



Make Your Voice Heard in Washington
Donate to NeurosurgeryPAC

[Learn More >](#)

Vol. 38, May 2015

[NeurosurgeryPAC](#) [AANS.org](#)



***Neurosurgeons Taking Action** is an E-newsletter from the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS). The purpose of this E-publication is to provide you with timely updates on socio-economic and political issues facing neurosurgeons. **Neurosurgeons Taking Action** is sent out as news and events warrant your attention so that our members can stay on top of the issues that affect them.*

Legislative Affairs

- President Obama Signs the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act >> [more](#)
- Neurosurgery and 500 Other Groups Urge Congress to Repeal IPAB >> [more](#)
- AANS and CNS Support Graduate Medical Education Legislation >> [more](#)
- Senate Finance Health Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Medical Device Tax >> [more](#)

NeurosurgeryPAC

- NeurosurgeryPAC Starts Strong with 2015 Fundraising >> [more](#)

Grassroots Action Alert

- Join the Alliance of Specialty Medicine for its Annual Capitol Hill Advocacy Conference >> [more](#)

Coding and Reimbursement

- Last Day to Apply for ICD-10 Testing Is May 22 >> [more](#)
- CMS Releases Proposed 2016 Medicare Hospital Payment Rule >> [more](#)

Drugs and Devices

- Open Payment Review and Dispute Process Ends May 20 >> [more](#)

CSNS Spotlight

- ABCs About PQRS >> [more](#)

Communications

- Subscribe to Neurosurgery Blog Today! >> [more](#)

Neurosurgeons Taking Action News

Legislative Affairs

President Obama Signs the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act

On April 16, 2015, President Obama signed into law the "[Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act](#)," which repealed Medicare's sustainable growth rate (SGR) physician payment system and prevented a 21 percent pay cut. In addition, the legislation:

- Consolidates the current [Physician Quality Reporting System](#) (PQRS), [Electronic Health Record](#) (EHR) and [Value-Based Payment Modifier](#) (VM) programs, and eliminates the penalties associated with these programs;
- Includes positive incentives for quality improvement payment programs that allow all physicians the opportunity to earn bonus payments;
- Enhances the ability of physicians — rather than the government — to develop quality measures and clinical practice improvement activities;
- Clarifies that quality improvement program requirements do not create new standards of care for purposes of medical malpractice lawsuits;
- Reverses the CMS decision to eliminate the 10- and 90-day global surgery payments; and
- Extends the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for two years.

The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) will now focus on guiding this legislation through the implementation process to ensure that the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) (CMS) develops the new Medicare physician payment system as directed and intended by Congress.

[[top of page](#)] [[back to headlines](#)]

Neurosurgery and 500 Other Groups Urge Congress to Repeal IPAB

On May 7, 2015, the AANS, CNS and several state neurosurgical societies, joined the [Healthcare Leadership Council](#) — with more than 500 national and state-based healthcare organizations — in sending a [letter](#) urging Congress to repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB). The IPAB is a board of 15 unelected, and largely unaccountable government bureaucrats, whose primary purpose is to cut Medicare spending. Repealing the IPAB is one of organized neurosurgery's top legislative priorities.

[[top of page](#)] [[back to headlines](#)]

AANS and CNS Support Graduate Medical Education Legislation

On May 4, 2015, the AANS and CNS joined the [Alliance of Specialty Medicine](#) in [endorsing S. 1148](#), the "Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2015." Introduced by Sens. **Bill Nelson** (D-Fla.), **Harry Reid** (D-Nev.) and **Charles Schumer** (D-N.Y.), S. 1148 would increase the number of Medicare-funded graduate medical education (GME) residency positions by 15,000 over the next five years. The Alliance also [endorsed](#) the House companion bill, [H.R. 2124](#), introduced by Reps. **Joseph Crowley** (D-N.Y.) and **Charles Boustany**, MD (R-La.).

