



Dear ENT Advocacy Network Member:

December 1, 2017

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 and FDA Discuss OTC Hearing Aid Regulations

On November 28, the AAO-HNS met with officials from the Food and Drug Administration to discuss forthcoming regulations to establish a new category of over-the-counter hearing aids for adults with mild-to-moderate hearing loss. Discussion topics included: timeline for the regulations, labeling requirements, manufacturing standards, and the importance of patient/consumer education. The Academy was represented by AAO-HNS EVP/CEO James C. Denny III, MD, and staff from the Advocacy Business Unit.

Action Requested

PROJECT 535 Amplifies Voice of the Specialty on Capitol Hill

This year, PROJECT 535 helped score several legislative “wins” for the Academy. By amplifying the specialty’s voice on Capitol Hill, PROJECT 535 participants helped to ensure reauthorization of the EHDI program, garnered strong bipartisan support for passage of IPAB repeal legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives, and prevented any substantive legislative action regarding the audiology community’s efforts to obtain “physician” status. It’s never too late to become an advocate for the specialty, so please contact the AAO-HNS Advocacy team to update your coverage or develop a relationship with an incoming lawmaker. [Sign up](#) today or contact legfederal@entnet.org for more information.

Initiate Your 2018 Monthly ENT PAC Contribution TODAY!*

Interested in supporting ENT PAC in 2018, but don’t want to make a lump-sum contribution? Problem solved! Initiate a recurring (monthly) contribution and enjoy your PAC Investor benefits throughout the duration of the year. Simply visit the [ENT PAC online giving page](#) and complete the form using the “Monthly” contribution option. With healthcare-related issues expected to remain high on the list of priorities next year, your early support is appreciated! For more information, contact entpac@entnet.org.

Legislative & Political Reports

AAO-HNS Examining Impact of Federal Tax Reform Effort

The U.S. Senate is expected to vote this evening on comprehensive [tax reform legislation](#), which will likely include a provision to repeal the ACA individual mandate. Notwithstanding the proposal’s effect on individual tax rates and itemized deductions, the legislation may modify tax rules relating to small business income (particularly pass-through entities), as well as the deductibility of student loan interest. The U.S. House of Representatives passed (227-205) its version of the legislation on November 16. The AAO-HNS, along with others in the physician community, are communicating with key leaders in the U.S. Congress to ensure lawmakers are aware of our concerns.

Senate Committees Begin Confirmation Process for Secretary of HHS

On November 29, the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) [held a hearing](#) to consider the nomination of Alex Azar to serve as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Prior to his nomination, Azar led the U.S. Pharmaceutical Division for Eli Lilly and served as a Deputy

Secretary at HHS during the George W. Bush Administration. The Senate Finance Committee is expected to soon announce the date of Azar's final confirmation hearing.

House Committee Examines Alternative Payment Models Under MACRA

The Health Subcommittee of the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee convened a hearing on November 8, titled "[MACRA and Alternative Payment Models: Developing Options for Value-based Care](#)." The Subcommittee examined Medicare payment reforms and heard testimony from the Physician Technical Advisory Committee, as well as from several physician groups, including the American College of Surgeons, American College of Physicians, and the American College of Rheumatology. The Subcommittee plans to hold a follow up hearing examining MIPS.

Bipartisan Agreement Reached on Medicare Extenders

On November 15, the U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means [announced a bipartisan agreement](#) to repeal Medicare Therapy Caps. The AAO-HNS is concerned that the agreement will include offsets to extend the redistribution of misvalued billing codes, which would allow Medicare to shift resources from specialties toward primary care services. The agreement also implements an across-the-board cut if certain spending targets are not met.

Other News

Registration and Housing Now Open For #BOGMTG18

It is time to make your plans to attend the [AAO-HNS/F 2018 Leadership Forum & BOG Spring Meeting](#), March 9-12, in Alexandria, VA. Join your colleagues for leadership development and mentoring opportunities, networking events with Academy leaders, BOG committee meetings, state society engagement discussions and tips, and much more. Registration is complimentary to AAO-HNS members who are otolaryngology practitioners. However, you must register to attend!

Coming Soon...Legislative Advocacy Podcasts!

Be on the lookout in early 2018 for access to exclusive legislative and political advocacy podcasts from the AAO-HNS Legislative Advocacy Team!

AAO-HNS Attends AMA House of Delegates Meeting

The [AMA House of Delegates](#) held its 2017 Interim Meeting from November 11-14 in Honolulu, Hawaii. The AAO-HNS was represented by its three-member delegation and one alternate delegate. Members of the AAO-HNS Delegation and staff also participated in two meetings of the OTO Section Council.

Years of Academy Advocacy Lead to Anthem's Coverage of BSOD

After years of collaborative advocacy efforts, Anthem will cover Balloon Sinus Ostial Dilation (BSOD) for treatment of chronic rhinosinusitis and recurrent acute rhinosinusitis. This is a significant change that will positively impact many members and their patients. [The 3P Workgroup, Rhinology and Paranasal Sinus Committee, and others were instrumental in this effort.](#)

CMS Releases Final QPP Rule for CY 2018

On November 2, CMS [issued the final rule](#) for Year 2 of the Quality Payment Program (QPP), addressing 2018 requirements and future years under the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System and the Advanced Alternative Payment Model programs. The Academy will submit comments by the January 1, 2018 deadline.

CMS Finalizes MPFS Payments for CY 2018

In the [2018 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule](#) (MPFS), CMS finalized recommended work Relative Value Units for the newly-developed endoscopic sinus surgery and balloon sinus dilation codes. A new AMA CPT Assistant on the new codes is being developed to provide members with guidance.



AAO-HNS/F 2018
**LEADERSHIP FORUM
& BOG SPRING MEETING**

**MARCH
9-12**
ALEXANDRIA, VA

Sincerely,
Susan R. Cordes, MD
BOG Legislative Affairs Committee Chair
and the AAO-HNS Legislative 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.

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