

# STATE-MENT

## MONTHLY STATE TRACKER UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2019

### Keep on Tracking!

In an effort to harness the best state legislative tracking technology available, AAO-HNS State Trackers and the Academy began 2019 with a new tracking system, StateScope. Legislative alerts customized by ENT topics are sent to our esteemed Trackers, who help screen the multitude of proposed bills for issues that may require advocacy action. To get an idea of the breadth and depth of these bills from across the nation, check out our map on the State Advocacy website, [Legislative Tracking by State](#).

### Issues of Interest

- **Hearing Aid Dispensing – Missouri, Nebraska, South Carolina:** Multiple states are considering legislation that would omit the role of otolaryngology in hearing assessments and dispensing of hearing aids. Missouri has proposed establishing a statewide hearing aid program with all assessments to be performed by audiologists/hearing instrument specialists ([SB 101](#) and [HB 222](#)). [LB 15](#), legislation tagged by a Nebraska State Tracker, was identified because it excludes otolaryngologists from the Children of Nebraska Hearing Aid Act. The bill, as introduced, only covers hearing impairments diagnosed by an audiologist. And, in South Carolina, [HB 3284](#) inappropriately assigns the diagnosis of hearing loss solely to audiologists. The Academy looks forward to working with the respective state OTO and state medical societies to ensure the role of otolaryngology is preserved.
- **CMV Screening:** In Virginia, with a short session and carry-over legislation from 2018, numerous bills of interest to the specialty have already been introduced. Most notably, [HB 2026](#), a bill to amend Board of Health regulations to screen for congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV) in newborns who fail the newborn hearing screening is being actively supported by our members in the state. At their request, and in conjunction with member testimony, the AAO-HNS wrote a [letter of support](#) to the Appropriations Committee. Advocacy efforts are ongoing.
- **Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K):** [SB 1741](#), a LEAD-K bill, was introduced in the Virginia Senate Education and Health Committee. Quick action led to the bill being sent to the Joint Commission on Health Care, which has been tasked with studying the issue. In addition to Virginia, LEAD-K legislation has been introduced in five other states (SC [SB 280](#), OK [SB 154](#), NY [S 674](#), IN [HB 1484](#) and NH [HB 631](#)). 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 stakeholders on the issue to address our concerns.

### Tracker Monthly Calls:

Thank you to all our AAO-HNS State Trackers who participated in our first two conference calls of the 2018/2019 legislative season. We are off to a great start, and we invite you to participate in our remaining conference calls. 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:

- February 27
- March 27
- April 24
- May 22
- June 26

### 2019 State Legislative Sessions

- All state legislatures will convene in 2019, with three states having a later start date:
  - Florida: March 5
  - Alabama: March 25
  - Louisiana: April 8