



Dear ENT Advocacy Network Member:

April 29, 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

### AAO-HNS Celebrates Successful 2022 Virtual Congressional Advocacy Day

The Academy's inaugural 2022 Virtual Congressional Advocacy Day (VCAD) on April 11 made a great impact, thanks to the member advocates who volunteered to participate. This event included Academy members from across the nation representing the specialty with the offices of some of the top health policymakers in Congress. Academy members met directly with three physician members of Congress—U.S. Representatives Andy Harris, MD (R-MD), Larry Bucshon, MD (R-IN), and Kim Schrier, MD (D-WA)—and participated in meetings with staff from the offices of 24 members of Congress in leadership positions and with jurisdiction over health legislation.

AAO-HNS members used the VCAD platform to lobby on the Academy's top federal legislative priorities: The importance of reforming the prior authorization process, how uncertainty in Medicare reimbursement rates impacts their practices and patients, reauthorizing the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program, and the continued need for scope of practice protections to ensure patient safety. Thank you to the AAO-HNS members who generously shared their time to participate in VCAD—your contributions are what made it so impactful.

If you are interested in getting more involved in the Academy's ongoing advocacy efforts, please email [govtaffairs@entnet.org](mailto:govtaffairs@entnet.org).

## Federal Legislative and Political Reports

### AAO-HNS Endorses Senate Legislation to Reauthorize Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program

The Academy offered its strong endorsement of S. 4052, the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Act of 2022. This bipartisan legislation to reauthorize the EHDI program [was introduced](#) on April 8 by U.S. Senators Rob Portman (R-OH), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Bill Cassidy, MD (R-LA), and John Hickenlooper (D-CO). Since EHDI's inception, the Academy has consistently advocated for reauthorization and full funding of the program, which supports statewide plans that identify infants and children with hearing loss and provides the appropriate early intervention services. Bipartisan legislation reauthorizing the EDHI program has already passed the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 410-17.

### AAO-HNS Calls for Increased Funding for CDC Office on Smoking and Health

The Academy joined members of the Tobacco Control Partners Coalition in sending an April 18 [letter to leadership of the U.S. House and Senate Committees on Appropriations](#), calling for a \$68.5 million funding increase for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Office on Smoking and Health (OSH).

This funding increase would help OSH better respond to the high rate of e-cigarette use among young people and address the broader impact of tobacco consumption on the nation's health.

## ENT PAC Update

ENT PAC is the non-partisan, issue-driven political action committee of the AAO-HNS, and the only political action committee that is solely focused on the priorities of otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons. ENT PAC is an invaluable tool that strengthens the Academy's overall federal legislative advocacy efforts and provides a strong collective voice for the specialty on Capitol Hill.

Thanks to generous support from members of the Academy, ENT PAC has successfully exceeded its "First 50" fundraising goal for 2022. Academy members who have supported ENT PAC at the "First 50" level for 2022 recently participated in an open dialogue with U.S. Representative Suzan DelBene (D-WA) focusing on health policy and what Congress hopes to achieve ahead of November's midterm elections. Representative DelBene is a leader on the House Committee on Ways and Means as well as the lead sponsor of the prior authorization reform bill (H.R. 3173, the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act) endorsed by the AAO-HNS.

We understand the importance of providing transparency and a greater understanding of how decisions are made regarding ENT PAC's work for the specialty. Therefore in 2018, ENT PAC launched a quarterly report titled, "Your PAC Dollars at Work." [View your "Q1 PAC Dollars at Work"](#) summarizing ENT PAC activities in the first quarter of 2022.

At the beginning of the second quarter, ENT PAC staff attended events supporting the lead sponsors of legislation seeking to reform the Medicare Advantage prior authorization process, members of the Senate Finance Committee, members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee. To support these efforts and invest in the future of the specialty, [please click here!](#)

## State Legislative Reports

### AAO-HNS Educates Florida Legislators About Children's Hearing Aids

The Academy, together with the Florida State Trackers, State Society leaders, and the Florida Medical Association, worked diligently to educate state legislators regarding the issues with HB 79/SB 498 — the poorly drafted and legally inconsistent attempt to mandate insurance coverage of hearing aids for children. Although firmly supportive of securing medically necessary hearing aids for children, advocates could not support the bills, as they did not meet the principles of best care, were inconsistent with federal requirements for hearing aid provision, and could have led to physical and economic harm for the families and children with hearing loss. Successful in stopping these bills, advocates hope to help legislators draft appropriate legislation for the 2023 sessions.

### Florida Passes Bill Requiring Newborn CMV Testing

On April 6, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed Senate Bill 292, legislation requiring testing for cytomegalovirus (CMV), into law. AAO-HNS and the Florida State Trackers were early supporters of this bill and sent letters of support during hearings to the Committee on Health Policy. The new law requires newborns who fail their hearing test to be tested for CMV before discharged or 21 days of age.

## Regulatory Reports

### HRSA Reopened Provider Relief Fund Period 1 Payment Reporting Portal

The reporting portal for recipients of Period 1 Provider Relief Funds was reopened by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) on April 11, following [successful advocacy efforts](#) by the Academy, the American Medical Association, and other medical societies. In an effort to help providers from small practices who were unaware of the reporting deadline remain compliant, providers who received more than \$10,000 in

Provider Relief Funds but failed to submit their Period 1 report were able to submit a late report. The reporting portal for Period 1 funding closed on Friday, April 22.

## Action Requested

### Volunteers Needed to Strengthen PROJECT 535

Successful legislative advocacy starts with a solid grassroots foundation. With Congress focusing in on health policy and physician reimbursement legislation, now is the time for the Academy to strengthen its grassroots network. PROJECT 535 supports the Academy's grassroots advocacy efforts through a network of volunteers who help reinforce our message by establishing personal relationships with each of the 535 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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