

*Pennsylvania Rheumatology Society (PRS)*  
*Grassroots Advocacy Update*  
*June 2022*

***Federal Grassroots Activity***

**American College of Rheumatology (ACR) updates:**

- Two legislative priority areas are highlighted with ACR's Advocacy Section on their website: Protecting Patients from Soaring Costs due to Copay Accumulators and Grow the Medical Workforce by Training More Physicians. For more information, you can check it out <https://www.rheumatology.org/Advocacy/Federal-Advocacy/Key-Issues>.
- ACR has begun accepting registrations for *ACR Convergence 2022*. It will be held on November 10<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> at the **Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**, with opportunities to view content virtually and on demand. For more information or to register, contact <https://www.rheumatology.org/Annual-Meeting/Registration>.

**Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations (CSRO) updates:**

- CSRO Advocacy Focus: *CMS "Pause" on Downcoding*
  - CSRO recently initiated a dialogue with CMS' Center for Program Integrity (CPI) on the difference between complex vs. therapeutic coding/billing issues.
  - On June 10<sup>th</sup>, a senior staffer at CPI informed CSRO that they gave "technical direction" to their national Medicare Administrative Contractors (MAC) to put a "pause" on downcoding and to cease Additional Documentation Requests (ADR) when physician practices submit claims for five specific medications used to administer chemotherapy (Cimzia; Orenzia; Prolia; Simponi Aria; and Stelara).
  - According to CPI, the rationale behind the "pause" was to provide CSRO additional time to collect data from members to justify their request for complex coding on those medications.
  - CPI was made aware that, despite its technical direction, some MACs continue to reject claims when the complex administration codes are submitted for those five drugs. They are looking into why this is happening and CSRO will send out an update once additional information is known.
  - **Next Steps: CSRO has asked member practices that receive ADR letters dated after June 10<sup>th</sup> for the five abovementioned drugs to notify CSRO at [info@csro.info](mailto:info@csro.info).**
- Additional updates are available at <https://csro.info/advocacy.html>.

***State Grassroots Activity***

*PRS Lobbying Reporting:* As required by the state's Lobbying Disclosure Law, I submitted our second quarterly expense report electronically prior to the July 30<sup>th</sup> deadline.

*Potential Advocacy Day:*

- Dr. Mike Borofsky, PRS Advocacy Chair, and I met in mid-June to further discuss grassroots lobbying priorities for the rest of this legislative session, and how to educate our members in how to get involved.
- After discussing current federal and state legislative areas of interest to rheumatology, our focus turned to PRS' upcoming PRS annual conference (September 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>).
  - At the end of the conference, Dr. Madelaine Feldman, CSRO President, will be providing a comprehensive advocacy update.
  - Dr. Borofsky and I will continue to discuss our role in the advocacy portion of the conference, or if additional opportunities exist to educate members at the beginning of the next two-year legislative session (starting January 2023).
  - Updates will be given as available.

### *Budget Update*

- After Governor Wolf unveiled his final proposed state budget in early February, I drafted a budget update detailing the process and highlighting proposed budget provisions.
- To comply with PA State Constitution, the state legislature must pass a budget and have it on the governor's desk by June 30<sup>th</sup>. This year, the state legislature did not meet the constitutional deadline.
- A copy of a finalized budget update is **enclosed** for your review and PRS distribution as determined by Advocacy Committee members and PRS leadership.

### *PRS Member Action Alert: Prior Authorization and Change of Venue*

- *Prior Authorization (House Bill 225 and Senate Bill 225)*: this legislative initiative has been a top priority for PRS, PAMED and our medical specialty colleagues at the state and federal level for several legislative sessions. Until recently, there was no movement at the state level. PAMED has turned up the heat on moving Senate Bill 225 prior to the end of this legislative session. In coordination with PAMED, I drafted a PRS Action Alert in mid-June for member use in grassroots lobbying.
- *Change of Venue (House Bill 2660)*: PAMED has been working with Representative Kauffman to advance his joint resolution mandating judicial administration in change of venue cases. The bill currently resides in the House Rules Committee until the fall. The PRS Action Alert recently distributed to members included this grassroots advocacy solicitation.
- Prior to the end of the summer recess, I corresponded with Dave Thompson (PAMED) to discuss a joint strategy. With the lack of legislative focus prior to the end of June, we jointly agreed that a full-fledged grassroots advocacy strategy will occur in the fall. A copy of the Member Action Alert is **enclosed** for your convenience.
- **Next Steps**: Dr. Borofsky and I will be working with PRS Executive Director Annemarie Whelan to set up a conference call to refine a grassroots strategy for the fall on these two legislative issues. I will also continue to stay connected with PAMED and our federal and state medical specialty colleagues to keep these issues in front of our membership soliciting assistance as appropriate.

### *Legislative Tracking List:*

- **A copy of our most recent legislative tracking list is enclosed for your reference.**
- Please let me know if you have any questions about our watch list or if there were any bills would want to be add/delete that are of interest.

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

### 2022 HOUSE SESSION SCHEDULE

September 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21  
October 24, 25, 26  
November 14, 15, 16

### 2022 SENATE SESSION SCHEDULE

September 19, 20, 21  
October 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26  
November 15

*Submitted by Deborah Ann Shoemaker, PRS outside lobbyist. For more information, contact Ms. Shoemaker at [shoemaker0805@comcast.net](mailto:shoemaker0805@comcast.net) or via cell at 717.575.9159.*

*July 14, 2022*