

FEBRUARY 2021

Advocacy Monthly



What topics would you like to read about in the next edition of *Advocacy Monthly*? The Society would like your feedback and suggestions in order to provide you with the most relevant resources and information. Please send your feedback to communications@sts.org.

STS Supports Extension of COVID Moratorium Act

In a [letter to congressional leaders](#), the Society joined the American Medical Association and more than 50 other associations in voicing support for the [Medicare Sequester COVID Moratorium Act](#) (H.R. 315). This bipartisan legislation would extend the current moratorium on the 2% cut to all Medicare payments until the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Without Congressional intervention, the moratorium is slated to expire March 31, but many hospitals and other providers continue to experience significant financial challenges. The legislation currently is with the House Committee on the Budget.

Congress Receives Call to Attention for Medicare Reform

Last month, members of the 117th Congress were sworn in, and not long after, they received a [letter from a coalition of professional organizations](#), including STS, that represents an estimated 1.4 million physicians and non-physician practitioners throughout the US. The letter shined a spotlight on the critical need for Medicare system reform. Also mentioned was the additional work required to resolve deficiencies in the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule, including addressing the budget neutrality requirement. The Society continues its work on permanently reversing Medicare reimbursement cuts that were scheduled to take effect in January, but were blocked temporarily.

Society Backs Massive Funding Request for AHRQ

The Friends of AHRQ (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality), of which STS is a member, sent [letters to House](#) and Senate leaders, urging appropriators to provide at least \$500 million in budget authority for fiscal year 2022, which begins on October 1. The group underscored that AHRQ supports research to improve health care quality, reduce costs, advance patient safety, decrease medical errors, and broaden access to essential services—all necessary as the country recovers from COVID-19, prepares for the next pandemic, and addresses disparities in the health care system.

Advocacy Extras

- Just a few weeks remain to apply for the [STS/American College of Surgeons Healthy Policy Scholarship](#). This award—in the amount of \$8,000—subsidizes attendance and participation in the [Executive Leadership Program in Health Policy and Management](#) at Brandeis University. The 2021 program is scheduled for June 6-12; the application submission deadline is March 17.
- [“Missing Data: Why Medicare Claims Data Matter to You”](#) is the latest video featured in the Society’s 8 in 8 Series. In the video, Dr. Alan Speir uses eight slides in approximately 8 minutes to examine the importance of registry access to Medicare claims data, current regulatory barriers, and how STS is working to improve access. The free [8 in 8 collection](#) also features four additional advocacy videos and others on critical care, end-stage cardiopulmonary disease, and general thoracic topics.
- Join STS surgeon leaders and the STS-PAC Board of Advisors on Wednesday, March 10, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET, for the new virtual [STS-PAC Speaker Series](#). The first event will feature foreign affairs columnist for *The Washington Post* and bestselling novelist David Ignatius, who will address journalistic integrity. This series is open to all 2021 STS-PAC contributors; an RSVP is required. For more information, contact advocacy@sts.org.



STS-PAC

STS-PAC Speaker Series



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