

# **American Gastroenterological Association**

## **Strategic Plan**

**Approved by the Governing Board  
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# **AGA Strategic Plan Contents**

<b>Overview of Strategic Plan</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Overarching Rationale</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The New Plan</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Mission and Core Commitments</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Strategic Directions</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Operating Principle</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>AGA Strategic Plan Graphic Overview</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Definition of Terms</b>	<b>14</b>

# Overview of Strategic Plan

## Mission

- **To advance the science and practice of gastroenterology.**

## Core Commitments

- **AGA is committed to expanding the science of gastroenterology**, by actively pursuing support for research, education, and training to improve understanding of the causes, prevention, treatment, and cure of digestive diseases.
- **AGA is committed to furthering excellence in the practice of gastroenterology**, by fostering innovation and ensuring that practice is scientifically based, fairly compensated, and provides quality care and value to patients.

## Strategic Directions

- **Direction I: AGA will continually identify new forces affecting the science and practice of gastroenterology and will be a leader in guiding the development of the field.**
- **Direction II: AGA will foster the discovery of new knowledge and the application of knowledge and technology to ensure the highest quality patient care.**
- **Direction III: AGA will expand its public policy efforts to enhance the field of gastroenterology and the economics of clinical practice and research.**
- **Direction IV: AGA will work to ensure the future vitality of the science and practice of gastroenterology through a sustained commitment to trainees and young professionals.**
- **Direction V: AGA will broaden and enhance its educational offerings to be responsive to the evolving diversity, scope, and needs of gastroenterology research and practice.**
- **Direction VI: AGA will foster international scientific research and collaboration and will disseminate new scientific and clinical information worldwide.**

## Operating Principle

- **AGA will develop the organization, governance, communication systems, and resources required to achieve its mission and move forward with its plan.**

# AGA Strategic Plan

## Overarching Rationale

AGA has developed this strategic plan at a pivotal time for the field of gastroenterology. With the emergence of new knowledge and the application of new technologies and approaches, researchers and clinicians are transforming the field for the benefit of patients. While this evolution is compelling and positive in many ways, it also carries with it some inherent challenges, not the least of which is the need to harness new technologies and fully integrate them into the field. The importance of addressing this challenge cannot be overestimated, particularly with the growing public awareness of advances in imaging technology. Gastroenterology has been the undisputed leader in the diagnosis and management of digestive diseases, but new technologies may lead to major changes in health care that gastroenterologists must incorporate or address.

A related and especially critical challenge is to ensure the ongoing relevance of the field of gastroenterology. Key to addressing this issue is the need to develop and support a highly talented corps of trainees and young professionals in both research and practice. Such a goal will need a heightened AGA effort to fully support and nurture these individuals to enable them to thrive as they embark upon their professional journey.

Significant funding for research and appropriate reimbursement levels for practitioners are essential to ensure continuing advances in the field and improvements in patient care. As members face increased regulatory mandates and economic pressures, they will look to AGA for active support and intervention. Scanning the environment for emerging trends and new technologies, developing benchmark data and documenting best practices must become new core competencies for AGA. It is equally critical that AGA develop the capacity to utilize this information to enhance the science and practice of gastroenterology and to continue its important role as an expert resource on trends and developments in the field.

In an environment of constrained resources and increased competition, AGA will need enhanced advocacy efforts, creative delivery of highly sophisticated education and training programs, and continued high quality publications of cutting edge science and innovative practice. In addition, international participation and collaboration will be integral to AGA's future success and will require AGA to build upon relationships that have been initiated with the global gastroenterology community.

## **The New Plan**

AGA's new plan reinforces its commitment to serving all of its members and honoring each core constituency. Through this plan, AGA capitalizes on the strength of its diverse membership, who represent all facets of the field and all stages of professional life.

This strategic plan is ambitious and will require the orchestrated efforts of every member, and every component of the organization. The plan represents a cultural shift, moving the AGA from a fairly autonomous "academic" model, to a more unified "mission driven" model of leadership and governance in which the mission and strategic plan provide the organizational framework. Over the years, a consistent commitment, by the Governing Board and staff leadership alike, will be needed to accomplish the goals of the plan. With this commitment AGA is well positioned to truly be a leader in gastroenterology, serving all of its members and ultimately creating new knowledge [for our traditional research members] and enhancing patient care.

### **This strategic plan:**

- Supports both researchers and clinicians in meaningful ways
- Acknowledges today's challenges and sets AGA on a strategic and focused course
- Recognizes the economic and regulatory challenges that impact research and practice
- Sees AGA's diverse constituencies as a strength
- Recognizes the significant role that trainees and young professionals play in the future vitality of the field
- Strengthens AGA's commitment to advocacy
- Enhances education, one of AGA's core strengths
- Anticipates the possibility of major technology-driven shifts in clinical care
- Builds on the strengths of AGA's international relationships and track record
- Aggressively addresses financial issues to ensure adequate resources.

