Yes, It Is Time for—Crossover

This year approximately 20 states have announced crossover deadlines and they usually come in March or April. What is crossover? It is a procedural deadline that requires bills that originated in one chamber (House/Senate) to be passed over to the other chamber for consideration by a deadline or it is considered dead for the session. One can imagine that things get a little hectic at this point in the legislative process as sponsors and proponents of bills work furiously to beat the deadlines and move their bill to the other chamber. Despite the frenetic pace, crossover does help indicate which bills have the best chance for advancement.

Issues of Interest

- **Hearing Aid Services:** Currently, 36 bills in 16 states are under careful watch as the sessions proceed. Advocacy activity has been particularly notable in FL (HB 79/SB 498), MA (HB 366/SB 211), and KY (HB 95), although all three are very different proposals. FL legislation addresses insurance coverage of hearing aids for children that mistakenly omits otolaryngologists and a medical clearance requirement. The MA bills were drafted by the MA Otolaryngology Society to repeal language prohibiting otolaryngologists from selling hearing aids to persons for whom they have provided services. The KY bill adds the sale/fitting of hearing aids to the audiologists’ scope and permits them to be exempt from a hearing aid dispenser’s licensure requirement. This bill also perpetuates existing language that prohibits a physician from selling hearing aids. KY HB 95 is likely to pass this year, however, physician advocates may consider a bill to remove the prohibition in 2023. The other 13 states mentioned in the last State-mENT are still active and are being monitored for progress.

- **Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact:** Advocacy work continues on the 10 states that have introduced the compact this year. Advocates in SC and TN have been working especially hard to stop or amend the legislation. Additionally, AAO-HNS recently sent a letter to the ID Senate Health & Welfare Committee to point out the problems with the legislation and offered the AAO/AMA amendments.

- **Cytomegalovirus:** Congratulations to advocates in NJ on approval of SB 3975, now Public Act 413, a bill to screen newborn infants for CMV and establish a public awareness campaign. SB 3975 passed through the Senate and House unopposed! Also moving with great speed and zero opposition is SB 292 sponsored by FL Senator Polsky. The bill has passed the House and Senate and has been sent to the Governor for signature. This legislation requires screening for newborns that fail the test for hearing loss, before 21 days of age or discharge, whichever is first. Advocacy for bills in PA, ME, NY, KY, and IN continue.