



Grassroots Advocacy Update November 17, 2021

Federal Grassroots Activity

ACR/CSRO

- ACR and CSRO have led federal grassroots advocacy efforts. PRS lobbyist, along with PRS Immediate Past President, Dr. Denio and PRS Advocacy Committee Chair, Dr. Killian, collaborate on a regular basis to maximize our Society's efforts at the federal level.
- In late October, PRS was informed by CSRO that a new member resource was added to their website. An online form was created to allow members to report concerns/issues/problems with insurance companies and other payer sources. Filling out this form will allow CSRO to expedite member insurer complaints AND track issues around the country. This will assist CSRO, PRS and other state medical rheumatology specialty organizations to collectively address issues in a more time-sensitive manner. PRS will place information on the advocacy section of our website.
- After a much-anticipated wait, the federal Co-Payment Accumulator bill was introduced the first week of November.
 - HR 5801 (also known as the Help Ensure Lower Patient Copays Act) seeks to eliminate barriers to treatment and allow the inclusion of copayment/related financial assistance in meeting a patient's annual deductible.
 - At the request of CRSO, and with approval of our leadership, PRS signed onto a joint letter endorsing HR 5801.
 - A copy of the bill is enclosed here for your reference:
<https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr/5801/BILLS-117hr5801ih.pdf>
- Additional updates can be found at <https://www.rheumatology.org/Advocacy/Federal-Advocacy/Key-Issues> (ACR) or at <https://csro.info/advocacy.html> (CSRO).

PRS Grassroots Advocacy Priorities

- Senate Bill 196 and House Bill 1644 (Co-Pay Accumulator)
 - Brian Henderson, CRSO's Government Relations Director and our lobbyist continue to meet to discuss PA Strategy and other related issues.
 - PRS and CRSO remain active partners in the *PA Make All Copays Count Coalition* (Coalition), meetings with key House and Senate Insurance Committee staffers, and the staff of Senator Judy Ward to attempt to move these bills throughout the state legislature.
 - Early this summer, draft amendments by the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance (DOI) were circulated to Senator Ward's office, Representative Gleim's office and to Coalition members for their review and comments. After careful deliberation by the Coalition, it was decided that the DOI amended version is

unacceptable. Areas that are non-negotiable for Coalition members include exceptions language and the addition of “Creditable Drug Coverage” provisions.

- At the coalition meeting in late October, we were informed that Highmark has also been circulating amendments to the bills that would, if amended, mandate that “cost share optimizer programs” cannot count toward insurance deductibles. After discussion with coalition members, it was noted that their proposed amendment is not acceptable.
 - Updates will be given as available.
- UPMC Lab Benefit Manager issue
 - At the request of a PRS member, the Society engaged our leadership and CSRO in fighting vs. UPMC’s proposed policy to implement their Lab Benefit Manager policy (which was to be effective October 1, 2021).
 - After much persistence, **especially by PRS board members, the implementation date was moved to January 1, 2022.**
 - All policy and procedure manuals, along with UPMC guidance and training, will be posted on their website.
 - Additional updates will be given as available.

**Pennsylvania General Assembly Session Update
2021-2022 Session**

Legislative Watch list is **attached**.

2021 SENATE SESSION SCHEDULE

December 13, 14, 15

2021 HOUSE SESSION SCHEDULE

December 13, 14, 15