## **Mission**

**To advance the science and practice of gastroenterology.**

## **Core Commitments**

AGA's mission confirms its commitment to both the science and practice of gastroenterology. The core commitments on which this plan is based are:

- **AGA is committed to expanding the science of gastroenterology**, by actively pursuing support for research, education, and training to improve understanding of the causes, prevention, treatment, and cure of digestive diseases.
- **AGA is committed to furthering excellence in the practice of gastroenterology**, by fostering innovation and ensuring that practice is scientifically based, fairly compensated, and provides quality care and value to patients.

## **Strategic Directions**

### ***Including Rationales, Outcomes and Proposed Strategies***

In order to fulfill its mission of advancing the science and practice of gastroenterology, AGA will focus on six integrated strategic directions. These directions are unranked, and each is critical to the plan.

#### **Direction I AGA will continually identify new forces affecting the science and practice of gastroenterology and will be a leader in guiding the development of the field.**

**Rationale:** Because the AGA embraces all facets of gastroenterology, it is uniquely positioned to influence the evolution of the field. New areas of clinical opportunity (such as nutrition, obesity, and GI oncology, to name only a few) could be important for gastroenterology in the future, but only if appropriate decisions are made about how to integrate them into GI science and practice. In order to determine the wisdom of embracing new areas, AGA will need to have the capacity to monitor information and identify emerging trends.

Of equal importance is the need to continually monitor the economic and regulatory environments and respond by fostering innovation that will ensure that practice demonstrates the added value provided by gastroenterologists. Gastroenterologists face increasing pressure for outcomes measurement and “pay for performance,” and they need help in addressing these challenges. Actively monitoring these situations and helping members evaluate and respond to them are key roles for AGA.

New procedures and technologies also offer opportunities for expanding the scope of the field, but decisions about adopting them in practice and research must be based on realistic and accurate information about their potential. It is critical that AGA be able to assess new and emerging technologies, determine their impact on the field, and offer mechanisms for their successful incorporation into research and practice. Without an “advance warning” system the field is at risk of missing opportunities or losing some of its breadth to other specialties. The impact of new imaging technologies illustrates the importance of understanding and acting upon scientific and technological advances.

AGA’s success in influencing the evolution of the field is dependent on its continued ability to attract and retain members who represent the breadth and depth of the field, including emerging areas that are important for the future. Benefits of membership must be flexible enough to meet the needs of all gastroenterologists, scientists, clinicians, and educators, from trainees to senior professionals. AGA must also ensure that its membership continues to include

leaders who represent the highest quality in gastroenterology research and practice. By involving these “thought leaders” from both traditional and new areas, AGA reinforces its role as the integrative force and pre-eminent authority on gastroenterology.

### **Outcomes**

#### **Direction I**

**Outcome A** AGA will be the principal source of information about trends and changes that affect gastroenterology and will proactively address new opportunities as they are identified.

#### **Direction I**

**Outcome B** AGA will identify and help its members integrate new knowledge, trends, technologies, and opportunities into research and practice.

#### **Direction I**

**Outcome C** AGA will monitor the economic and regulatory environments and will prepare members to understand and respond to issues.

#### **Direction I**

**Outcome D** The value of AGA membership will continuously grow and AGA will attract scientists, clinicians, and educators, from trainees through senior professionals, who represent the breadth of the field of gastroenterology.

#### **Direction I**

**Outcome E** Prominent researchers, educators, and practitioners—the thought leaders in gastroenterology, allied fields, and emerging areas—will look to AGA as their primary professional affiliation.

**Direction II** AGA will foster the discovery of new knowledge and the application of knowledge and technology to ensure the highest quality patient care.

**Rationale:** As AGA renews its long-standing commitment to creating new knowledge through basic and clinical research, it also recognizes the importance of translating that knowledge into effective practice. AGA supports the discovery of new knowledge as a way of advancing understanding of gastroenterology and human health and the application of this knowledge to improve patient care. The

highest quality patient care requires, among other things, new evidence-based practice management tools and guidelines. Practice must also be efficient and provide improved patient and physician satisfaction.

### **Outcomes**

#### **Direction II**

**Outcome A** AGA will be a leader in expanding resources to foster scientific and clinical discovery

#### **Direction II**

**Outcome B** AGA will be a leader in translating new knowledge into practice, thus enhancing patient care.

#### **Direction II**

**Outcome C** AGA will be a leader in maximizing the efficiency and economic vitality of GI practice.

#### **Direction II**

**Outcome D** The medical and lay communities will recognize that the GI physician should be the principal physician to manage digestive diseases.

