



Dear ENT Advocacy Network Member:

November 2, 2018

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

### **Advocacy in Action: CMS Heeds AAO-HNS Concerns on 2019 Physician Fee Schedule**

On November 1, CMS released a final rule implementing changes to the 2019 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. In response to AAO-HNS advocacy and coordinated efforts across the House of Medicine, CMS opted to rescind its proposal to apply an MPPR/Modifier 25 reduction for procedures reported on the same day as an E/M service. In addition, the agency delayed and modified its broad-reaching proposed changes relating to coding and payment for E/M services for new and established patient office visits. Beginning in 2021, which allows more time for stakeholder input, CMS will maintain the billing code for the most complex patients and collapse the current E/M coding system into three tiers. As the AAO-HNS continues its review of the 2,400-page final rule, a more detailed analysis will be posted on ENTConnect and included in next Thursday's *OTO News*. Academy members can view the final rule [here](#) and the AAO-HNS comment letter on the proposed rule [here](#).

## Action Requested

### **Election Day Is November 6: Don't Forget to Vote!**

Election Day is Tuesday, November 6 - don't forget to vote! The AAO-HNS Advocacy team will be closely monitoring the races to determine if there will be a shift in power in the U.S. House and/or Senate and state legislatures. The outcome of the elections will likely impact the specialty's healthcare priorities and the agenda for the impending Congressional lame duck session. [Click here to confirm your polling location!](#)

### **Help Us Finish Strong...Make Your 2018 Contribution to ENT PAC!**

Thanks to the generous contributions of our members, ENT PAC exceeded its fundraising goal, raising more than \$20,000 at the AAO-HNSF Annual Meeting in Atlanta! With yet another critical election season on the horizon, now is the time to strengthen our ENT PAC coffers. If you didn't get a chance to stop by the Advocacy Booth, there is still time to show your support for the Academy's political programs before the end of the year. Your immediate contribution will help amplify the specialty's collective voice and impact on Capitol Hill. A strong close to 2018 means ENT PAC can hit the ground running in 2019. [Make your contribution today!\\*](#)

### **Preparations Are Underway for the 2019 State Legislative Sessions: Additional Trackers Needed!**

The AAO-HNS [State Tracker program](#) has grown to include more than 140 volunteers covering 46 states. However, more Trackers are needed, especially in Idaho, Nevada, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Previous experience with state legislation is not required! The Academy's Advocacy team can work with you and your state society to ensure issues affecting ENT patients and your profession are heard by the state legislatures. The first nationwide conference call with our volunteer State Trackers will be held on December 19, to discuss the upcoming 2019 sessions. Contact [legstate@entnet.org](mailto:legstate@entnet.org) to sign up or learn more!

## Legislative & Political Reports

### AAO-HNS Pushes Back on EHR Data Blocking

The AAO-HNS is actively working to end the obstructive practice by some EHR vendors who refuse or make it difficult to transfer patient data to clinical data registries, such as Reg-ent<sup>SM</sup>. Combining both legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts, the AAO-HNS recently signed onto a coalition letter urging HHS to streamline its quality reporting and promote data sharing in MIPS. Additionally, the AAO-HNS has submitted comments and joint letters to CMS, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, and Congressional leadership addressing information blocking by EHR vendors and the burden of Medicare reporting requirements on physicians. [Click here to view AAO-HNS supported letter from Congress to HHS.](#)

### U.S. Congress on Recess Until Mid-November

The U.S. Senate adjourned on October 11, allowing Senators currently up for re-election to return to their home states to campaign. With the Senate's departure, both chambers of the U.S. Congress are on recess until after the November 6 mid-term election.

### AAO-HNS Advocates on Measure Licensing for QCDRs

The AAO-HNS joined with other members of the Physician Clinical Registry Coalition in sending letters to Congressional leadership opposing CMS' recent proposal to require Qualified Clinical Data Registry (QCDR) measure owners to enter into licensing agreements with CMS that would permit any other approved QCDR to submit data on the licensed measure for purposes of MIPS reporting. View the letter [here](#).

## Other News

### Advocacy Resources Available to BOG State Societies

Did you know there are several advocacy-related resources readily available for BOG State Societies? In addition to a slide deck highlighting key AAO-HNS grassroots programs (which can be customized for your state) and other advocacy handouts, Academy staff may be available to offer an advocacy update to your members and/or host a booth at your next state society meeting. Interested? Contact [govtaffairs@entnet.org](mailto:govtaffairs@entnet.org) for more information

Sincerely,

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

For more information, contact [govtaffairs@entnet.org](mailto: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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