**PA Rheumatology Society**

**Grassroots Advocacy Update**

**March 2024**

**Federal Grassroots Activity**

**ACR**

* ACR has been busy with various federal grassroots activities this month. The March 7th issue of *The Rheumatologist* highlights some recent activities, including:
  + ACR’s Insurance Subcommittee. Here is a link to their update: <https://www.the-rheumatologist.org/article/updates-from-the-acr-insurance-subcommittee/>; and
  + ACR and their state rheumatology societies collaborative grassroots advocacy <https://www.the-rheumatologist.org/article/spring-2024-state-legislative-update/>
* At this time of year, there is a focus on passage of the federal budget. Of particular concern for all medical specialty organizations is the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS). The proposed Calendar Year 2024 MPFS was to cut rheumatologists' reimbursement to 3.4%. After much grassroots advocacy by ACR, and their coalition partners (among others), Congress reduced the payment reduction to 1.68% when provisions were passed as part of a larger funding initiative. For more information, including ACR’s recommendations for long-term Medicare payment reforms, check out the link to their press release: <https://rheumatology.org/press-releases/acr-commends-congress-for-mitigating-medicare-cuts-calls-for-ongoing-healthcare-reforms>

**CSRO**

* This month was another busy month for federal grassroots advocacy. On behalf of CSRO members, a letter was drafted to members of the doctor’s caucus soliciting co-sponsors for the HELP Co-Pays Act (also known as HR 830 and S1375). A copy of the letter is enclosed here for your convenience: <https://csro.info/UserFiles/file/CSROLetterDocCaucus--HELPCopays.pdf>.
* The Alliance of Service Providers presented regulatory comments to CMS on “Notice of Methodological Changes for Calendar Year (CY) 2025 for Medicare Advantage (MA) Capitation Rates and Parts C/ D Payment Policies”. The document is enclosed here: <https://csro.info/UserFiles/file/Alliance_2025AdvanceNotice_FINAL_March.pdf>

**State Grassroots Activity**

**PRS Grassroots Advocacy Activities:**

* At our most recent PRS Advocacy Committee meeting, we created a to-do list. Dr. Denio and I are responsible to administer the list- meeting with “like-minded” medical specialty presidents/PAMED to find areas of mutual interest/collaboration to advance grassroots advocacy initiatives;
  + Future work:
    - Will continue to work closely with CSRO, other medical specialty colleagues (including dermatology, oncology, and related areas) and patient consumer groups to further explore mutual areas of local and state grassroots advocacy.
  + Additional updates and/or additional committee meeting dates will be forthcoming.

**Activities of the State Legislature:**

* This month, a few bills of interest to rheumatology received legislative activity.
  + House Bill 1512 (telemedicine)- originally introduced in June of 2023; the bill was amended on March 25th and awaits second consideration in the House.
  + House Bill 1633 (non-compete agreements for healthcare workers)- originally introduced in August of 2023; the bill was amended and tabled on March 27th.

*Submitted by Deborah Ann Shoemaker, PRS* *lobbyist*