Stutts (R-District 6), Vice Chairman  
 Sen. Linda Coleman-Madison (D-District

20), Ranking Minority Leader  
 Sen. William Beasley (D-District 28)  
 Sen. Tom Butler (R-District 2)  
 Sen. Donnie Chesteen (R-District 29)  
 Sen. Tim Melson (R-District 1)  
 Sen. Greg Reed (R-District 5)  
 Sen. Dan Roberts (R-District 15)  
 Sen. Cam Ward (R-District 14)  
 Sen. Tom Whatley (R-District 27)  
 Sen. Jack W. Williams (R-District 34)

For more information on members of the Health and Human Services Committee visit the [Alabama State Senate website](http://Alabama State Senate website). 



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