



Dear ENT Advocacy Network Member:

March 1, 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

### Audiology Groups Announce Joint Effort to Develop Direct Access Legislation

The Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA), the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), and the American Academy of Audiology (AAA) recently announced a collaborative agreement to develop and advance federal legislation that would grant audiologists “direct access” to Medicare patients, eliminating the long-standing physician referral requirement. For patient safety reasons, the AAO-HNS has [strongly opposed](#) similar legislative proposals since hearing and balance disorders are medical conditions that require a full patient history, physical examination, and diagnosis by an MD/DO. The AAO-HNS anticipates the legislation will be formally introduced in the U.S. Congress in the coming weeks, so stay tuned for future updates and grassroots “Calls to Action.”

## Action Requested

### ENT PAC Exceeds "First 50" Goal

Thanks to the generosity of our members, ENT PAC raised more than \$50,000 during the 2019 “First 50” campaign. This success enabled ENT PAC to be very active in the opening months of the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress (see story below). To help ensure the strength of the Academy’s political programs, join your colleagues by [making or increasing your 2019 investment in ENT PAC!](#)\*

### State Activity Ramps Up

Curious what is happening in your state legislature? Read the latest edition of [The State-mENT](#), an “at a glance” one-page resource outlining the Academy’s state legislative activity from the previous month. Sign up as a [State Tracker](#) to receive The State-mENT and help the AAO-HNS advance legislative priorities in your state!

## Legislative & Political Reports

### AAO-HNS Supports Congressional Resolution Recognizing World Hearing Day

The AAO-HNS joined others in the hearing health community to support a [Congressional Resolution](#) designating March 3 as World Hearing Day. The Resolution underscores the importance of hearing loss prevention, highlights the significance of patient access to early detection and intervention, and recognizes the role otolaryngologists serve on the hearing healthcare team. U.S. Representatives Mike Thompson (D-CA) and David McKinley (R-WV), Co-Chairs of the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus, introduced the Resolution on February 25.

### Your ENT PAC Investment at Work

February was a busy month on Capitol Hill for [ENT PAC](#) – the specialty’s non-partisan, issue-driven political action committee. The Academy hosted (via ENT PAC) a physician community event for U.S. Representative Mike Thompson (D-CA), a member of the House Committee on Ways & Means and Co-Chair of the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus. In addition, ENT PAC made the specialty’s voice heard at political events in support of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and the following U.S. Representatives:

- Steny Hoyer (D-MD), House Majority Leader;
- Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), House Minority Leader;
- Steve Scalise (R-LA), House Minority Whip;
- Drew Ferguson, DDS (R-GA), Minority Chief Deputy Whip;
- Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Chair of the House Energy & Commerce (E&C) Committee;
- Michael Burgess, MD (R-TX), Ranking Member of E&C Health Subcommittee;
- Doris Matsui (D-CA), Member of E&C Health Subcommittee;
- Buddy Carter (R-GA), Member of E&C Health Subcommittee; and
- Julia Brownley (D-CA), Chair of the Veterans Health Subcommittee.

## Other News

### Advocacy in Action

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.](#)

### ABMS Releases "Vision for the Future Commission" Final Report

The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) "Vision for the Future Commission" recently issued its [final report](#) on Continuing Certification. The final report contains important modifications requested by the AAO-HNS in its [comment letter](#) on the Commission's initial recommendations. To succeed, ongoing collaboration between all stakeholders is critical, and the AAO-HNS is prepared to work closely with the American Board of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery to ensure the goals of the final report are achieved. Members are encouraged to read key takeaways in the March *Bulletin*.

### AAO-HNS Signs Coalition Letter Regarding "Surprise Billing"

The AAO-HNS, along with the AMA and other medical societies, [signed onto a letter](#) regarding "surprise billing." The letter, which was sent to key Congressional committees, addresses the concerns of patients without eliminating the need for insurers to act in good faith when negotiating network participation contracts.

### Housing Deadline for #BOGMTG19 is March 27

Join your colleagues at the [AAO-HNS/F 2019 Leadership Forum & BOG Spring Meeting](#), April 26-28, in Alexandria, VA, for advocacy updates, mentoring opportunities, networking events with Academy leaders, BOG committee meetings, state society engagement discussions, and much more. While registration is complimentary to AAO-HNS members who are otolaryngology practitioners, members must register to attend by April 19, and book their housing by March 27.

Sincerely,

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

American Academy of Otolaryngology — Head and Neck Surgery  
1650 Diagonal Road, Alexandria, VA 22314-2857  
Phone: 1-703-836-8444 | Fax: 1-703-683-5100