



Legislative and Regulatory Update

With the government shutdown ended and the debt ceiling crisis averted, at least until next January, it's back to other business in Washington. ASTS continues to press its legislative and regulatory agenda, rescheduling meetings with federal agencies that were postponed due to the shutdown, including one with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) about the results of the focused quality improvement performance improvement (FQAPI) pilot program and efforts to reduce the misalignment between CMS and OPTN certification processes.

Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage Bill

During the government shutdown, ASTS gained 8 more House cosponsors for the Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act of 2013 (H.R. 1428/S. 323), bringing the total in both the House and Senate to 104. In the last session, the legislation had 127 cosponsors, and the goal is to exceed that number in this session, making it more likely it can be attached to a piece of legislation that will pass both the House and Senate.

HOPE Act

The HIV Organ Policy Equity Act (HOPE) Act has passed the Senate and is awaiting a vote in the House. It is currently included in a package of health-related bills that is expected to go to the floor for a vote, but due to process issues it may be pushed into next year.

SGR Fix

Work on a bill to repeal the SGR was in limbo during the shutdown, since the Congressional Budget Office was unable to score bills and CMS was unavailable for input. As part of the legislation to end the government shutdown, Congress

created a Budget Conference Committee to reconcile the House and Senate budget resolutions adopted earlier this year. As both of those resolutions include the Medicare physician payment formula (sustainable growth rate or SGR) fix, this newly created committee may be tackling the SGR issue instead of, or perhaps in conjunction with, the Congressional committees charged with this issue.

While decisions of the Budget Conference Committee are non-binding, if leaders from both sides of the Capitol and political aisle agree to a large-scale budget solution that also "fixes" the Medicare Payment problem, it will likely be ratified by the House and Senate. The Budget Conference Committee is charged with concluding its negotiations by December 13, 2013, and the SGR fix expires at the end of the year.

OPTN Policies

At its fall meeting, the ASTS Council reviewed the six OPTN policies out for public comment through December 6, 2013, and assigned councilors or committees to review each and provide feedback by early November. Collated responses will be posted on ASTS.org for members to review.

ASTS Winter Symposium Legislative Update and Advocacy Symposium

On Friday, January 24, immediately preceding the Winter Symposium, a half-day session will inform you about legislation that impacts transplantation, ASTS' advocacy work, and how to make your voice heard at the state and federal levels as health care reform is implemented. [Register online](#) for this session or for the entire Winter Symposium, including the ASTS 40th Anniversary Gala celebration.

Missed an Issue?

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