

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

# STS Advocacy Monthly

May 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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### FDA Moves to Regulate E-Cigarettes

On May 10, the Food and Drug Administration [issued a Final Rule](#) extending its authority to all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, cigars, hookah tobacco, and pipe tobacco. Although the Tobacco Control Act of 2009 allowed the FDA to regulate these products, it had not asserted its authority until earlier this month. Consistent with the Society's [Declaration on Tobacco Control](#), STS repeatedly called for action on regulating this portion of the tobacco market, including comment letters to the [FDA's Associate Commissioner for Policy](#) and the [House](#) and [Senate](#) appropriation committees, discussions with staff in the Office of Management and Budget, and [social media](#).

### STS Endorses Bill Addressing Pediatric Subspecialist Shortage

The Society has joined a sign-on letter to House and Senate leadership endorsing legislation that would ease the current shortage of pediatric medical subspecialists. H.R. 1859/S. 2782, the [Ensuring Children's Access to Specialty Care Act](#), would modify the National Health Service Corps loan repayment program to allow participation by pediatric subspecialists working in underserved areas. The bill currently is undergoing subcommittee review.

### Society Prepares Comments on Payment Models

The Health Care Payment Learning & Action Network, a group convened by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to foster the development of alternative payment models (APMs), has released a draft white paper, "[Accelerating and Aligning Clinical Episode Payment Models: Coronary Artery Disease](#)." The paper outlines recommendations to facilitate the adoption of clinical episode-based payment models for cardiac care. STS is preparing feedback on the white paper and also is drafting its own APM proposal for CMS to consider.

### Key Contact Connect

#### Be an Advocate from Your Office

Attending an [STS Legislative Fly-In](#) is an important way to advocate for issues facing cardiothoracic surgeons, but you can still have an impact without leaving your desk. James M. Levett, MD, from the Physicians' Clinic of Iowa in Cedar Rapids, recently had a productive telephone conversation with a Senate staffer regarding the importance of collecting unique device identifiers (UDIs) on claims forms. He explained that UDIs would enable large-scale analyses of device outcomes, thus improving patient safety. In a reversal from its previous position, CMS recently pledged to work with Congress on the incorporation of UDIs in claims forms. To get assistance scheduling similar calls with your lawmakers or learn more about how you can advocate for the specialty, [sign up to be an STS Key Contact today](#).

### **STS Welcomes New Key Contacts**

Seven STS members recently became Key Contacts:

- Erin A. Gillaspie, MD, Mayo Clinic
- Lawrence E. Greiten, MD, Mayo Clinic
- Roman V. Petrov, MD, Marietta Memorial Hospital
- Adam N. Protos, MD, University of Louisville
- Kristen A. Sell-Dottin, MD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Katherine L. Wood, MD, University of Rochester
- Moritz C. Wyler Von Ballmoos, MD, PhD, MPH, Medical College of Wisconsin

For more information about the STS Key Contact Program, contact [advocacy@sts.org](mailto:advocacy@sts.org).