



Make Your Voice Heard in Washington
Donate to NeurosurgeryPAC

[Learn More >](#)

Neurosurgeons Taking Action



American
Association of
Neurological
Surgeons

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

LINKEDIN

NEUROSURGERY
BLOG

ARCHIVES

Vol. 42, March 2016

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

[View as a Web Page](#)

*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. To ensure that our members stay on top of the issues that affect them, **Neurosurgeons Taking Action** is sent out when news and/or events warrant their attention.*

Legislative Affairs

U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee Hosts Concussion Roundtable [more...](#)

Training Tomorrow's Doctors Today Act Introduced in the House [more...](#)

NeurosurgeryPAC

It's Time to Make Your Annual Contribution to NeurosurgeryPAC [more...](#)

NeurosurgeryPAC Kicks-off Its Election-year Giving [more...](#)

Coding and Reimbursement

AANS and CNS Nominate Neurosurgeon to Medicare Commission [more...](#)

Quality Improvement

Physician Groups Receive Medicare Quality Payment Adjustments [more...](#)

Health Affairs Study Highlights Physicians Spend \$15.4 Billion on Quality Reporting [more...](#)

Graduate Medical Education

Organized Neurosurgery Testifies at ACGME Resident Duty Hours Congress [more...](#)

Drugs and Devices

CMS Updates 2014 Open Payments Data; Prepares for June 2016 Data Release [more...](#)

Communications

Neurosurgery Hosts GME Awareness Month in March [more...](#)

Dr. Alex B. Valadka Pens Guest Column for The Hill [more...](#)

Neurosurgeons Taking Action News

Legislative Affairs

U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee Hosts Concussion Roundtable

On March 14, 2016, the [U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee](#) hosted a [roundtable](#) to conduct a [broad review](#) surrounding the causes, effects and treatments for concussions. The meeting brought together experts from the medical, military, athletic and research communities to increase collaboration and expand the body of knowledge to help improve the diagnosis and treatments of concussions. **Geoffrey T. Manley**, MD, PhD, FAANS, past-chair of the AANS/CNS [Section on Neurotrauma and Critical Care](#), chief of Neurosurgery at San Francisco General Hospital and professor of neurosurgery at the University of California at San Francisco, participated in the roundtable. The AANS and CNS issued a [press release](#) applauding the committee for its leadership on the issue of concussions.

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

Training Tomorrow's Doctors Today Act Introduced in the House

On March 17, 2016, Rep. **Kathy Castor** (D-Fla.) introduced H.R. 4774, the "[Training Tomorrow's Doctors Today Act](#)", which would increase the number of graduate medical education (GME) residency positions by 15,000 over the next five years to tackle the severe physician manpower shortage. The AANS and CNS [joined](#) with the [Association of American Medical Colleges](#) and others in backing this bill and along with the [Alliance of Specialty Medicine](#), sent a [letter](#) supporting the legislation.

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](#)] [[headlines](#)]

NeurosurgeryPAC

It's Time to Make Your Annual Contribution to NeurosurgeryPAC

To date, NeurosurgeryPAC has raised a total of \$91,000 towards our \$250,000 fundraising goal. As it is a critical election year, please support your political action committee so organized neurosurgery can continue to make progress on our advocacy agenda. Contribute online at [MyAANS](#).

