

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

STS Advocacy Monthly

June 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.

STS Participates in HHS Roundtable

On June 20, Alan M. Speir, MD, Chair of the STS Council on Health Policy and Relationships, spoke at a roundtable hosted by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regarding regulatory administrative burden. Dr. Speir discussed concerns with a mandatory CABG Alternative Payment Model (APM) that does not take into account STS's quality-based payment innovations, the importance of specialty-designed APMs, and the benefits of providing Qualified Clinical Data Registries (QCDRs) with continuous access to Medicare claims data.



Dr. Speir (left) with HHS Secretary Thomas E. Price, MD

STS Advocates Add Signatures to Lung Cancer Screening Letter

At this month's Legislative Fly-In, STS advocates urged members of Congress to fight recent payment reductions for low-dose computed tomography lung cancer screening. As a result of these meetings, four members of the House of Representatives agreed to sign a letter asking the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to [avoid enacting further payment cuts](#).

Society Joins Letters on MIPS, NQF Funding

STS recently signed two multiorganizational letters that:

- Asked HHS to consider participation in a QCDR through an electronic health record as [fully satisfying the Advancing Care Information category](#) of the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System, or MIPS. (Learn more about MIPS in the Society's [MACRA Toolkit for Cardiothoracic Surgeons](#).)

- Called for [continued funding of the National Quality Forum](#), a private, nonpartisan organization that convenes physicians, hospitals, payers, consumers, and national experts in a consensus-based process to endorse the best measurement tools for improving accountability and patient care. (Learn more about the Society's [NQF-endorsed measures](#).)

Key Contact Connect

STS Holds Successful Fly-In

Earlier this month, 11 STS members and the Society's new Public Director Chris Draft attended 40 meetings with lawmakers and legislative aides on Capitol Hill. They discussed a number of issues important to cardiothoracic surgeons, including physician reimbursement, ways to reduce the resident physician shortage, passage of legislation providing medical liability reform, funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and both lung cancer prevention and early detection.

The night before the Capitol Hill meetings, Fly-In participants gathered for a preparatory dinner and to meet with Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA), an internal medicine physician, who was presented with the STS Legislator of the Year award for exceptional support of cardiothoracic surgeons and their patients.

[Check out photos from the Fly-In](#), and [watch a video of Rep. Bera accepting his award](#). And stay tuned for more information on the Society's next Legislative Fly-In!

Connect with Lawmakers This Summer

If you would like to meet with your members of Congress while they are home in your district during the month of August, contact STS Government Relations Assistant Madeleine Stirling at mstirling@sts.org for details. The Society can set up the meeting for you, as well as provide materials and talking points if desired.