

April 2016

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons is pleased to present this issue of *STS Advocacy Monthly*, an e-newsletter with the latest and most important legislative and regulatory news relevant to cardiothoracic surgery. If you have comments or suggestions, please e-mail [advocacy@sts.org](mailto:advocacy@sts.org).

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### **Medicare Payment Proposed Rule Released**

Yesterday, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a [proposed rule affecting how cardiothoracic surgeons are paid](#). The proposed rule would implement provisions of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act.

STS had an important role in helping government officials make choices that will lead to better patient care. On April 13, STS Past President Jeffrey B. Rich, MD, STS Secretary Keith S. Naunheim, MD, and Chair of the STS/AATS Workforce on Health Policy, Reform, and Advocacy Alan M. Speir, MD met with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation to provide feedback on Alternative Payment Model (APM) arrangements and APM bonus payments. Additionally, STS joined a [multi-stakeholder letter](#) urging CMS to clarify the pathway for creating an APM. The letter also stressed that physicians should receive credit under MIPS for clinical improvement activities that they work on in the private sector.

The Society is working to review the proposed rule and provide comments to CMS by the June 26 deadline.

### **PTAC Holds Public Meeting on APMs**

The Physician-Focused Payment Model Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) is hosting a public meeting on APMs on May 4 in Washington, DC. The Committee's first meeting was held in February. STS commented on the importance of PTAC functioning as Congress intended—to help evaluate APMs and provide guidance to those developing APMs. The Society also underscored how it is uniquely qualified to demonstrate how quality measurement and improvement can enhance patient outcomes and decrease costs through the STS National Database. The [summary from the February meeting](#) and the [meeting slides](#) are available online.

### **Attend the Next Legislative Fly-In this June**

Reservations are now being accepted for the next [STS Legislative Fly-In](#), June 13-14 in Washington, DC. After a dinner briefing the evening of Monday, June 13, participants will meet with lawmakers on Capitol Hill the next day to discuss issues of importance to cardiothoracic surgery. [Watch a short video](#) from STS Immediate Past President Mark S. Allen, MD explaining what happens during a Fly-In, and register by e-mailing [advocacy@sts.org](mailto:advocacy@sts.org).

### **Key Contact Connect**

#### **STS Awards Advocacy Scholarships**

Earlier this month, the Society welcomed four new Key Contacts. The four, all STS Candidate Members, received advocacy scholarships that allowed them to participate in the American College of Surgeons Leadership and Advocacy Summit in Washington, DC. Scholarship recipients were Moritz C. Wyler von

Ballmoos, MD, PhD, MPH from the Medical College of Wisconsin, Kristen A. Sell, MD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Adam N. Protos, MD from the University of Louisville, and Katherine L. Wood, MD from the University of Rochester. They participated in sessions about advocacy strategies and met with their representatives on Capitol Hill.

All STS members have the opportunity to advocate on behalf of cardiothoracic surgery. To learn how you can help, contact STS Government Relations staff at [advocacy@sts.org](mailto:advocacy@sts.org). Staff can arrange a meeting with your legislators at their home offices or help you arrange a facility tour. Learn more about [becoming an STS Key Contact](#).



*From left: Drs. Wyler von Ballmoos, Sell, Protos, and Wood*