



Dear ENT Advocacy Network Member:

December 7, 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

### 115th Congress Wraps Up with "Lame Duck" Session

Following the mid-term elections, the U.S. Congress reconvened on November 13 with a few legislative weeks remaining to address several priorities during the "lame duck" session. The death of former U.S. President George H.W. Bush on November 30 shortened the number of legislative working days available before the end of the year and created the need for a short-term funding bill to avoid a partial government shutdown. A temporary spending agreement was reached, which funds government operations until December 21. Read on to learn more about what's ahead when the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress convenes in January.

## Action Requested

### First State Trackers Call is December 19

The first nationwide conference call with our volunteer State Trackers will be held on December 19 to discuss the upcoming 2019 sessions. 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. Contact [legstate@entnet.org](mailto:legstate@entnet.org) to sign up or learn more!

### ENT PAC "First 50" Campaign Kicks Off January 1, 2019!

Don't miss the start of ENT PAC's annual "First 50" campaign! The "First 50" campaign is a fundraising effort to garner at least **50 contributions of \$1,000+** (Chairman's Club or Leadership Club) during the month of January. **"First 50" investors will have exclusive access to a 2019 conference call series with high-ranking individuals from Congress and the Administration.** If you have questions or would like additional information, visit [www.entpac.org](http://www.entpac.org) or contact ENT PAC staff at [entpac@entnet.org](mailto:entpac@entnet.org).\*

### Help Shape the Academy's Future in Less Than Five Minutes

The ENT PAC Board of Advisors and AAO-HNS Advocacy Team invite you to complete a brief survey that will help strengthen the Academy's advocacy efforts and shape future decisions about political programs and the viability of new initiatives. **The survey is voluntary and 100 percent confidential.** Your name will never appear connected to your answers and the results will only be assessed for internal use and planning. A robust member response will empower us to better meet your advocacy needs! [Click here to access the survey.](#)

## Legislative & Political Reports

### What's Ahead in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress

When the first session of the [116<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress](#) convenes on January 3, 2019, Capitol Hill will look a little different. The balance of power has shifted slightly as the Democratic Party will hold a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, while the Republican Party expanded its majority in the U.S. Senate. The 116<sup>th</sup> Congress will feature more than 100 new faces representing one of the largest and most diverse freshman classes in history, but party leadership will look very much the same. Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) is poised to become Speaker of the House and Representative Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) will be the Minority Leader. Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Mitch McConnell (R-KY) will serve as Majority and Minority Leaders in the U.S. Senate. Healthcare is likely to remain a top tier issue, with potential areas for bipartisan compromise on prescription drug pricing and projections for those with pre-existing conditions. The AAO-HNS has already begun meeting with the incoming Members of Congress and leadership teams about priority issues impacting the specialty. Unfortunately, the partisan rhetoric is like to carryover and worsen as the 2020 Presidential election nears.

## Other News

### AAO-HNS Supports Revised Physician Compounding Requirements

On November 30, the AAO-HNS submitted [comments](#) to the United States Pharmacopeia (USP) reiterating support for [proposed revisions to Chapter 797](#). The revised Chapter, which is scheduled to be finalized by June 2019, includes a provision to exempt allergy immunotherapy from most in-office physician compounding requirements.

### Academy Signs Coalition Letter on Tobacco Control Efforts in the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement

The AAO-HNS recently joined several public health organizations in signing onto a [coalition letter](#) regarding tobacco control efforts in the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement. The letter requests that any agreement provide the protections necessary to enable both countries to adopt public health measures to protect their citizens from the death and disease caused by tobacco products without facing the risk of litigation by tobacco companies.

### AAO-HNS Submits Code Change Application for New Category I Add-On Codes

On November 7, the Academy's CPT team submitted a [code change application \(CCA\)](#) for the creation of new Category I add-on codes for hypoglossal nerve stimulation procedures. The Academy also signed onto CCAs with other impacted societies (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, American Academy of Audiology, American Academy of Neurology) for revised codes to describe Auditory Evoked Potentials and Vestibular Evoked Myogenic Potentials. These codes will be presented at the February 2019 CPT meeting in Tucson, Arizona.

### Academy Comments on CY 2019 HOPPS and ASC Final Rule

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released [a final rule](#) implementing changes to the Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System (HOPPS) and Ambulatory Surgical Center (ASC) Payment System for Calendar Year 2019 on November 2. In [comments](#) submitted on the final rule, the AAO-HNS thanked the agency for its drive toward site neutrality for outpatient services, specifically clinic visits for outpatient settings. While the proposed rule had recommended the equalization in payment occur in CY 2019, the HOPPS final rule describes phasing in this change over two years.

### ICYMI: FDA Pursues Restrictions on Flavored E-Cigarettes

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [recently announced](#) new restrictions on the sale of certain flavored e-cigarettes in convenience stores, gas stations, and online. The agency will also pursue a ban on menthol flavors in traditional combustible cigarettes, as well as a ban on flavored cigars. The AAO-HNS, as a member of the PARTNERS coalition, has supported such efforts to help address the sharp increase in underage use of tobacco and nicotine-delivery products.

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.

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