

April 2022

# Advocacy Monthly



## CMS Releases 2023 IPPS Proposed Rule

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently issued the [proposed rule](#) for the 2023 Medicare hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS). The rule includes several changes, such as updating Medicare payment rates and policies for inpatient hospitals, modifying graduate medical education policies, transforming quality reporting and value programs, and addressing health equity. STS currently is reviewing the rule and will provide comments, which are due by June 17.

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## Pushback Is Strong for CMS Changes to Split Billing Policy

In a [letter to the CMS administrator](#), the Society, American Medical Association, and other national specialty societies urged the agency not to move forward with previously finalized changes on split or shared visits. The group argues that this policy would “drastically disrupt team-based care and interfere with the way care is delivered in the facility setting” and urges CMS to propose an alternative policy that would allow physicians or qualified health professionals to bill split or shared visits based on time or medical decision-making. CMS recently responded, stating that the agency “will take this information into consideration for possible future changes.” The [2022 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule final rule](#) was issued in November 2021.

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## STS Supports Increased Funding for Tobacco Control Programs

More than 60 medical organizations—including STS—signed a [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids letter](#) pushing for a \$68.5 million increase in funding (for a total of \$310 million) in fiscal year 2023 for the CMS Office on Smoking and Health (OSH). This increase would allow OSH—the lead federal agency for comprehensive tobacco prevention and control—to strengthen efforts that address the epidemic of e-cigarette and tobacco use and expand programs to assist regions disproportionately harmed by tobacco use.

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## Medical Orgs Commit to Preventing Future Generations of Smokers

The Society also joined a [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids letter](#) to the commissioner of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), expressing support of prohibiting menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars. The letter urges the FDA to issue life-saving rules to ban these products and move quickly to finalize and implement them. “There is no question that flavored products are particularly attractive to young people, leading to increased tobacco initiation,” the letter states. STS has a long-standing commitment to anti-tobacco efforts; more details are available at [sts.org/tobaccopaper](https://sts.org/tobaccopaper).

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## ACTION ALERT: Urge Congress to Cosponsor Claims Data Legislation

The Society remains strong in its support of the [Meaningful Access to Federal Health Plan Claims Data Act of 2021](#). This STS-endorsed legislation would provide clinician-led clinical data registries such as the STS National Database and STS/ACC TVT Registry with access to federal health care claims data for the purposes of research and quality improvement. In addition, it would confirm the authority of CMS to use Coverage with Evidence Development as a coverage pathway. **Reach out today and urge lawmakers to cosponsor this important legislation.** The [STS Legislative Action Center](#) allows you to easily contact your members of Congress. Sample text for the message is provided, so you only need to log in with your email address and ZIP code, and then hit send.

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## Save the Date for Fall Advocacy Conference

Join your colleagues in Washington, DC, for the Society's next Advocacy Conference, September 13-14. The 1.5-day event will include a dinner briefing and meetings with STS surgeon leaders, as well as lawmakers and Congressional staff. Registration opens in early May. Scholarships—covering reasonable travel and meal expenses—will be available for STS members. For more information, contact [advocacy@sts.org](mailto:advocacy@sts.org).



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