



2015 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Scope of Practice

The AAO-HNS strongly believes a physician-led hearing healthcare team, with coordination of services, is the best approach for providing the highest quality care to patients. The AAO-HNS also believes it is appropriate for non-physician providers to seek updates to statutes and regulations relating to their defined scope of practice to reflect advances in education and training. However, the AAO-HNS strongly opposes state legislation that would inappropriately expand the scope of practice of non-physician providers beyond their education and training. Enabling non-physician providers to independently diagnose, treat, or manage medical disorders could adversely affect the quality of patient care.

Hearing Aid Services

The coverage of, sale, and dispensing of hearing aids is an issue considered by several states in various forms each legislative year. The AAO-HNS tracks a number of bills that address the scope of practice of dispensing hearing aids, state insurance mandates for hearing aids, and tax credits and/or exemptions for hearing aids. The merits and potential concerns with these varying proposals are typically evaluated on an individual basis.

Taxes on Medical Procedures

Each year, there is a re-emergence of proposals to tax medical procedures. In light of continuing state budget shortfalls, 2015 will likely be no exception. The Stop Medical Taxes Coalition, of which the AAO-HNS is a member, asserts that the taxation of medical procedures is unfair for patients, violates patient privacy, requires physicians to be tax collectors, and is a “slippery slope” towards the taxation of other medical services.

Truth in Advertising

With the emergence of clinical doctorate programs for non-physician providers, which has led to many degree holders referring to themselves as “doctors,” there is growing confusion within the patient population about the level of training and education of their healthcare providers. The AAO-HNS continues to advocate for increased transparency and clarity in patient communications and interactions to help avoid confusion in the healthcare delivery system.

Tobacco Use and Smoking Cessation

The AAO-HNS supports legislation and regulations that will help to reduce the use of tobacco products and exposure to secondhand smoke in order to promote healthy environments and lifestyles for the public. The AAO-HNS tracks legislation that seeks to strengthen or weaken smoking ban laws, as well as proposals to mandate insurance coverage and/or benefits for tobacco cessation.

Medical Liability Reform

Every year, numerous states consider various tort reform measures, including those related to affidavits of merit, alternative reforms, caps on non-economic damages, defensive medicine issues, expert witnesses, health courts, and/or pre-trial screening panels. The AAO-HNS strongly supports comprehensive medical liability reforms to stabilize and reduce professional liability premiums, ensure continued access to care by patients, and eliminate frivolous lawsuits.

*For more information on state legislative issues or specific measures,
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