



Dear ENT Advocacy Network Member:

March 1, 2021

Legislative and political activity directly affects our practices and our patients. As a leading advocate for otolaryngology-head and neck surgery, we hope you enjoy reading this edition of *The ENT Advocate*, your premier source of advocacy information for the specialty!

## Lead Story

### The 117th Congress and New Administration: First 100 Days

With Democrats now in control of the White House, Senate, and House of Representatives, President Biden is leading the Administration and Congress' response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The President's \$1.9 trillion COVID relief package passed the House of Representatives on February 27. This legislation has an uphill battle in the Senate, given the party's slim majority. Confirmation hearings for President Biden's nominations for Xavier Becerra to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to serve as the Administrator for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have commenced in the Senate. Once these two key Administration posts are filled, we can expect Congressional debate on pivotal healthcare issues to begin in earnest. The Academy is eager to build off the legislative successes from the previous Congress to further protect and bolster otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons and their patients.

## Legislative and Political Reports

### New AMA Resource Available on the "No Surprises Act"

On December 27, 2020, the "No Surprises Act" was signed into law. This legislation, which enacts changes to federal law to protect patients from the financial impact of unanticipated medical bills, was included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. The new law takes effect on January 1, 2022, and includes provisions on price transparency, provider directories, and patient financial protections that will impact AAO-HNS members and their patients. The American Medical Association has [released an initial guide](#) to the major provisions included in this legislation.

### AAO-HNS Opposes Additional Medicare Payment Cuts

The AAO-HNS [joined the American Medical Association](#) and dozens of other national and state medical societies in urging Congress to pass H.R. 315, the "Medicare Sequester COVID Moratorium Act." This bipartisan legislation would suspend the automatic 2% Medicare sequester payment cut for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency. While we applaud Congress for recognizing the financial strain that COVID-19 is placing on physician practices and for enacting a temporary sequester moratorium and subsequent extension to March 31, 2021, it is critical that Congress further postpone the sequester. The

Advocacy network can expect to see an AAO-HNS grassroots campaign in support of H.R. 315, the “Medicare Sequester COVID Moratorium Act” soon.

## ENT PAC “First 50” Update

Thanks to the support of so many AAO-HNS members, we have reached our “First 50” goal! These generous contributions will help ENT PAC protect otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons and their patients across the country. While the First 50 contributors are integral in our efforts, we hope that many more will consider bolstering our work on Capitol Hill. With your collective efforts, even \$10 a month can add up to an overwhelmingly loud voice in Washington. If you have not contributed in 2021, we hope that you will consider [amplifying AAO-HNS’ efforts on Capitol Hill](#).

## Regulatory Reports

### SBA PPP Provisions for Small Businesses with 20 or Fewer Employees: Now through March 9

In order to reach the smallest businesses, SBA will offer PPP loans to businesses with fewer than 20 employees and sole proprietors only from Wednesday, February 24 through Tuesday, March 9, 2021, at 5:00 pm (ET). [Additional program changes](#) were also announced to make access to PPP loans more equitable. [Read More](#).

### New Coding Resources Available: Top 100 ENT Services for 2021

The AAO-HNS [has prepared two charts](#) for members outlining the top 100 Current Procedural Terminology codes reported by providers with the designation “4-Otolaryngology” within the Medicare database. The two charts describe the top 100 ENT codes billed in a physician office and the hospital outpatient department. The information is based on 2019 Medicare claims data, which is the most recent year for which data is available.

### AAO-HNS Continues Medicare Advocacy Efforts on Payment for PPE

On February 1, the AAO-HNS [submitted a comment letter](#) to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding its interim final policy on coding and payment for personal protective equipment (PPE) and other infection control costs during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE). The Academy’s comments reiterated our previous recommendation that CMS immediately implement and separately pay for CPT code 99072. Fair reimbursement for this code is required to recognize physicians’ increased expenses due to infection control practices necessary to care for patients during the ongoing PHE.

## Action Requested

### Strengthening PROJECT 535

Given the ambitious legislative agenda for the 117th Congress, it’s more important than ever for the Academy to strengthen its “key contacts” network via PROJECT 535. In addition to the Academy’s overall advocacy efforts, PROJECT 535 volunteers help reinforce our message by establishing one-to-one relationships with federal elected officials. This additional element of constituent-based outreach amplifies our advocacy efforts when Congress debates major issues affecting the specialty. The commitment is minimal, but the impact is immense. To help further strengthen our collective advocacy efforts, [sign up](#) today or contact [govtaffairs@entnet.org](mailto:govtaffairs@entnet.org) for more information.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey S. Brown, MD  
BOG Legislative Affairs Committee Chair  
and the AAO-HNS Advocacy Team

If you no longer wish to receive important legislative and political updates via *The ENT Advocate*, please reply to this email with CANCEL ADVOCATE in the subject line.

\*Contributions to ENT PAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Contributions are voluntary, and all members of the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Federal law prohibits ENT PAC from accepting contributions from foreign nationals. By law, if your contributions are made using a personal check or credit card, ENT PAC may use your contribution only to support candidates in federal elections. All corporate contributions to ENT PAC will be used for educational and administrative fees of ENT PAC, and other activities permissible under federal law. Federal law requires ENT PAC to use its best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation, and the name of the employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

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