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

NeurosurgeryPAC Kicks-off Its Election-year Giving

Since the start of the year, NeurosurgeryPAC has made contributions to 19 members of Congress who have been supportive of organized neurosurgery's priorities. In the U.S. Senate, contributions went to Sens. **Mark Kirk** (R-Ill.) and **Rob Portman** (R-Ohio). In the U.S. House of Representatives, NeurosurgeryPAC has supported House Speaker **Paul Ryan** (R-Wis.) and Reps. **Marsha Blackburn** (R-Tenn.); **Kevin Brady** (R-Texas); **Michael Burgess**, MD (R-Texas); **Buddy Carter** (R-Ga.); **Gene Green** (D-Texas); **Brett Guthrie** (R-Ky.); **Richard Hudson** (R-N.C.); **Tim Murphy**, PhD (R-Pa.); **Frank Pallone** (D-N.J.); **Tom Price**, MD (R-Ga.); **Phil Roe**, MD (R-Tenn.); **Steve Scalise** (R-La.); **Pete Sessions** (R-Texas); **John Shimkus** (R-Ill.); **Pat Tiberi** (R-Ohio), and **Fred Upton** (R-Mich.). Finally, National Party contributions included the **National Republican Congressional Committee** (NRCC) and the **National Republican Senatorial Committee** (NRSC).

Please note, the NeurosurgeryPAC Board will review House and Senate candidates for office at its upcoming meeting in April 2016. NeurosurgeryPAC donors are encouraged to recommend candidates to the PAC Board for its review and consideration. If you believe a candidate would be supportive of neurosurgery's priority issues in the U.S. Congress, please send your recommendations to Adrienne Roberts, senior manager of legislative affairs at aroberts@neurosurgery.org.

[Click here](#) for more information on the NeurosurgeryPAC, including the current 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

Coding and Reimbursement

AANS and CNS Nominate Neurosurgeon to Medicare Commission

The AANS and CNS have nominated **Gregory J. Przybylski, MD, FAANS**, for a position on the influential [Medicare Payment Advisory Commission](#) (MedPAC). MedPAC is an independent agency established to advise Congress on issues that affect the Medicare program. A practicing neurosurgeon from New Jersey, Dr. Przybylski is a past chair of the AANS/CNS Coding and Reimbursement Committee and currently serves as organized neurosurgery's representative on the AMA/Specialty Society Relative Value Update Committee (RUC). During his tenure on the RUC, Dr. Przybylski has led some important initiatives, including heading up the Professional Liability Insurance Workgroup. His nomination is supported by more than 30 national medical societies, the Partnership to Improve Patient Care and key members of Congress.

To help bolster Dr. Przybylski's nomination, the AANS and CNS also spearheaded a congressional letter writing campaign. Led by Reps. **Larry Bucshon, MD (R-Ind.)**; **Tom Price, MD, (R-Ga.)**; and **Phil Roe, MD (R-Tenn.)**, this campaign is calling on the [Government Accountability Office](#) (GAO) to appoint a surgeon to MedPAC. The [letter](#), which was signed by 23 members of the House of Representatives, highlights the need for a surgeon's expertise on the commission to provide crucial input from those who are well versed in Medicare payment systems, including fee-for-service.

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

Quality Improvement

Physician Groups Receive Medicare Quality Payment Adjustments

In March 2016, the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#) (CMS) released payment adjustment results related to the implementation of the 2016 [Physician Value-based Payment Modifier](#) (VM). The 2016 VM, based on 2014 performance, is being applied to physicians in groups of 10 or more eligible professionals. Most physician groups met the minimum reporting requirements, and their Medicare payments will remain unchanged. Medicare Administrative Contractors have begun paying claims based on these updated payment amounts since March 14, 2016, and groups will start seeing the adjustments on their claims within the next six weeks. CMS will reprocess any CY 2016 claims with dates of service that were paid before this date. [Click here](#) for information about individual practice quality and cost performance reports.

Health Affairs Study Highlights Physicians Spend \$15.4 Billion on Quality Reporting

According to a [new study](#) (subscription required) published in the journal *Health Affairs*, physicians are spending hundreds of hours reporting clinical quality measures to Medicare, Medicaid and private insurers at an estimated cost of \$15.4 billion per year. The authors point out that while much is to be gained from quality measurement, the current system is unnecessarily costly, and greater effort is needed to standardize measures and make them easier to report.

If you have any questions regarding these or other quality-related issues, please contact Rachel Groman, Vice President for Clinical Affairs and Quality Improvement at Hart Health Strategies, via email at rgroman@hhs.com.