**Direction III** AGA will expand its public policy efforts to enhance the field of gastroenterology and the economics of clinical practice and research.

**Rationale:** Public policy decisions significantly impacts both the science and practice of gastroenterology; such decisions influence the funding of research, the acceptance and use of new technologies, patient access to gastroenterologists, and reimbursement for patient care. Public policy embraces all organizations that influence these decisions: Congress, Federal and state governmental and regulatory agencies, insurers, and the health care system. While AGA cannot address individual state issues, it will need the capacity to stay informed about state issues that may have national implications.

AGA is committed to improving and expanding its public policy activities that may support the needs of its members. Basic and clinical scientists require growth in funding for research so that they may continue to advance the field. Members in practice need adequate reimbursement and protection of revenue, as well as enhanced patient access to quality care by gastroenterologists. GI

education and training also face major funding challenges that may be addressed through public policy efforts.

AGA also recognizes the need to keep members informed of its activities and successes in the public policy arena so that members can have a good understanding of what the issues are and how AGA has addressed them.

Public policy offers opportunities for focused activities that engage members in addressing issues specific to gastroenterology. It also provides opportunities for leveraging impact by collaborating with others—including both professional and patient groups—to call attention to broader issues and their implications for health care. AGA is a member of a number of alliances, such as the Alliance of Specialty Medicine, and will expand these collaborations as appropriate.

### **Outcomes**

#### **Direction III**

**Outcome A** AGA will be a leader in public policy to ensure adequate support for basic and clinical research in gastroenterology.

#### **Direction III**

**Outcome B** AGA will be a leader in public policy aimed at enhancing both patient care and the viability of gastroenterology practice.

#### **Direction III**

**Outcome C** AGA will be recognized as the leading proponent of the field of gastroenterology and of policies that support high quality patient care and access to such care.

#### **Direction III**

**Outcome D** AGA members will be aware of the issues that affect gastroenterology and will recognize AGA's public policy efforts and accomplishments.

**Direction IV** AGA will work to ensure the future vitality of the science and practice of gastroenterology through a sustained commitment to trainees and young professionals.

**Rationale:** The field of gastroenterology will thrive only if it can continue to attract and retain top quality trainees and young professionals. AGA is well positioned to be a leader in promoting and supporting careers in gastroenterology,

including practice, basic and clinical research, and teaching. To do this, it is essential that AGA:

- Help attract more researchers, physicians and other professionals to the field;
- Influence education and training so that young scientists and physicians are able to utilize new methods and technologies effectively and in doing so contribute to enhanced patient care; and
- Provide and encourage research funding to support trainees and young investigators.

AGA is committed to ensuring that trainees and young professionals receive the education and training they need to be successful, and to integrating these individuals as members of the AGA. Representing the breadth and depth of the entire field, AGA has the collective knowledge to influence the direction of gastroenterology education and training.

### **Outcomes**

#### **Direction IV**

**Outcome A** AGA will be seen as the leading resource for the development of information to support the training, certification, and recertification of gastroenterologists.

#### **Direction IV**

**Outcome B** AGA will be known for its effective support of research careers in gastroenterology.

#### **Direction IV**

**Outcome C** AGA will be a vibrant, supportive affiliation for all gastroenterology trainees and young professionals.

#### **Direction IV**

**Outcome D** AGA will play a strong role in leadership development for gastroenterology trainees and young professionals.

**Direction V** AGA will broaden and enhance its educational offerings to respond to the evolving diversity, scope, and needs of gastroenterology research and practice.

**Rationale:** AGA is committed to ensuring that its educational offerings reflect the needs of the field and the strategic plan. AGA is widely recognized for the excellence of its publications and its contributions to DDW, and it must maintain and enhance the quality of these offerings so that they remain relevant and vital to all AGA members. As the diversity of AGA's membership increases, AGA will adjust its offerings so that they effectively serve each constituency and component of the membership. This may require developing tailored publications and educational offerings tailored to address specific areas of science, clinical practice, and practice economics.

A key element of supporting trainees and young professionals is to provide educational offerings that meet their specific and changing needs. While DDW and the publications are excellent resources for these members, AGA also recognizes that trainees and young professionals will be looking for future-oriented educational programming that will help them build their knowledge and skills and enhance their careers.

Providing educational offerings to serve all members will require a variety of delivery methods, tailored to ensure that members can receive the education they need in the ways and in the locations that best meet their requirements. AGA, as a trusted provider of information, is well positioned to expand its offerings through web-based technologies and other innovative approaches to meet the changing needs of members.

