



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 definitio

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.

New Volunteers Needed to Strengthen PROJECT 535

Successful legislative advocacy starts with a solid grassroots foundation. Given Congressional focus on legislation important than ever for the Academy to strengthen its key contacts network via PROJECT 535. In addition to ers help reinforce our message by establishing