[[top of page](#)] [[back to headlines](#)]

Senate Finance Health Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Medical Device Tax

On April 23, 2015, the [Health Subcommittee](#) of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee held a [hearing](#) on the impact of the medical device tax on jobs, innovation and patients. Created by the [Affordable Care Act](#), the medical device tax is a 2.3 percent excise tax that applies to the gross sales of medical device products. This tax imposes more than \$30 billion in new taxes and is adversely affecting medical innovation and patient care. Repealing the medical device tax is among neurosurgery's top legislative priorities, and the AANS and CNS issued a [press release](#) applauding the committee for its efforts to abolish this arbitrary tax.

If you have questions about these or other legislative issues, please contact Katie Orrico, director of the AANS/CNS Washington Office at korrico@neurosurgery.org.

[[top of page](#)] [[back to headlines](#)]

NeurosurgeryPAC

NeurosurgeryPAC Starts Strong with 2015 Fundraising

So far this year, NeurosurgeryPAC has raised \$140,716 from 175 neurosurgeons. This includes \$35,270 that was recently raised at the 2015 AANS Annual Scientific Meeting in Washington, D.C. Thanks to all our contributors!

Renewal statements were mailed earlier this year, so please remember to send in your 2015 contributions to ensure that your PAC has the funds to support members of Congress and other candidates who support neurosurgery. As always, you can contribute using our online donation option by logging into [MyAANS](#).

In the second quarter, NeurosurgeryPAC made contributions to the following candidates for the U.S. Senate: Sens. **Lamar Alexander** (R-Tenn.); **Richard Burr** (R-N.C.); **Orrin Hatch** (R-Utah); **Johnny Isakson** (R-Ga.); and **Patty Murray** (D-Wash.). In the House, your PAC has supported: Reps. **Andy Barr** (R-Ky.); **Marsha Blackburn** (R-Tenn.); **Charles Boustany**, MD (R-La.); **Michael Burgess**, MD (R-Texas); **Charlie Dent** (R-Pa.); **Frank Pallone** (D-N.J.); **Raul Ruiz**, MD (D-Calif.); **Pete Sessions** (R-Texas); **John Shimkus** (R-Ill.); **Steve Stivers** (R-Ohio); and **Jackie Walorski** (R-Ind.).

[Click here](#) for more information on the NeurosurgeryPAC, including the current, complete list of donors, candidates receiving NeurosurgeryPAC support and to read more about your PAC in action.

Editor's Note: AANS members who are citizens of the United States and pay dues or have voting privileges may contribute to NeurosurgeryPAC, as may AANS candidate members. All contributions must be drawn on personal accounts and any corporate contributions to NeurosurgeryPAC will be used for administrative expenses and other activities permissible under federal law. Contributions are not tax-deductible. Federal law requires NeurosurgeryPAC to use its best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation, and the name of the employer of every individual whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

If you have questions about NeurosurgeryPAC, please contact Adrienne Roberts,

senior manager for legislative affairs in the AANS/CNS Washington Office, at aroberts@neurosurgery.org

[[top of page](#)] [[back to headlines](#)]

Grassroots Action Alert

Join the Alliance of Specialty Medicine for its Annual Capitol Hill Advocacy Conference

In July, the [Alliance for Specialty Medicine](#) will host its annual Capitol Hill advocacy conference. This two-day event will feature informative speakers, events with members of Congress and an opportunity for neurosurgeons to meet with their own elected officials. The conference will begin on the evening of Monday, July 13, 2015, and conclude the afternoon of July 15, 2015. If you are interested in attending, please contact Katie Orrico, director of the Washington Office, at korrico@neurosurgery.org. Space is limited.

[[top of page](#)] [[back to headlines](#)]

Coding and Reimbursement

Last Day to Apply for ICD-10 Testing Is May 22

The [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#) (CMS) is offering final testing of the ICD-10 diagnosis coding system prior to implementation on Oct. 1, 2015. Physicians may apply to participate by completing a form on the Medicare Administrative Contractor's (MAC's) website by May 22, 2015. CMS will review applications and select 850 volunteers to participate during the week of July 20-24, 2015. CMS intends to select volunteers representing a broad cross-section of physicians. Applicants will be notified whether they have been selected to participate by June 12, 2015. More information is available by clicking [here](#).

