

Amy Barger Stevens, MD, FAAFP, President
Kim Friar, Chief Executive Officer

Happy
National Doctors' Day

March 2026
Volume 5 . Issue 1

Front Lines



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Happy National Doctors' Day

"Thank you for showing up every day with skills, heart, and humanity. Your dedication, compassion, and quiet acts of excellence strengthen our communities and elevate our profession. We are all better because of the work that you do. Happy Doctors' Day!" -Dr. Amy Stevens

Amy R. Barger Stevens MD Living the Mission



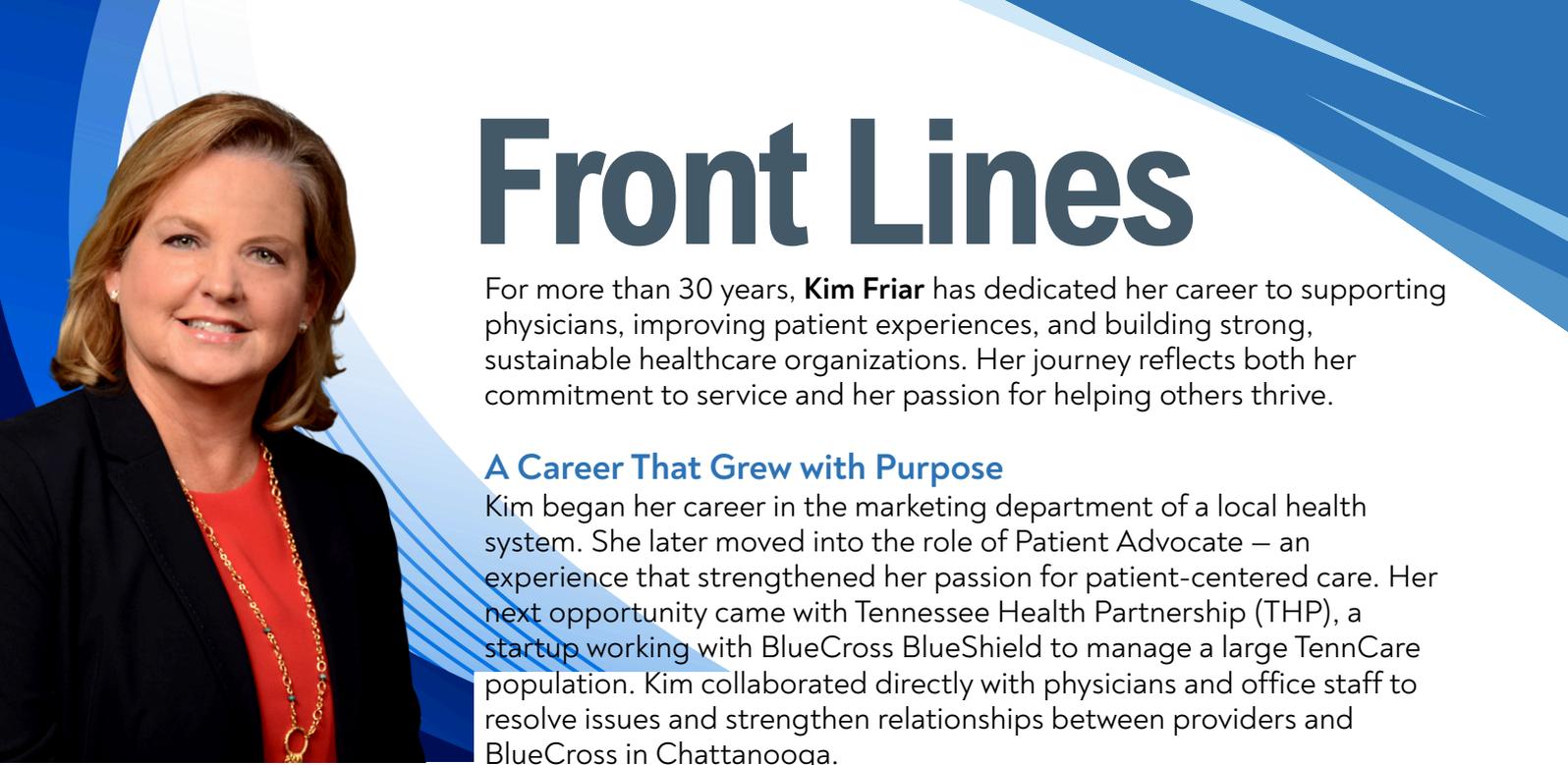
Amy R. Barger Stevens, MD, FAAFP
President, UPA
University Family Physicians
Family Physician, Professor

Amy Barger Stevens, MD is board certified in Family Medicine. She earned her medical degree from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, then completed her internship and residency at Baptist Healthplex Family Medicine Residency. Dr. Stevens further advanced her academic leadership training through a fellowship at the National Institute of Program Director Development. In addition to her commitment to compassionate patient care and excellence in resident education, she serves UT Medical in multiple leadership roles, contributing to clinical, educational, and institutional advancement.

"I wanted to become a physician to help people by listening, caring and provide healing in all ailments." -Dr. Amy Stevens

Dr. Stevens became a physician to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others through attentive listening, compassionate care, and effective treatment across a broad range of health concerns. She is dedicated to supporting patients of all ages and guiding them through their health challenges. Driven by a lifelong commitment to learning, she remains engaged and inspired through ongoing personal and professional growth. Dr. Stevens also encourages fellow healthcare professionals to prioritize their own well-being as an essential part of providing exceptional care.

