

STATE-MENT

MONTHLY STATE TRACKER UPDATE

APRIL 2019

Advocacy in Action Update

Hearing Aid Services – Missouri, Florida, Nebraska, South Carolina: The AAO-HNS and its member advocates in these states are still engaged on legislation that would permit the coverage, sale and dispensing of hearing aids. These bills, as proposed, erroneously omit otolaryngologists in coverage for hearing assessments and/or dispensing of hearing aids.

- Missouri: [SB 101](#), establishing a statewide hearing aid program with all assessments to be performed by audilogsitists/hearing instrument specialists, has been successfully amended to include physicians and has passed the Senate. The House will now proceed with consideration this month. Florida: [SB 572](#), Coverage for Hearing Aids for Children legislation would cover hearing aids “prescribed, fitted and dispensed by a licensed audiologist.” Despite efforts to amend the legislation, it has passed through two committees unchanged. However, the AAO-HNS and Florida Society of Otolaryngology continue their efforts for amendment. Nebraska: [LB 15](#), the Children of Nebraska Hearing Aid Act legislation, has been successfully amended to include otolaryngologists for diagnosis and medical clearance. These amendments have been so-well received that the bill has been chosen as a Speaker’s bill, and is now being fast-tracked to the governor’s desk. South Carolina: [HB 3284](#) inappropriately assigns the diagnosis of hearing loss solely to audiologists. This bill has not moved out of committee, but could end up carried over to the 2020 session.

Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K). Initially these bills were introduced in 14 states. Action is still possible in six remaining states.

- LEAD-K: The AAO-HNS has concerns that such LEAD-K bills would prevent parents of deaf/hard of hearing children from being fully informed of all their choices on auditory/medical interventions and communication modes. Many of the proposed LEAD-K bills appear biased toward requiring American Sign Language as the most appropriate option for parents. As part of a coalition effort, the Academy is working with other engaged stakeholders to address these concerns. Advocates continue work on this issue in: CT [HB 7353](#), NY [S 674](#), MA [HB 3550](#), and TX [SB 895](#). In Maine [SB 642](#) was recently heard in the Education & Cultural Affairs Committee; the follow-up work session will be held next week. [HB 1484](#) in Indiana is the most concerning legislation, as it has passed the House and Senate and will be sent to Governor Holcomb soon. Parent Choice advocates will ask the governor for a veto.

Tracker Monthly Calls:

Thank you to all our AAO-HNS State Trackers who have been participating in our monthly conference calls. We invite all Trackers to participate in our remaining conference calls for the 2019 legislative season. As a reminder, calls are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month (December-June) at 8 pm (ET). The dates for the remainder of the season are as follows:

- April 24
- May 22
- June 26

2019 State Legislative Sessions

- Thirty-six states remain in session by the end of this month. However, Governor veto/signature time periods remain in play in many states.
- Louisiana opened their legislature on April 8.