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# Advocacy Monthly



## Medicare Cuts Battle Receives Bipartisan Backing

Representatives Ami Bera, MD, and Larry Bucshon, MD, released a Congressional sign-on letter opposing Medicare reimbursement cuts, driving a bipartisan effort to prevent the damaging payment reductions from taking effect on January 1. Earlier this year, the Society helped avert the cuts from taking effect. It was a temporary fix, however. Cuts of this magnitude pose a very real danger to the financial viability of cardiothoracic surgery practices and—more importantly—could limit patient access to lifesaving care. The Society needs your help in persuading elected officials to join the letter; take 2 minutes and [contact your members of Congress via the STS Legislative Action Center](#). For more information, contact the STS Government Relations team at [advocacy@sts.org](mailto:advocacy@sts.org).

## Virtual Advocacy Conference



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## Group Applauds First Federal Tobacco Tax Hike in 10 Years

In a [letter to House and Senate leaders](#), the Society and more than 50 specialty organizations expressed strong support for the [Tobacco Tax Equity Act of 2021 \(S. 1314\)](#). This legislation would establish the first federal e-cigarette tax, as well as increase the federal tax on traditional cigarettes for the first time since 2009. According to the group—led by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids—raising tobacco prices is “one of the most effective ways to reduce tobacco use, especially among youth, who are more sensitive to changes in price than adults.” The bill, introduced in Congress earlier this spring, awaits consideration by the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance committees.

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## PCRC Requests MACRA Oversight Hearing

The Physician Clinical Registry Coalition (PCRC), which includes STS, sent a [letter to leaders](#) of the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, urging them to hold hearings on the implementation of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) as it relates to Qualified Clinical Data Registries (QCDRs) such as the STS National Database. Specifically, the Coalition recommended that oversight efforts focus on key policies and reforms, including access to Medicare claims data, data validation requirements, and incentivizing clinical data and measure testing participation, as well as cooperative agreements between the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and QCDRs.

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## Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment to Improve Patient Access, Boost Workforce

The Society joined a [letter thanking Representatives Kim Schrier \(D-WA\) and John Joyce \(R-PA\)](#) for building support among their colleagues for the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program. Their leadership helped secure \$25 million in funding for the program—a “historic investment” in the pediatric subspecialty workforce. The program will provide up to \$35,000 annually for a maximum of 3 years to pediatric subspecialists who agree to practice in underserved areas, which could help improve patient access to care. This targeted financial support also will help address the critical shortages in the workforce.



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