



STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Scope of Practice

While it is appropriate for non-physician providers to seek updates to statutes and regulations relating to their defined scope of practice to reflect advances in education and training, the AAO-HNS strongly believes a physician-led hearing healthcare team, with coordination of services, is the best approach for providing the highest quality care to patients. The AAO-HNS strongly opposes legislation that would inappropriately expand the scope of practice of non-physician providers beyond their education and training, particularly proposals that threaten patient safety by enabling such providers to independently diagnose, treat, or manage medical disorders.

Audiology/Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Licensure Compact

Interstate compacts are contractual agreements between two or more states often used to standardize professional licensure among an increasingly mobile workforce. The stated mission of this compact is to facilitate the practice of audiologists and speech-language pathologists among the states. However, the AAO-HNS strongly objects to the use of such compacts to inappropriately expand a profession's scope of practice and/or to extend the governing Commission's rule-making authority over existing state laws and regulations.

Hearing Aid Services

The coverage of, sale, and dispensing of hearing aids is an issue considered by several states in various forms each legislative year. The AAO-HNS tracks many bills that address the scope of practice of dispensing hearing aids, state insurance mandates for hearing aids, and tax credits and/or exemptions for hearing aids. The merits and potential concerns with these varying proposals are typically evaluated on an individual basis.

Infant Newborn Screening for Cytomegalovirus (CMV)

An estimated one in every 200 babies is born with CMV, a congenital viral infection that has been associated with sensorineural hearing loss. Early identification of CMV-related hearing loss in the first month of life is critical to successful treatment, language development, and achievement of long-term developmental milestones. The AAO-HNS supports screening and prevention efforts to educate pregnant women and their families regarding this common, yet preventable, viral infection.

Truth in Advertising

With the emergence of clinical doctorate programs for non-physician providers, which has led to many degree holders referring to themselves as "doctors," there is growing confusion within the patient population about the level of training and education of their healthcare providers. The AAO-HNS continues to advocate for increased transparency in patient communications and interactions to help clarify each provider's qualifications and appropriate role in the healthcare delivery system.

Maintenance of Certification

Maintenance of certification (MOC) requirements for physicians are under increased scrutiny from policymakers and the medical community. The process required for recertification has become time consuming, expensive, and not directly relevant for patient care. While lifelong learning is essential, the AAO-HNS believes professional self-regulation through continuous learning and assessment must fit within the normal flow of a physician's practice, be available at a reasonable expense, improve patient care, and not undermine existing specialty-board authority. In addition, the AAO-HNS opposes the use of MOC requirements for the purposes of hospital privileging, licensing, and payer participation and reimbursement.

Medical Liability Reform

Each year, numerous states consider various tort reform measures, including those related to affidavits of merit, alternative reforms, caps on non-economic damages, defensive medicine issues, expert witnesses, health courts, and/or pre-trial screening panels. The AAO-HNS strongly supports comprehensive medical liability reforms to stabilize and reduce professional liability premiums, ensure continued access to care by patients, and eliminate frivolous lawsuits.

*For more information on state legislative issues or specific measures,
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