



Dear ENT Advocacy Network Member:

March 30, 2022

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

Calling all OTO Advocates: Last Chance to Register for Virtual Congressional Advocacy Day!

Registration for the 2022 AAO-HNS Virtual Congressional Advocacy Day closes this Friday, April 1. This event, held in conjunction with the AAO-HNS/F 2022 Leadership Forum & BOG Spring Meeting, is an opportunity for Academy members to meet with their congressional representation and advocate for the legislative issues that matter most to otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons. Members of Congress need to hear from you about how pending legislation impacts you as a physician, your practice, and your patients. The program for this fully virtual event, which is free of charge for Academy members, includes training on Sunday, April 10, at 3:30 - 5:00 pm (ET) on how to conduct advocacy meetings and briefings on the legislative priorities that will be the focus of Virtual Congressional Advocacy Day this year. On Monday, April 11, participants will meet virtually with the appropriate congressional offices and lobby for the specialty. Join your colleagues to raise your voice by advocating for the specialty and your patients.

Legislative and Political Reports

Congress Passes FY22 Spending Bill, Democrats Eye Pandemic Relief

After nearly five months of negotiations, Congress passed a \$1.5 trillion omnibus spending package this month to avoid a shutdown and fund the government through the end of fiscal year 2022. This spending package which President Biden signed into law on March 15 included several health-related provisions, such as increased funding for biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and public health investments at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The package also closed a regulatory loophole for vaping products by giving the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) new oversight authority over synthetic nicotine products.

Congress may also look to provide funding for additional COVID-19 relief in the coming weeks. The omnibus spending package initially included more than \$15 billion in spending for pandemic priorities, but Democratic leaders were forced to remove it at the last minute. The Biden Administration has continued to press lawmakers for more money to fund additional vaccine doses and to finance care for uninsured Americans, though it is unclear at this time if there is a path forward for an additional spending measure.

AAO-HNS Sends Letter to Senate Committee Urging Reauthorization of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program

On March 8, the Academy joined with several other hearing health groups in sending a letter to leadership of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions urging reauthorization of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program. The Academy has consistently advocated for full funding of the EHDI program, which supports statewide plans that identify infants and children with hearing loss and

provides the appropriate early intervention services. Bipartisan EHDI legislation has already passed the House of Representatives. The Senate must now pass the bill in order for the program to be reauthorized. The Academy will continue its advocacy efforts toward enactment of this important legislation.

AAO-HNS Joins Coalition Letter to Congress Urging Regulation of Synthetic Nicotine

The Academy joined 61 other public health organizations in sending a letter on March 7 to congressional leadership requesting passage of legislation allowing the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate synthetic nicotine. Manufacturers of synthetic nicotine and e-cigarettes that contain synthetic nicotine have suggested that their products do not fall within the definition of a “tobacco product,” and thus are not subject to FDA regulation. The Academy has long advocated for federal policies to protect children, youth, and adults from the consequences of tobacco use and to reduce the incidence of smoking in the United States.

AAO-HNS Applauds Passage of Bill to Protect Physician Mental and Behavioral Health

On March 8, the Academy joined 55 healthcare organizations in sending a letter to thank the congressional champions of the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act (H.R. 1667). This bipartisan legislation takes important steps to reduce and prevent suicide, burnout, and mental and behavioral health conditions among healthcare professionals. Named in honor of Dr. Breen, a physician who worked in New York on the frontlines of the pandemic and who tragically died by suicide, the legislation is a critical step to address mental health concerns facing our healthcare providers during COVID-19. After passing the U.S. House of Representatives last December, H.R. 1667 was approved by the Senate on February 17 and was signed into law by President Biden on March 18.

Q1 ENT PAC Update

ENT PAC, the only political action committee that is solely focused on the priorities of otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons, is an invaluable tool that strengthens the Academy’s overall legislative advocacy efforts. Thanks to generous support from members of the Academy, ENT PAC has successfully exceeded its “First 50” fundraising goal for a strong start to 2022.

We understand the importance of providing transparency and a greater understanding of how decisions are made regarding the specialty’s political action committee. Therefore, in 2018 ENT PAC launched a new quarterly report titled “Your PAC Dollars at Work.” [View your “Q1 PAC Dollars at Work”](#) summarizing ENT PAC activities to date in 2022. To invest in the future of the specialty, [click here!](#)

New State-mENT Available: All About Crossover

This year approximately 20 states have announced crossover deadlines, which usually land 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. To review some of the Academy’s state legislative priorities for this year, visit the [State Advocacy website](#). To read the State-MENT, [click here!](#)

Regulatory Reports

Provider Relief Fund Period 2 Payment Reporting Deadline: March 31

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [reporting portal](#) remains open only through March 31, 2022, at 11:59 pm (ET) for Provider Relief Fund Period 2 reporting. Providers who fail to report before this deadline may have to refund payments to the government or may lose out on government financial support. As discussed in previous Academy correspondence, any healthcare provider who received at least \$10,000 from the Provider Relief Fund during period 2 (July 1 to December 31, 2020) must report on its use of those funds by March 31, 2022. Provider Relief Fund payments were to be used only for healthcare-related expenses or lost revenue attributable to COVID-19 by December 31, 2021.

CMS Announces New ACO REACH Model

On February 24, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a [redesign](#) of the Global and Professional Direct Contracting Model. In its place, the agency will launch the newly developed Accountable Care Organization (ACO) Realizing Equity, Access, and Community Health (REACH) Model on January 1, 2023. A Request for Applications for organizations interested in joining the ACO REACH program opened on March 7. The redesigned ACO REACH model will promote health equity and address care disparities, prioritizing applications submitted by provider-led organizations.

Action Requested

New Volunteers Needed to Strengthen PROJECT 535

Successful legislative advocacy starts with a solid grassroots foundation. Given Congressional focus on legislation addressing health policy and physician reimbursement in the 117th Congress, it's now more important than ever for the Academy to strengthen its key contacts network via PROJECT 535. In addition to the Academy's overall advocacy efforts, PROJECT 535 volunteers help reinforce our message by establishing personal relationships with federal elected officials. Federal lawmakers want to hear from YOU—their physician constituents! The commitment is minimal, but the impact is immense. To help further strengthen our collective advocacy efforts contact govtaffairs@entnet.org for more information.

Sincerely,

Yolanda L. Troublefield, MD, JD
BOG Legislative Affairs Committee Chair
and the AAO-HNS Advocacy Team

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.

For more information, contact govtaffairs@entnet.org. Don't forget to bookmark [The ENT Advocate!](#)

*Contributions to ENT PAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Contributions are voluntary, and all members of the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Federal law prohibits ENT PAC from accepting contributions from foreign nationals. By law, if your contributions are made using a personal check or credit card, ENT PAC may use your contribution only to support candidates in federal elections. All corporate contributions to ENT PAC will be used for educational and administrative fees of ENT PAC, and other activities permissible under federal law. Federal law requires ENT PAC to use its best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation, and the name of the employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

American Academy of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery
1650 Diagonal Road, Alexandria, VA 22314-2857
Phone: 1-703-836-8444 | Fax: 1-703-683-5100