[[top of page](#)] [[back to headlines](#)]

CMS Releases Proposed 2016 Medicare Hospital Payment Rule

On April 30, 2015, the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#) (CMS) published the [2016 Medicare Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment System](#) (IPPS) Proposed Rule. Of particular interest to neurosurgeons, the rule included a request for four new MS-DRGs for endovascular procedures, separating the procedures from the MS-DRGs for open cerebrovascular procedures. In addition, CMS plans to revise the titles of MS-DRGs for spinal fusions to more closely correspond to the ICD-10 wording by changing the current title of "9+ Fusions" to "Extensive Fusions." Furthermore, CMS is proposing to continue the new technology add-on payments for the responsive neurostimulator system, which the AANS and CNS have supported.

If you have any questions regarding these or other reimbursement issues, please contact Cathy Hill, AANS/CNS senior manager for regulatory affairs, at chill@neurosurgery.org.

[[top of page](#)] [[back to headlines](#)]

Drugs and Devices

Open Payment Review and Dispute Process Ends May 20

On April 6, 2015, the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#) (CMS) started the [Open Payment](#) review and dispute period, during which physicians can log on to the Open Payments website and review their 2014 data. The review and dispute period will end on May 20, 2015, following which, CMS will make the information public on June 30, 2015. [Click here](#) to access additional information and registration instructions on the CMS Open Payment website.

If you have any questions regarding this or other drug and device issues, please contact Cathy Hill, AANS/CNS senior manager for regulatory affairs, at chill@neurosurgery.org.

[[top of page](#)] [[back to headlines](#)]

CSNS Spotlight

ABCs About PQRS

What do neurosurgeons need to know to prepare for quality reporting? What is the physician quality reporting system? What quality measures are reportable? How can you avoid negative adjustments? The Affordable Care Act (ACA) Task Force of the [Council of State Neurosurgical Societies](#) (CSNS) has developed a [short presentation](#) to help answer these questions. Changes to this document are likely, given passage of the, "[Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act](#)." Members of the CSNS ACA Task Force will provide updated information on quality reporting requirements as changes occur.

[[top of page](#)] [[back to headlines](#)]

Communications

Subscribe to Neurosurgery Blog Today!

The mission of [Neurosurgery Blog](#) is to investigate and report on how healthcare policy affects patients, physicians and medical practice, and to illustrate how the art and science of neurosurgery encompass much more than brain surgery. Over the past few months, Neurosurgery Blog has ramped up its reporting efforts to include multiple guest blog posts from key thought leaders and members of the neurosurgical community. Listed below are some recent blog posts on topics, including medical liability, payment reform, and health reform in general.

- [HITECH Act: \\$28 Billion Taxpayer Investment Spent, Minimal Progress on Interoperability](#)
- [Spread the Word: May is #StrokeMonth](#)
- [Ambulatory Surgery Centers Provide Excellent Setting for Spine Surgery](#)
- [Senate Finance Health Subcommittee Holds Critical Hearing on Medical Device Tax](#)
- [Faces of Neurosurgery: Neurosurgery to the Rescue](#)
- [Stick a fork in it, it's finally done: Senate Passes SGR Repeal Bill Preventing 21% Medicare Pay Cut](#)
- [Aneurysms: Where Neurosurgeons Touch and Change Lives](#)

We invite you to visit the blog and subscribe to it, as well as connect with us on our various social media platforms. This will allow you to keep up with the many health-policy activities happening in the nation's capital and beyond the Beltway.

- [Neurosurgery Blog: More Than Just Brain Surgery](#)
- [Neurosurgery's Twitter Feed: @Neurosurgery](#)
- [Neurosurgery's Facebook Page](#)
- [Neurosurgery's LinkedIn Group](#)
- [Neurosurgery's YouTube Channel](#)
- [Neurosurgery's Google+ Page](#)

If you are interested in these communications activities, please contact Alison Dye, AANS/CNS senior manager of communications, at adye@neurosurgery.org.

[[top of page](#)] [[back to headlines](#)]

Please add *Neurosurgeons Taking Action* to your email address book or Safe Sender List to ensure delivery.

You may [change your e-mail address](#) by logging in to MyAANS.org with your username and password and changing your profile preferences. [Click here](#) to unsubscribe.

Questions or comments? Please contact Katie Orrico at 202-446-2024 or korrico@neurosurgery.org.

© Copyright 2015 AANS. All rights reserved.