"It is difficult to care for others effectively if you are not caring for yourself. Identify what brings you joy and make space for it!" -Dr. Amy Stevens



Front Lines

For more than 30 years, **Kim Friar** has dedicated her career to supporting physicians, improving patient experiences, and building strong, sustainable healthcare organizations. Her journey reflects both her commitment to service and her passion for helping others thrive.

A Career That Grew with Purpose

Kim began her career in the marketing department of a local health system. She later moved into the role of Patient Advocate – an experience that strengthened her passion for patient-centered care. Her next opportunity came with Tennessee Health Partnership (THP), a startup working with BlueCross BlueShield to manage a large TennCare population. Kim collaborated directly with physicians and office staff to resolve issues and strengthen relationships between providers and BlueCross in Chattanooga.

Kim Friar
Chief Executive Officer

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This experience opened the door for her recruitment to the University Physicians' Association (UPA), then a small but ambitious Independent Physician Association with just three employees and 258 physicians. Kim was hired as employee number three, immersing herself in every aspect of the organization. As UPA grew, so did her roles – first to Chief Operating Officer and eventually to Chief Executive Officer, a position she has held for the last 20 years.

Lessons Learned Along the Way

Looking back, Kim says she wishes she had learned earlier to set realistic expectations – for herself and for others. “I said ‘yes’ to a lot of extra work just to get the task accomplished. Over time, I learned the importance of understanding when my involvement made sense and when someone was simply relying on my willingness to take on more.”

Still, Kim recognizes that the many challenges she embraced helped her grow and succeed. Today, UPA has more than 1,200 team members and 1,400 providers across 21 counties, and Kim is proud to lead a team dedicated to reducing administrative burdens for physician practices so providers can spend more time caring for the patients in our communities.



April is **National Volunteer Month**, and we'd love to celebrate by spotlighting the amazing volunteer work happening across UPA! Please submit a photo of you volunteering along with a short blurb about an organization you support and why it's meaningful to you.

Deadline to submit: April 8
Send submissions to: UPAMarketing@utmck.edu

We can't wait to highlight the causes you care about—thank you for making a difference!



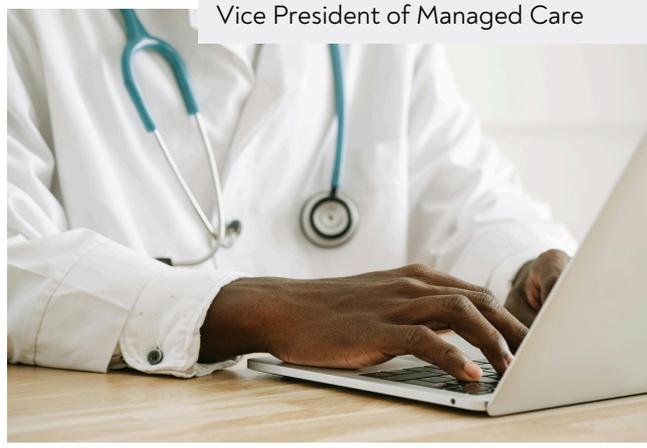
NEW

WELCOME Clinical Members

Sarah A. Dotson, PA	Neurosurgical Associates, PC	865-524-1869
Hannah E. Gales, NP	University Cancer Specialists	865-305-8780
Kimberly A. Garcia, MD	University Radiology	865-305-9661
Hesamm E. Gharavi, MD	University Cancer Specialists	865-428-6505
Samantha J. Grayson, NP	High Risk Obstetrical Consultants, PLLC	865-263-2400
Jeremy P. Greer, MD	The Skin Wellness Center	865-584-8580
Julie A. Markus, NP	Renueven Health Partners	931-381-3112
Nicholas J. McClendon, DPT	Tennessee Sports Medicine Group	865-951-2975
Mallory A. Morris, NP	Allergy, Asthma & Sinus Center	865-584-8589
Christopher S. Rudd, FNP	Allergy, Asthma & Sinus Center	865-584-8589
April N. Steele, NP	GI for Kids, PLLC	865-546-3998
Pauline G. Tolentino, CRNA	University Anesthesiologists	865-305-9220

PATHWAYS TO MANAGED CARE

Marisa D. Williams, MBA
Vice President of Managed Care



Credentialing & Payer Enrollment

Key insights for providers:

Credentialing delays can stall payments for 3-4 months. Many practices lose significant revenue simply because enrollment isn't completed before providers start seeing patients. Credentialing is becoming a strategic revenue cycle function, not just as administrative task.

Source: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/unlocking-hidden-bottleneck-provider-credentialing-payer-cham-md-3isyc?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_ios&utm_campaign=share_via

Credentialing & Contracting Trends

- Payer networks are becoming more selective.
- Credentialing timelines have increased due to payer backlogs.
- Practices should start credentialing months before onboarding new providers.

Source: <https://rightmedicalbilling.com/credentialing-contracting-in-2025-trends-and-pitfalls-to-avoid>

Provider Enrollment Trends

Industry benchmarks indicate:

- Payer enrollment timelines are now commonly 90-180 days.
- Over 40% of delays come from documentation discrepancies.
- Credentialing errors often lead to underpaid or delayed claims.
- Nearly 1 in 3 practices report revenue disruption due to enrollment-related issues.
- Incorrect enrollment data contributes to a significant portion of underpaid claims and rework.

Source: Provider Enrollment in 2026: New Trends, New Rules, and New Risks - Finnastra

