

UPDATE

# neurosurgery

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 8, 2021

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## **Neurosurgeons Release 2021 Legislative and Regulatory Agenda**

*Prior authorization reform, health insurance coverage, GME funding remain among the top priorities*

Washington, DC—Today, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) released [their 2021 legislative and regulatory agenda](#), including health policy action items neurosurgeons plan to advance with Congress and the Biden Administration. Organized neurosurgery is pursuing the following priorities:

- **Protect patients’ timely access to care** by reforming utilization review practices, such as prior authorization, step-therapy and Medicare’s appropriate use criteria program for advanced diagnostic imaging.
- **Improve the health care delivery system** by maintaining existing insurance market reforms and advancing solutions that will lower costs, expand coverage and enhance choice, including establishing network adequacy standards and out-of-network options — with appropriate patient protections for unanticipated medical bills.
- **Support quality resident training and education** by increasing the number of Medicare-funded residency positions and preserving the ability of surgeons to maximize education and training opportunities within the profession’s current regulatory structures.
- **Fix the broken medical liability system** by adopting proven reforms that are in place in California and Texas and other innovative solutions.
- **Continue progress with medical innovation** by prioritizing funding for the National Institutes of Health, adopting a *21st Century Cures Act 2.0* initiative to support pioneering medical technology and life-saving therapies and expanding the availability of telehealth.
- **Alleviate the burdens of electronic health records (EHRs)** by achieving interoperability, preventing data blocking, reducing unnecessary data entry and improving the functionality of EHR systems to enhance, not hinder, the delivery of medical care.
- **Restructure Medicare quality improvement programs** by minimizing the complexity, streamlining and reducing reporting burdens and promoting specialty-specific quality measures, clinical data registries and alternative payment models that clinicians, not the government, develop.
- **Champion fair reimbursement** by improving the Medicare physician payment system — including providing an inflationary payment update, revisiting budget-neutrality requirements and maintaining the 10- and 90-day global surgery payment package — empowering patients and physicians to privately contract fee arrangements and closing the gap in payments between Medicaid and private insurers to reduce access to care disparities.

“During these unprecedented times, the AANS and the CNS will continue to encourage policymakers to work together to find bipartisan solutions for our nation’s top health care issues to ensure that our patients have timely access to high-quality neurosurgical care,” said **John K. Ratliff**, MD, FAANS, FACS a neurosurgeon from Stanford, Calif., and chair of the AANS/CNS Washington Committee.

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*The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), founded in 1931, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), founded in 1951, are the two largest scientific and educational associations for neurosurgical professionals in the world. These groups represent over 8,000 neurosurgeons worldwide. Neurological surgery is the medical specialty concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the entire nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves. For more information, please visit [www.aans.org](http://www.aans.org) or [www.cns.org](http://www.cns.org), read our blog [www.neurosurgeryblog.org](http://www.neurosurgeryblog.org), follow us on [Twitter](#) or connect with us on [Facebook](#).*