



Dear ENT Advocacy Network Member:

October 4, 2019

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

### Senator Cassidy Addresses Academy Members at the AAO-HNSF 2019 Annual Meeting

The AAO-HNS was pleased to host U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy, MD (R-LA) as the guest speaker at an Advocacy Breakfast during the AAO-HNSF 2019 Annual Meeting & OTO Experience in New Orleans on September 16, 2019. Senator Cassidy is a gastroenterologist who was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2008, and the U.S. Senate in 2014. Dr. Cassidy, the state's senior senator, has been a strong ally for the physician community and a bold leader on healthcare issues impacting the House of Medicine, most recently on the issue of surprise billing.

Senator Cassidy shared his thoughts on the growing debate surrounding remedies for surprise medical bills and drug pricing reforms. He also provided his perspective on the need for increased transparency in our healthcare system with select ENT PAC contributors, AAO-HNS advocacy leaders and Louisiana physician advocates in attendance. Given Dr. Cassidy's role on the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP), and leadership in the bipartisan Senate Working Group on surprise billing, it was particularly helpful to hear from him on this topic, as well as other items of importance to AAO-HNS members.

The Academy will continue to work with Senator Cassidy and other Congressional champions on a sensible solution to surprise billing, as well as audiology direct access legislation and other important issues being debated in Congress.

## Legislative & Political Reports

### AAO-HNS Sends Letter to Trump Administration on Proposal to Ban Flavored E-Cigarettes

As Congress and the Administration continue to develop policies to curb the e-cigarette epidemic, the AAO-HNS is actively pursuing its longstanding policy to advocate for patient safety concerns resulting from vaping. The Academy joined the Partners Coalition in [sending letters to the President and First Lady](#) on September 24, expressing our support for the Administration's proposal to remove all non-tobacco-flavored e-cigarettes from the market. The AAO-HNS attended two hearings this week in the U.S. House of Representatives (the [Committee on Oversight and Reform](#) and the [Committee on Energy and Commerce](#)) to discuss the immediate public health threat posed by e-cigarettes.

### AAO-HNS Signs Letter Urging Members of Congress to Take Action on Prior Authorization

The AAO-HNS joined many patient, physician, and healthcare professional stakeholder organizations in signing a [letter](#) to express strong support for H.R. 3107, the "Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act of 2019", introduced by U.S. Representatives Suzan DelBene (D-WA), Mike Kelly (R-PA), Roger Marshall, MD (R-KS), and Ami Bera, MD (D-CA). The letter, sent on September 9, is another important step in the

Academy's ongoing efforts to reduce the growing burden of Medicare Advantage prior authorization requirements on physicians and patients.

### AAO-HNS Joins Forces to Tackle CMV

The Academy, working together with the Pennsylvania Academy of Otolaryngology-HNS, sent a [letter](#) of support to the Chairs and members of the Pennsylvania House's Human Services Committee regarding HB 1220. HB 1220 is a bill that would provide for cytomegalovirus (CMV) education and newborn screening. The bill, which received a hearing on September 18, 2019, will be reported as amended after a unanimous vote by the Committee. The AAO-HNS, working with our State Trackers and the PA Academy of Otolaryngology-HNS, will continue our advocacy efforts on behalf of newborns and their families to provide early identification and prevention of this congenital viral infection.

### AAO-HNS Comments on Medicare CY 2020 Hospital Outpatient Proposed Rule

On September 27, the AAO-HNS [submitted a comment letter](#) to CMS regarding the CY 2020 Medicare Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) and Ambulatory Surgical Center (ASC) Payment System proposed rule. The Academy's comments included support for Medicare's proposed changes to increase hospital price transparency and designate certain procedures performed by otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons as permanently office-based; while opposing the increased application of prior authorization policies.

### AAO-HNS Leadership Visits Capitol Hill

On July 10, AAO-HNS leadership went to Capitol Hill to meet with U.S. Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Michael Burgess, MD (R-TX), and U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) on surprise medical billing legislation being considered in the House and Senate. To learn more about our most recent legislative efforts, check out The Academy's [Trending Topics in Advocacy page](#).

## Action Requested

### AAO-HNS Needs Your Support! Say No to H.R. 4056

Now, more than ever, **the AAO-HNS needs your support.** Legislation has been introduced (H.R.4056/S. 2446) that seeks to designate audiologists as "practitioners" and allow them direct access to Medicare beneficiaries without a physician referral.

Your voice is needed to amplify our efforts on Capitol Hill and ensure your patients continue to receive the highest quality care. Please click [here](#) to access the action alert on the AAO-HNS Advocacy website, [www.entadvocacy.org](http://www.entadvocacy.org). The alert includes a sample letter you can use to **make your voice heard and stop this misguided legislation from advancing in Congress.** With your support, we can make a difference and tell Congress to **say no to H.R.4056/S. 2446** "The Medicare Audiologist access and Services Act of 2019".

Sincerely,

David Boisoneau, MD  
BOG Legislative Affairs Committee Chair  
and the AAO-HNS Advocacy Team

**For more information, contact [govtaffairs@entnet.org](mailto:govtaffairs@entnet.org).**

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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