

*PA Rheumatology Society
Grassroots Advocacy Update
October 2024*

Federal Grassroots Activity by External Organizations

ACR

Highlighted below are ACR-specific federal grassroots advocacy efforts during October.

- **Proposed 2025 Physician Medicare Fee Schedule-** ACR and CSRO continue to work at the federal level to minimize cuts to physician payments for services to our Medicare patients. On October 11th, 233 bipartisan members of Congress sent an opposition letter to House Speaker Johnson and House Minority Leader Jeffries on the proposed Medicare 2025 fee schedule. The document details the impact of recent cuts to physician payments- including the significant rise in operating expenses for providing care while payments have been reduced almost 30% over the past decade. Their recommendation was to halt the proposed 2.8% cut to payments this year to ensure patient access to quality affordable healthcare. The letter may be found here:
<https://schmidtpa.sharepoint.com/sites/SPATeam/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FSPATeam%2FShared%20Documents%2FGeneral%2F10%2E11%2E2024%20%2D%20Final%20%2D%20Medicare%20Physician%20Fee%20Schedule%20Proposed%20Cuts%20Letter%20to%20House%20Leadership%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FSPATeam%2FShared%20Documents%2FGeneral&p=true&ga=1>.
- **Non-Compete Agreements-** In the October 7th issue of *The Rheumatologist*, Ms. Emily Johnson, JD provide members with a detailed overview of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC)'s non-compete agreement saga.
 - FTC unveiled their final ruling on banning non-compete agreements this past April. As you would expect, there have been legal challenges to the ban (including filings by Texas and Pennsylvania).
 - On August 20, 2024, a Texas district court judge halted the rule. His ruling imposed a national injunction- which puts the implementation of non-compete agreements under state authority.
 - **In Pennsylvania, Act 74 of 2024 (signed by Governor Shapiro on July 17, 2024) limits noncompete agreements to a maximum of one year.**
 - For more information, check out the article **here**: <https://www.the-rheumatologist.org/article/status-check-non-compete-agreements-in-healthcare/>.
- **Improving Seniors Access to Treatment-** This month, ACR signed onto a letter from the Regulatory Relief Coalition (RRC) to federal House and Senate leadership asking for passage of the *Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act*. The document describes the need to aid our senior citizens in obtaining medication by reducing prior authorization requirements within our Medicare Advantage plans. The RRC letter is **enclosed** for your review and consideration:
<https://assets.contentstack.io/v3/assets/bltee37abb6b278ab2c/blt62b3d5bca51ebd10/advocacy-letter-improving-seniors-timely-access-to-care-act.pdf>
- **Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) Reform-** ACR signed onto a joint letter to federal congressional leadership imploring inclusion of current Stepping Act provisions [within Senate Bill 1339 (*PBM Reform Act*)] into any end-of-session PBM reform legislative package. Although PBM reform is not guaranteed to move, this is a step in the right direction. Here is a **link to the document**:
<https://assets.contentstack.io/v3/assets/bltee37abb6b278ab2c/blt9db305664112e769/advocacy-letter-coalition-support-safe-step-act.pdf>
- **Upcoming ACR meeting of potentially interest to PRS members-**
 - *Convergence 2024- November 14-19, 2024, Washington DC*: <https://rheumatology.org/meetings/acr-convergence>. We strongly encourage your review of the program, advocacy opportunities, event schedules and opportunities for growth/professional development. Please do not hesitate to contact ACR with any questions or for more information.

CSRO

October continues to be busy for CSRO. Details on their specific grassroots advocacy efforts are highlighted below for your review.

- **State Legislative Report-** On October 16th, CSRO published an updated state legislative update report. Here is a link to the informative document: <https://files.constantcontact.com/3f723a2a701/34e3691a-98c8-4c4e-9af4-60f9be562a63.pdf>
- **Advocacy Conference Update-** CSRO's most recent advocacy conference was held on September 20th-22nd in Nashville. Dr. Al Denio, PRS Advocacy Chair, attended the conference on behalf of the Society. A recent *biweekly update* detailed the conference and allowing for presentation material download. For more information, digest this article: <https://csro.info/news/2024/csro-2024-advocacy-conference-in-review>
- **Biosimilar Reform-** As part of their grassroots advocacy work, CSRO sent a letter to congressional leaders on Senate Bill 2305 (*Biosimilar Red Tape Elimination Act*). Although the letter did not specifically oppose the bill, CSRO detailed their concerns with provisions that would end FDA's interchangeability process and corresponding switching studies. For more information or to review CSRO's concerns, check out this link: <https://csro.info/UserFiles/file/CSRO-BiosimilarRedTapeEliminationAct-10-2024.pdf>
- **Upcoming training opportunities of interest-** A variety of upcoming educational events are detailed on CSRO's events page. Here is a link to that section: <https://csro.info/conferences/upcoming-events> .

State Legislative Update

The fall legislative session has been slow and steady since their return in mid-September.

With the nearing of the end of the 2023-24 Legislative Session, legislative activity has focused on bills with a already moving or will move by the end of session.

According to the PA Constitution, the last day of a two-year session is November 30th.

Submitted by Deborah Ann Shoemaker, PRS lobbyist