



2025 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

State Legislative Tracker Program

A State Legislative Tracker is a volunteer role designed to support AAO-HNS advocacy efforts at the state level. State Legislative Trackers take an active part in monitoring and analyzing pending state legislation that will affect otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons and your patients.

We ask that State Trackers be familiar with AAO-HNS state legislative priority issues and AAO-HNS Position Statements. AAO-HNS staff will assist you and provide the tools to be successful. As a State Tracker, you are given regular access and updates to legislation introduced in your state. These are provided via email twice per week.

State Tracker duties:

- Check your email for state legislative alerts (from AAO-HNS tracking service)
- Read bill summaries: Does the bill affect our patients, our practice, our profession?
- Communicate with your state OTO society and state medical societies
- Attend monthly conference calls from December-June to help identify national trends and to share feedback and ideas on pending legislation

State Trackers help us stay on top of the latest policy developments at the state level and often play an integral role in our advocacy initiatives. Join your colleagues today in becoming a State Tracker by reaching out to the email below!

2025 State Advocacy Highlights

State legislatures are in the midst of a busy 2025, with sessions convening in all 50 states, and 38 still meeting. For AAO-HNS, audiology scope-of-practice issues are once again front and center for advocacy with related bills proposed in Arkansas, Oregon, and Louisiana. A new Maryland law enacted in 2024 changed the definition of the practice of audiology to include a broad expansion of services that audiologists

may perform, which are unlike privileges granted in any other state. AAO-HNS has worked to amend the Maryland law in the 2025 session and to oppose any measures that inappropriately expand the scope of practice for nonphysicians.

Additionally, other priority issues for AAO-HNS at the state level include hearing aid services, newborn screening for cytomegalovirus, prior authorization, medical liability reform, and truth in advertising.

Ensuring Patient Safety for Hearing Healthcare

The AAO-HNS believes that a physician-led hearing healthcare team, with coordination of services, is the best approach for providing the highest quality care to patients. Unfortunately, the audiology community continues to pursue legislation that would inappropriately increase their scope of practice and put patient safety at risk. Some of these bills have included provisions that would allow audiologists to order radiographic images and bloodwork, perform health screenings, and remove cerumen without limitations. The Academy opposes any legislation that would allow audiologists to independently diagnose or treat the medical conditions associated with hearing loss or balance disorders.

Preventing Permanent Hearing Loss in Infants

Congenital cytomegalovirus (cCMV) is a little known, yet common, virus that is harmless in adults, but can cause birth defects like deafness, seizures, and developmental delays in babies. It is the leading non-genetic cause of birth defects. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that one in 200 babies are born with CMV and 1 in 5



babies born with CMV will develop long-term health problems.

The AAO-HNS supports screening and prevention efforts to educate pregnant women and their families regarding this common, yet preventable, viral infection.

Hearing Aid Services

The coverage of, sale, and dispensing of hearing aids is an issue considered by several states in various forms each legislative year. The AAO-HNS tracks and advocates on bills that address the scope of practice of dispensing hearing aids, state insurance mandates for hearing aids, and tax credits and/or exemptions for hearing aids. The merits and potential concerns with these varying proposals are evaluated on an individual basis.

Prior Authorization

The AAO-HNS is increasingly concerned about health insurers' use of prior authorization (PA) as a tool to reduce healthcare spending. PA requirements

commonly now apply to routine office procedures, imaging, evaluations, medications, and minor surgeries. The process for obtaining this approval is lengthy and typically requires physicians or their staff to spend the equivalent of two or more days each week negotiating with insurance companies—time that would be better spent taking care of patients. Patients are now experiencing significant barriers to medically necessary care due to PA requirements for items and services that are eventually routinely approved. The AAO-HNS strongly supports needed PA reforms.

Medical Liability Reform

Each year, numerous states consider various tort reform measures, including those related to affidavits of merit, alternative reforms, caps on non-economic damages, defensive medicine issues, expert witnesses, health courts, and/or pre-trial screening panels. The AAO-HNS strongly supports comprehensive medical liability reforms to stabilize and reduce professional liability premiums, ensure continued patient access to care, and eliminate frivolous lawsuits.

For more information on state legislative issues or specific legislation, please contact

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