

STATE-MENT

MONTHLY STATE TRACKER UPDATE

MAY 2021

Nimble and Flexible

As we navigate through the fifth month of the 2021 legislative season, “nimble and flexible” are still the by-words of state legislative operations, as the pandemic has affected the continuity of government like nothing before. To meet this challenge, some states are holding sessions completely virtual, some address it in a hybrid manner meeting in-person but socially distancing in an outdoor venue, while many others returned to full in-person sessions with public health protocols in place. All of these changes have, in turn, affected public participation, testimonies, and speed of the legislative process. All 50 state legislatures convene in 2021. At this point in the year, 22 have already adjourned with another 13 states set to adjourn by the end of May. Importantly, however, with the interruption in many sessions, we are seeing more states than ever hold special sessions with some convening more than one. For state advocates, this means that the path is a little longer and a little rougher this year. This surely remains a time to be “nimble and flexible.”

- **ASLP-IC Update:** In 2021, the Audiology/Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC) legislation has been introduced in 17 states. Currently, five states are still in play, CO, OH, OR, SC, and TX. Two states, IN and IA, did not make it through the entire process and are likely to carryover to the next session. NH, NM, SD, and WA were stopped, while AL, GA, KS, KY, MD, and NE have passed this year. When combined with the six states that passed the compact last year, the ASLP-IC now has the 10 initial states needed to implement the Compact Commission. The good news is that the AAO-HNS/AMA amendments have been included in seven of the bills that have passed and are included in three of the bills still pending. Our advocates in the remaining three states are working hard to fix this faulty legislation.
- **Hearing Aid Coverage for Children:** As we have in past years, the Academy and the State Trackers continue to successfully convince state legislators that otolaryngologists, who specialize in the medical diagnosis and treatment of pediatric hearing problems, are an essential component of the appropriate prescribing and coverage of hearing aids for minors. As such, our specialty should not be omitted from hearing aid coverage legislation. Approximately 77 bills in 29 states have been introduced on this subject thus far this year. Advocates have been especially active on hearing aid legislation in FL, OH, MT, SC, and WV. Watch for more information on this subject in the June issue of the AAO-HNS *Bulletin*.
- **Honorable Mention: Lead-K, CMV, Telehealth, and Tobacco:** These issues continue to rise despite, or in some cases as a result of, the pandemic (notably telehealth). There have been five CMV bills issued this year (KY, IN, MA, MN, NY), although none have passed as of yet. Fortunately, there have been only two LEAD-K bills introduced in 2021 (IA, SC) and each appear to be going nowhere. Forty-eight telehealth bills have been introduced in 21 states, while 18 states are attempting to have an impact on e-cigarettes/vaping with over 65 bills introduced. These and many more issues are under the constant watch and advocacy of our State Trackers and our state society leaders. To learn more, join us on our next call on May 26!

Tracker Monthly Calls:

Thank you to all of our AAO-HNS State Trackers who have been able to participate in our Zoom calls during the 2021 legislative season. As a reminder, calls are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 8 pm (ET). The dates remaining for 2021 are as follows:

- May 26
- June 23

2021 State Legislative Sessions

- Due to the fluidity of the Sessions, please continue to check the calendar at: www.multistate.us/

Recruiting State Trackers

- The AAO-HNS is still looking to add State Trackers for all states but especially seek coverage in: Nevada, Rhode Island, and South Dakota. If you are willing to volunteer, please contact: legstate@entnet.org