## **Outcomes**

### **Direction V**

**Outcome A** AGA educational offerings will be comprehensive, year-round, and designed to meet the needs of its diverse membership.

### **Direction V**

**Outcome B** AGA will provide cutting edge scientific and clinical programs.

### **Direction V**

**Outcome C** AGA programming at DDW will attract the very best in GI relevant science.

### **Direction V**

**Outcome D** AGA will apply new and innovative technology to facilitate dissemination and exchange of knowledge and information.

**Direction V**

**Outcome E** AGA will be the pre-eminent source of GI related publications.

**Direction VI AGA will foster international scientific research and collaboration and will disseminate new scientific and clinical information worldwide.**

**Rationale:** Although many gastroenterology organizations exist throughout the world, AGA attracts significant international membership and participation. Though primarily a US focused organization, AGA has strong ties with the international scientific and clinical community. As information technology increases the interactions between and among scientists and practitioners across the globe, national distinctions and boundaries will become less relevant, and international collaboration more important. Through AGA programs at DDW and *Gastroenterology*, AGA has developed international relationships, and can build on these connections to strengthen both the field and AGA's ability to impact it. Because it includes both scientists and clinicians, AGA is also strongly positioned to facilitate the translation of research into practice worldwide.

**Outcomes**

**Direction VI**

**Outcome A** AGA will facilitate international communications among scientists and practicing physicians to foster research and share best practices.

**Direction VI**

**Outcome B** AGA will build relationships with GI societies outside the United States.

## Operating Principle

Success will require that AGA commit to a key operating principle that underlies the plan:

**AGA will develop the organization, governance, communication systems, and resources required to achieve its mission and move forward with its plan.**

This direction has five components:

- **AGA’s organization and governance will be nimble and effective, supporting the strategic plan.** This will require assessing AGA’s governance structures, systems, and processes and adjusting them as required to facilitate implementation of the strategic plan.
- **AGA’s organization and governance structure and processes will result in effective leadership development and productive member engagement.**
- **The distribution and utilization of resources will be determined by the strategic plan.** Each year AGA will assess priorities for the coming based on the plan and allocate resources accordingly.
- **AGA will develop and sustain the financial and human resources required to move forward with the plan.** With the strategic plan as a guide, AGA will develop a plan to ensure its long-term financial stability.
- **AGA will enhance its communications to members and non-members.** AGA recognizes the need to establish and implement a multimedia, constituency-focused communication plan.

## AGA Strategic Plan Overview

### The Mission of AGA:

To advance the science and practice of gastroenterology

### Core Commitments:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>AGA is committed to expanding the science of gastroenterology</b>, by actively pursuing support for research, education, and training to improve understanding of the causes, prevention, treatment, and cure of digestive diseases.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>AGA is committed to furthering excellence in the practice of gastroenterology</b>, by fostering innovation and ensuring that practice is scientifically based, fairly compensated, and provides quality care and demonstrated value to patients.</li></ul> |
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### Strategic Directions:

- I. AGA will continually identify new forces affecting the science and practice of gastroenterology and will be a leader in guiding the development of the field.
- II. AGA will foster the discovery of new knowledge and the application of knowledge and technology to ensure the highest quality patient care.
- III. AGA will expand its public policy efforts to enhance the field of gastroenterology and the economics of clinical practice and research.
- IV. AGA will work to ensure the future vitality of the science and practice of gastroenterology through a sustained commitment to trainees and young professionals.
- V. AGA will enhance and expand its educational offerings to be responsive to the evolving diversity, scope, and needs of gastroenterology research and practice.
- VI. AGA will foster international scientific research and collaboration and will disseminate new scientific and clinical information worldwide.

### Operating Principle:

AGA will develop the organization, governance, communication systems, and resources required to achieve its mission and move forward with its plan.

## Definition of Terms Used in this Plan

- **Mission:** statement of AGA’s underlying purpose
- **Core Commitments:** building on the mission, these are statements of principle – AGA’s commitments to both science and practice
- **Strategic Directions:** the six major elements of the plan. These are unranked and highly interrelated and form the “backbone” of the plan, indicating the principal directions in which AGA is going to move over the next several years. They are numbered I, II, etc.
- **Outcomes:** statements in general terms of the outcomes or results that you will be looking for as AGA moves to fulfill the strategic direction. They are numbered A, B, C, etc.
- **Strategies:** specific actions or approaches AGA may use to achieve the desired outcomes. While some strategies are suggested under each outcome, they are by no means all inclusive. These strategies may be changed, and new ones added, as the plan is implemented.
- **Operating Principle:** a commitment to ensuring that the organizational and resource infrastructure is in place to support implementation of the plan.