

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

STS Advocacy Monthly

February 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.

In this issue:

1. STS Endorses Legislation Defining Clinical Data Registries
2. Invitation to Comment on Proposed Modification for Adult Heart Allocation System
3. Society Provides Input on Chronic Medical Conditions, Episode Groups, PQRS
4. New Roundtable Video on Global Surgical Payments
5. STS Advocates Recognized
6. New Section Highlights Key Contacts

STS Endorses Legislation Defining Clinical Data Registries

The Society [has endorsed legislation](#) that would create a statutory definition of clinician-led clinical data registries. STS National Database leaders helped draft the legislative language. The bill also requires electronic health record vendors to make all EHR platforms “interoperable” and requires EHR software to communicate with clinician-led clinical data registries, setting up the possibility of EHR-based reporting for the STS National Database.

In January, STS joined a [Physician Clinical Registry Coalition letter](#), sent to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, requesting changes to an earlier draft of the bill. The final bill is expected to be included as a part of a broader effort to expedite research into a cure for cancer.

Invitation to Comment on Proposed Modification for Adult Heart Allocation System

The Thoracic Organ Transplantation Committee—created by the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) and United Network for Organ Sharing—is seeking feedback on its [Proposal to Modify the Adult Heart Allocation System](#). The proposal calls for better stratification of the most medically urgent heart transplant candidates, reflects the increased use of mechanical circulatory devices, and addresses geographic disparities in access to donors. STS will submit a response on behalf of the Society; you are encouraged to submit an individual response by March 25, 2016, using the OPTN [public comment website](#).

Society Provides Input on Chronic Medical Conditions, Episode Groups, PQRS

STS recently submitted comments on three matters affecting cardiothoracic surgeons:

- A letter on [care for Medicare beneficiaries with chronic medical conditions](#) provides feedback to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) as the agency looks to implement new quality reporting requirements as a part of physician payment reform.
- The second letter on [episode groups for measuring and comparing physician resource use in treating Medicare patients](#) cautions CMS against using only claims information and not clinical

data, similar to what is collected in the STS National Database, to develop payment models for new episodes of care.

- The final letter [calls for CMS to improve its feedback and review process for the Physician Quality Reporting System](#), specifically for health care providers who experience vendor transmission issues when submitting their data to CMS.

New Roundtable Video on Global Surgical Payments

The latest video in the Society's roundtable series explains life under the global surgical payment system. [Watch here](#) as Drs. Alan M. Speir, Stephen J. Lahey, Robert S.D. Higgins, and Francis C. Nichols III discuss the global reimbursement for cardiothoracic procedures, recent legislative changes and the effect on the cardiothoracic surgical team, ways to influence policy, advocating for patients, and more.

STS Advocates Recognized

At the STS 52nd Annual Meeting in Phoenix this past January, the Society recognized two cardiothoracic surgeons who have had a significant impact on the specialty.

Dudley A. Hudspeth, MD was named 2015 STS Key Contact of the Year for his commitment to advocacy on behalf of the specialty. Additionally, Rep. Larry Bucshon (R-IN) was named 2015 Legislator of the Year for exceptional service in support of cardiothoracic surgeons and their patients.



Dudley A. Hudspeth, MD (right), from Phoenix, received the 2015 STS Key Contact of the Year Award from Douglas J. Mathisen, MD, Chair of the Health Policy and Relationships Council Operating Board. Rep. Bucshon will receive his award in April.

Also at the Annual Meeting, STS-PAC raised \$44,135 from 101 contributors. This is a strong start to the year, but the PAC needs continued support to help fight for issues important to cardiothoracic surgeons and their patients. If you haven't yet made your contribution, [please do so now](#).*

New Section Highlights Key Contacts

Advocacy Monthly is adding a new section to recognize [STS Key Contacts](#) who actively engage with their

elected officials on issues affecting cardiothoracic surgeons. If you participate in legislative activities, such as meeting with your representatives in Washington or hosting them at your medical facility, send photos to advocacy@sts.org, and they may be featured in an upcoming issue.

If you would like to become a Key Contact, [fill out this form](#), and STS Government Relations staff will send materials outlining the available activities and provide webinar training to hone your advocacy skills.

*Contributions to STS-PAC are voluntary and not tax deductible for federal income tax purposes. You have the right to decline to contribute without any reprisal against your STS membership. **Your contribution must be made using a credit card, check or money order, and must be drawn on a personal account to be used to support federal candidates. You must be a U.S. citizen or lawfully admitted permanent U.S. resident to contribute.** Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of each individual whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year. Federal law prohibits STS and STS-PAC from soliciting contributions from persons outside STS's restricted class. STS's restricted class includes individuals who are dues paying members or non-dues paying members with voting rights, and who are U.S. citizens or lawfully admitted permanent U.S. residents.