

December 2017

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

### **MIPS Reporting Deadline Draws Near**

If you haven't yet reported any information under the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), there's still time to do so before the December 31 deadline. Learn what you must submit to avoid a 4% penalty in the [STS MACRA Toolkit for Cardiothoracic Surgeons](#).

### **STS Signs Coalition Letters**

The Society recently signed multiorganizational letters that:

- Asked House and Senate leadership not to use Medicare dollars for [offsetting the cost of extenders](#) needed in passing the tax bill, an end-of-the-year spending package, or other legislation. The letter argues that Medicare cuts could threaten patient access to quality care.
- Requested that the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission [increase incentives for participating](#) in a clinician-led Qualified Clinical Data Registry (QCDR), such as the STS National Database. Specifically, the letter recommends that clinicians using a certified electronic health record system to participate in a QCDR receive full credit under the MIPS Advancing Care Information category.

### **Key Contact Connect**

#### **Learn Advocacy Tips at STS Annual Meeting**

The [STS 54th Annual Meeting](#) is just 5 weeks away. Make room on your schedule to attend several advocacy-related events:

- **STS Key Contacts: Advocates for Cardiothoracic Surgery** (Monday, January 29): This session will explain how the Key Contact program works, discuss the current health care debate, and describe how STS-PAC enhances these advocacy efforts. In addition, experienced Key Contacts will role-play a meeting with a member of Congress, the Key Contact of the Year and other awards will be announced, and attendees will be able to socialize and network.
- **STS-PAC Reception** (Monday, January 29): Join Society surgeon and staff leaders for a special reception in support of [STS-PAC](#), the only political action committee that exclusively represents cardiothoracic surgeons. This event is open to US members of STS who contribute to STS-PAC in 2018. Contributions will be accepted at the event.
- **Health Policy Forum** (Tuesday, January 30): Speakers will describe the changes resulting from the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act and help attendees learn how they can be successful under either aspect of the Medicare Quality Payment Program: the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System or Alternative Payment Models.

STS Government Relations staff also will be available at the STS booth (#807) in the Exhibit Hall to bring you up to date on the Society's many efforts on Capitol Hill, from coding and reimbursement issues to the future of health care reform legislation and regulation.

If you haven't already, make sure to [register for the Annual Meeting and reserve your housing](#).