



Dear ENT Advocacy Network Member:

June 07, 2019

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

AAO-HNS Supports Introduction of Comprehensive Tobacco Control Legislation

The AAO-HNS [joined more than 50 public health organizations in expressing strong support](#) for the *Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act of 2019* ([H.R. 2339](#)). This new legislation, introduced by U.S. Representatives Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Donna Shalala (D-FL), addresses youth use of tobacco products. The bill is one of several bipartisan proposals introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate attempting to curb the youth tobacco epidemic.

Action Requested

Are You Prepared for August Recess?

The Academy provides numerous opportunities for its members to influence health policy at the state and federal level, educate elected officials, and invest in the future of otolaryngology. One of the best ways to make your voice heard on behalf of the specialty is by participating in the In-District Grassroots Outreach (I-GO) program. You don't need to fly to Washington, DC, to meet with your elected representatives! Meeting with a lawmaker or their staff at their local office or inviting them to tour your practice are also effective ways to engage with policymakers. [To learn more about the I-Go program, or request a meeting with your state or federal legislators, be sure to check out the June edition of the *Bulletin*.](#)

Text to Advocate: Sign Up Today!

Members can reinforce the Academy's legislative efforts by signing up to receive timely advocacy updates and "Calls to Action!" This layer of outreach strengthens the specialty's position when Congress debates major healthcare issues. You CAN make a difference and it's as simple as **texting "Otoadvocate" to 313131**. Questions? Contact the AAO-HNS Advocacy team at govtaffairs@entnet.org.

Legislative & Political Reports

AAO-HNS Co-Sponsors Education Briefing on Capitol Hill

On May 29, the AAO-HNS cosponsored a briefing on Capitol Hill with the Friends of the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus. At the briefing, [Academy member Richard K. Gurgel, MD, spoke](#) on the public health impact of hearing loss in older adults. Dr. Gurgel, AAO-HNS Advocacy staff, and Caucus members also met with offices on Capitol Hill to discuss a range of issues concerning adult hearing loss and the Medicare program. **Surprise Billing**

Gains Traction on Capitol Hill

As part of the AAO-HNS/F 2019 Leadership Forum & BOG Spring Meeting last month, AAO-HNS physician leaders advocated on Capitol Hill for legislative solutions to "surprise billing" to better protect patients. Surprise billing solutions continue to gain momentum on Capitol Hill as multiple pieces of legislation have been introduced in the U.S. House and Senate. On Tuesday, May 21, the [House Committee on Ways & Means convened a hearing to examine the issue](#).

ICYM : AAO-HNS Member Debara Tucci, MD, MS, MBA, Named Director of NIH NIDCD

AAO-HNS Member Debara L. Tucci, MD, MS, MBA, [has been selected to lead the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders \(NIDCD\) as its new director](#). Dr. Tucci is currently a professor of surgery and director of the cochlear implant program in the Division of Head and Neck Surgery & Communication Sciences at Duke University. A long-time, active member of the AAO-HNS, she is the recipient of the AAO-HNS Distinguished Service Award and Jerome C. Goldstein, MD Public Service Award. Dr. Tucci also served on the AAO-HNS Research Advisory Board, Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and numerous subcommittees. She is expected to join NIH on September 3, 2019.

ENT PAC Working For You

Throughout the month of May, the AAO-HNS participated (via ENT PAC) in political events for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) and National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), as well as for the following U.S. Representatives and Senators:

- Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA);
- Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK);
- Rep. Neal Dunn, MD (R-FL);
- Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA);
- Rep. Phil Roe, MD (R-TN);
- Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME);
- Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY);
- Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR);
- Rep. Michael Burgess, MD (R-TX);
- Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX).

Other News

Academy Comments on Moda Health Reimbursement Policy

Effective February 18, 2019, Blue Cross Blue Shield Highmark updated its commercial medical policies in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia to cover stand-alone balloon ostial dilation of the sinus. The procedure is now considered medically necessary for the treatment of chronic sinusitis when specific criteria are met. [Learn more about the Academy's continued advocacy on balloon sinus ostial dilation.](#)

Major Alabama Payer Opt's to Maintain Reimbursement for Cone Beam CT Scans

In December 2017, one of Alabama's largest health insurance carriers announced a drastic reimbursement reduction for cone beam computed tomography (CT) scans, effective January 2018. Coordinated advocacy efforts occurring over the course of the next 18 months eventually resulted in a significant win for practicing otolaryngology-head and neck surgeons in the state of Alabama. [To read the full article, check out the May 2019 *Bulletin* online.](#)

Looking for More? Check out the recent Advocacy Articles in the *Bulletin*!

- [Tackling Private Payer Denials](#)
- [Increased payer coverage](#)
- [ENT PAC launches "ResidentTEN" program for resident physicians](#)
- [Advocacy highlights from the AAO-HNS/F 2019 Leadership Forum & BOG Spring Meeting](#)
- [Making Connections through Coalitions](#)

Sincerely,

David Boisonneau, MD
BOG Legislative Affairs Committee Chair
and the AAO-HNS Advocacy Team

For more information, contact govtaffairs@entnet.org. Don't forget to bookmark [The ENT Advocate!](#)

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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