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

Graduate Medical Education

Organized Neurosurgery Testifies at ACGME Resident Duty Hours Congress

On March 16-17, 2016, the [Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education](#) (ACGME) convened the "Resident Duty Hours in the Learning and Working Environment Congress" in Chicago. In his capacity as president of the [Society of Neurological Surgeons](#) (SNS), AANS past president **Robert E. Harbaugh**, MD, FAANS, testified on behalf of the SNS, AANS, [American Board of Neurological Surgeons](#) and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS). Other neurosurgeons attending included AANS president **H. Hunt Batjer**, MD, FAANS; CNS president **Russell R. Lonser**, MD, FAANS; and AANS/CNS Washington Committee chair **Shelly D. Timmons**, MD, PhD, FAANS. Neurosurgical resident **Maya Babu**, MD, presented testimony on behalf of the American College of Surgeons [Residents and Associate Society](#). Dr. Harbaugh testified on the need for flexible resident duty hours and reiterated key points from organized neurosurgery's [detailed written comments](#).

If you have questions about this issue, please contact Katie Orrico, director of the AANS/CNS Washington Office, at korrico@neurosurgery.org

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

Drugs and Devices

CMS Updates 2014 Open Payments Data; Prepares for June 2016 Data Release

On Jan. 19, 2016, [CMS](#) updated the [Open Payments](#) dataset, which contains industry payments to physicians and teaching hospitals previously released on June 30, 2015. Each year, CMS will "refresh" the Open Payments data at least once to include updates from disputes and other data corrections made since the initial publication of the data. In the upcoming months, neurosurgeons will be able to review and challenge their 2015 data, and manufacturers will make any corrections before the June 30, 2016, data release date. CMS will [hold a conference call](#) on April 12, 2016, from 2:30-3:30 p.m. EDT to educate physicians, teaching hospitals and physician office staff on the process for reviewing 2015 data. Individual physician data may be found using the Open Payments [search tool](#). For more

information about Open Payments, [click here](#).

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](#)] [[headlines](#)]

Communications

Neurosurgery Hosts GME Awareness Month in March

During the month of March, Neurosurgery Blog is hosting graduate medical education (GME) awareness month. In order to maximize attention on GME and physician workforce issues, we planned our efforts around [Match Day](#), which occurred on March 18, 2016. Dubbing March as "[GME Month](#)," the AANS and CNS launched the hashtag #gmemonth on Twitter. [Neurosurgery Blog](#) and other communications outlets will focus on GME-related topics throughout the month, with multiple guest blog posts. Our first [guest post](#) was authored by **Atul Grover**, MD, PhD executive vice president of the Association of American Medical Colleges. Another [guest post](#) was written by Rep. **Joe Crowley** (D-N.Y.), vice chair of the House Democratic Caucus and a member of the powerful Ways and Means Committee.

We invite all neurosurgeons to join the conversation — using the #gmemonth hashtag — so we can grow awareness through social media. In the meantime, if you have not already done so, we also encourage you to subscribe to Neurosurgery Blog to stay informed on this and other important topics facing neurosurgery. Simply [click here](#) to enter you email address, confirm your subscription and away you go!

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

Dr. Alex B. Valadka Pens Guest Column for The Hill

On Feb 17, 2016, *The Hill* newspaper published an [op-ed](#) by **Alex B. Valadka**, MD, FAANS, spokesperson for the [Alliance of Specialty Medicine](#), which provided an overview of critical issues concerning the meaningful use of electronic health records (EHRs). In the piece, Dr. Valadka wrote:

Despite its many flaws, Meaningful Use will be a cornerstone of the Medicare Access & CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA), which is intended to focus less on compliance with arbitrary rules and more on paying for value and better patient care. However, unless immediate and significant changes are made to the Meaningful Use program and the interoperability of EHRs is addressed, value and better patient care facilitated by health IT will remain unattainable ideals.

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](#)] [[headlines](#)]

[View as a Web Page](#)

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 2016 AANS. All rights reserved.