

# STATE-MENT

## MONTHLY STATE TRACKER UPDATE

MARCH 2019

### Advocacy in Action

**Hearing Aid Coverage:** Legislation relating to hearing aid coverage continues to be a predominate area of concern for AAO-HNS members and otolaryngology societies across the nation, with approximately 30 bills active in 14 states. The Academy has been collaborating with state OTO societies and/or state medical societies to amend flawed bills that omit otolaryngologists in coverage for hearing assessments and/or dispensing of hearing aids.

- **Missouri [SB 101](#)** has been successfully amended in Committee to include physicians in patient assessments and distribution of hearing aids for the statewide hearing program. **[LB 15](#), the Children of Nebraska Hearing Aid Act**, was heard in Committee on March 4, with State Tracker Ryan Sewell, MD, testifying in support of amendments to include otolaryngologists and “diagnosis” by a physician. These amendments were approved by the Banking, Commerce, and Insurance Committee, and the bill is moving forward. Newly tagged for **Florida**, **[HB 531](#)** and its companion bill **[SB 572](#)** propose hearing aid coverage for children from birth to 21 years of age, but only as prescribed, fitted, and dispensed by a licensed audiologist. The AAO-HNS is actively working with the Florida Society of Otolaryngology and the Florida Medical Association to advance changes to the legislation. Other states with pending hearing aid legislation are: **Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, and Washington.**

**Newborn Hearing Services:** In late February, the AAO-HNS submitted [testimony](#) for the record at hearings for **Hawaii [HB 678 HD 1](#)** and **[SB 1243](#)**, companion bills related to newborn hearing screening follow-up. The bills contained new language that inappropriately broadened the definition and scope of practice of audiologists in Hawaii. As a result of AAO-HNS testimony, the Hawaii Department of Health agreed with our position and joined the Academy in successfully proposing an amendment to modify the “audiologist” definition.

- In a successful collaborative effort by AAO-HNS member advocates in Virginia, the CMV Newborn Screening bill, **[HB 2026](#)**, passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor on March 18, 2019.

**Maintenance of Certification:** The ABMS Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future Commission final report was recently released. One key modification included in the final report states, “ABMS Boards must facilitate voluntary engagement of lifetime certificate holders and continuing professional development through a supportive form of continuing certification.” We encourage you to read the Commission’s final report: <https://visioninitiative.org/commission/final-report/>.

### Tracker Monthly Calls:

Thank you to all our AAO-HNS State Trackers who have been participating in our monthly conference calls and welcome to our newest members. We invite all Trackers to participate in our remaining conference calls for 2019. The calls begin at 8 pm (ET), with reminders sent prior to the call.

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

### 2019 State Legislative Sessions:

- Virginia and Wyoming adjourned in late February.
- Six states will adjourn in March: Idaho, Kentucky, New Mexico, South Dakota, Utah, and West Virginia.
- Louisiana’s session will begin on April 8.