Dear ENT Advocacy Network Member:

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 Opposes Audiology "Physician Status" Legislation
This week, an audiology "kitchen sink" bill (H.R. 2276) was reintroduced in Congress by U.S. Representatives Tom Rice (R-SC), Lynn Jenkins (R-KS), and Matt Cartwright (D-PA). If enacted, the legislation would grant audiologists "limited license physician" status under Medicare and provide audiologists with unlimited direct access to Medicare patients without a physician referral. The Academy's strong opposition to H.R. 2276 was communicated in a letter to the bill sponsors and members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Help us further educate lawmakers about this patient safety issue by contacting your U.S. House Representative today!

OTC Hearing Aid Legislation Examined By Congressional Committee
The Health Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee recently held a hearing titled, "Examining Improvements to the Regulation of Medical Technologies." As part of the May 2 hearing, lawmakers heard testimony regarding H.R. 1652, the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017. The AAO-HNS has been monitoring H.R. 1652 closely and submitted a written statement for the record outlining the Academy’s qualified support of creating a new class of OTC or “basic” hearing aids.

Action Request

Senate HELP Committee Advances EHDI Legislation
The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee recently advanced the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Act of 2017 (S. 652). This critical Committee activity paves the way for consideration by the full Senate. Once passed by the Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives will consider the bill. The AAO-HNS supports passage of this important legislation and continues to work with others in the hearing-health community to ensure final passage is achieved. Contact your lawmakers today and urge swift passage of S. 652!

Legislative & Political Reports

ACA Replacement Effort Advances to U.S. Senate
On May 4, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 1628, the American Health Care Act of 2017, by a vote of 217-213. The legislation, which is the cornerstone of the Republican Majority's effort to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, will now move to the U.S. Senate for consideration and possible amendments. The AAO-HNS will continue our conversations with lawmakers as the bill advances through the legislative process, advocating for affordable access to care for patients and reduced administrative burdens on physicians.

Read the April 2017 Edition of the State-mENT
The State-mENT is an “at a glance” one-page resource outlining the Academy’s state legislative activity from the previous month. Sign up as a State Tracker and become part of the discussion!

Other News

FTC Meeting on OTC Hearing Aids
The AAO-HNS recently participated in a Federal Trade Commission (FTC) workshop titled, “Now Hear This:
Competition, Innovation, and Consumer Protection Issues in Hearing Health Care." The day-long meeting examined hearing health and technology matters, especially those related to hearing aids. In preparation for the workshop, the AAO-HNS submitted comments to the FTC.

Hearing Health Community Hosts EHDI Briefing
The Friends of the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus (FCHHC), including the AAO-HNS, hosted a Capitol Hill briefing on May 2, to highlight the importance of ongoing efforts to reauthorize the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program. The briefing was attended by several Members of Congress, as well as more than 50 health staff.

National Allergy Societies Address Ohio Compounding Concerns
To help clarify recent changes to in-office compounding regulations in Ohio and their impact on allergy immunotherapy, the AAO-HNS, the American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy, and others recently shared a new communication from the state’s Board of Pharmacy. Allergen extracts may be prepared and used in accordance with the provisions of USP Chapter 797 rules and are not subject to a general six-hour beyond use date. View the Board's clarification here.

Surgical Coalition Sends Letter to HHS Regarding Global Surgical Codes
The AAO-HNS joined 23 surgical organizations in sending a letter to HHS Secretary Tom Price, MD, and CMS Administrator Seema Verma regarding the implementation of a CMS policy requiring data collection on global services as finalized in the 2017 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. Given the significant implementation hurdles, the Surgical Coalition requested CMS share a detailed plan for data validation and not enforce the July 1 data collection start date until all concerns have been addressed.

Sincerely,

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

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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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