

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

# STS Advocacy Monthly

July 2017

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).

## **STS Opposes Health Reform Vote**

The Society has [submitted a letter](#) to members of the US Senate opposing current efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Analyses from the Congressional Budget Office have shown that the health reform proposals being contemplated in the Senate would result in the loss of insurance coverage for millions of Americans. The Society urged Senators to work through regular order in an open, bipartisan manner to advance reforms that align with STS's [Health Reform Priorities](#) and protect patient access to care. In the early hours of Friday, July 28, following hours of debate, the vote on the "skinny" repeal bill failed to pass the Senate. STS thanks its members who reached out to their Senators and expressed opposition on the Senate health reform efforts.

## **Society Suggests Ways to Reduce Regulatory Burdens**

Following a meeting on the topic with Health & Human Services Secretary Tom Price, STS submitted comments to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on [reducing regulatory burdens](#) and improving health care choices to empower patients. The Society's suggestions include providing a pathway by which specialty-specific quality measures can be used in the Quality Payment Program for physicians whose hospitals report their quality measures, ensuring appropriate implementation of data collection requirements for global surgical payments, making changes to the Coronary Artery Bypass Graft Episode Payment Model, and making it easier for physician-focused alternative payment models to be implemented.

## **STS Supports Home Infusion Services Coverage Gap Relief**

The Society joined with the American College of Cardiology and the Heart Failure Society of America in sending a letter to the House Committee on Ways and Means [in support of H.R. 3163](#), the Medicare Part B Home Infusion Services Temporary Transitional Payment Act. Medicare reimbursement for home inotropic infusion therapy was cut earlier this year and, while a new reimbursement model is scheduled to be implemented in 2021, the 4-year coverage gap will make it difficult for many infusion providers to continue offering this care. H.R. 3163 would create a transitional payment beginning in January 2019 to ensure that cardiac patients can continue receiving this therapy.

## **Society Joins Letter on Measure Approval Process**

STS signed a Physician Clinical Registry Coalition letter to CMS [outlining concerns with the Qualified Clinical Data Registry](#) measure review and self-nomination process under the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System. The letter stated that the review and self-nomination process was opaque, the timeframe was too limited, and CMS did not provide enough specifics.

## **Key Contact Connect**

### **Take Advantage of the August Recess**

Health care reform is a hot topic right now, and Congress needs to hear from physicians. If you would like to meet with your members of Congress while they are home in your district this August, contact STS Government Relations Coordinator Madeleine Stirling at [mstirling@sts.org](mailto:mstirling@sts.org) for details. The Society can set up meetings for you, as well as provide materials and talking points if desired. Make your voice heard!