



Events



Election Day

Nov. 4, 2014

Chances are you'll be busy that day. Request an [absentee/mail ballot](#) (PDF).

2015 Coding Seminar

Feb. 27-28
Grandover Resort
Greensboro

2015 Annual Meeting

July 23-26
Marriott Grande Dunes
Myrtle Beach

We're here to help if your UnitedHealth Premium physician designation is wrong

The NC Society of Otolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery is available to help you resolve problems with your 2015 [UnitedHealth Premium physician designation](#). In response to ENT physician complaints earlier this year, UnitedHealthcare's implementation of ENT physician designation was halted after flaws with the program's methodology were discovered. In a statement to its ENT providers, UnitedHealthcare in February 2014 announced that the ENT program was suspended while the algorithms applied to certain ENT-specific measures are evaluated. Provider designations for 2015 will be announced in the coming weeks. Please take the time to understand how your designation is calculated. [Contact us](#) for assistance if you suspect a problem with the methodology used to calculate your 2015 designation.

In This Edition: (click the title to go to the story)

- [Update on Blue Cross/Blue Shield of North Carolina coverage of balloon sinuplasty procedures](#)
- [2014 NC/SC Otolaryngology Assembly wrap-up](#)
- [Patient safety and CON reform support among actions approved by Society members](#)
- [Report examples of misleading advertising by non-physicians](#)
- [Medicaid reform discussion will be continued in 2015 as 4% physician fee cuts loom on the horizon](#)
- [Hearing aid practitioners denied scope of practice expansion attempt](#)
- [Approval of sleep studies problematic for some physicians](#)
- [Some good news and some bad news about Meaningful Use](#)
- [NCMS webinars answer your questions about accountable care and payment models](#)
- [AAO-HNS urges members to contact Congress in opposition to audiology encroachment bill](#)

Update on Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina coverage of balloon sinuplasty procedures

Members of the North Carolina Society of Otolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery are working with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina to develop policy guidelines to provide coverage for balloon sinuplasty as a stand-alone procedure. Current BCBSNC policy does not provide coverage for balloon sinuplasty when used by itself in the absence of other sinus surgery procedures. The minimally invasive procedure is used as an adjunctive treatment in the management of chronic rhinosinusitis. An advisory board of academic and private practice otolaryngologists from North Carolina along with NCSOHNS board members has been created to collaborate with BCBSNC, to aid in development of appropriate policy guidelines covering the use of balloon sinuplasty. Approval of balloon sinuplasty for BCBSNC patients will expand the options for the treatment of chronic rhinosinusitis.

[Return to "In This Edition"](#)

2014 NC/SC Otolaryngology Assembly wrap-up

By Nancy Lowe, CMP, Associate Director

Over 80 otolaryngologists, residents, and fellows convened at the historic Omni Grove Park Inn Resort on July 25-27 for this year's Otolaryngology Assembly. Program Chair Eileen Raynor, MD assembled an outstanding program that provided 9.5 hours of CME credit. The event began with a Friday afternoon session, featuring Head & Neck and Otolaryngology sessions and panel discussions, followed by state Society business meetings and advocacy updates. Then the group enjoyed a welcome reception with vendors. Saturday began with breakfast with the vendors, resident and student presentations from Duke, UNC, Wake Forest, and MUSC, followed by the keynote speaker, Dr. David Nielsen, executive vice president of AAO-HNS, who gave an update on the national society's activities and initiatives. A Pediatrics session and panel discussion rounded out the day. The weather cooperated for golfers and others to enjoy the beautiful mountain venue, and a dinner was held outdoors with musical entertainment by a local bluegrass band. Sunday began with the last breakfast with the vendors, a Rhinology session and panel discussion, and concluded with breakout sessions on Adenotonsillectomy and Thyroid Nodule.

North Carolina ENT residents again competed for the Garrabrant Award, created in 2003 to pay tribute to a former North Carolina otolaryngologist and Society leader, Dr. Ed Garrabrant, who succumbed to cancer in July 2003. The purpose of the award is to demonstrate the importance the Society places on residency medical training. The award is presented to the winning resident paper presenter at the NCSOHNS Annual Meeting, in those years when the meeting is held in North Carolina. This year's winner was Dr. Adam Kimple of UNC for his presentation, "Mucociliary Clearance Facilitates Clearance of Debris from Respiratory Epithelium." Congratulations to Dr. Kimple, to all residents who participated and to our volunteer judges.

At the NCSOHNS business meeting, outgoing President, Dr. Calhoun Cunningham, III, was recognized for his service to the NCSOHNS, and Dr. Eileen Raynor was formally installed as President for 2014-15, along with the rest of the members of the board of directors.

Thank you to Dr. Raynor as program chair, and to all of our program faculty and meeting supporters!

Be sure to mark your calendars for the [NCSOHNS Coding Seminar](#), focusing on ICD-10 and practice management issues, scheduled for February 27-28, 2015, at the Grandover Resort in Greensboro, and for [the next NC/SC Otolaryngology Assembly](#), scheduled for **July 23-26, 2015**, at the Myrtle Beach Marriott Resort at Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach, SC.

[Return to "In This Edition"](#)

As with every year, the meeting at such a wonderful venue would not have been possible without our partnership with these companies:

Acclarent
Alcon
ALK
Allcare Pharmacy & Healthcare
Brainlab
Carestream
Depuy Synthes CMF
Finch Surgical
Grason-Stadler
Hill Dermaceuticals
Hitachi Aloka Medical
Intersect ENT
JedMed Instrument Co.
Karl Storz Endoscopy
MAG Mutual Insurance Company
Marathon Medical
MEDA Pharmaceuticals
Medical Center Pharmacy
Medical Mutual
Medtronic
Olympus
Shire
SinuSys
Smith & Nephew
Sophono
Stryker
Xoran Technologies

Patient safety and CON reform support among 2014 Business Meeting issues

Members in attendance at the 2014 NCSOHNS Business Meeting considered and approved motions to support two advocacy initiatives. The Society will join the [NC Coalition to Protect Patients](#) — a coalition of physician groups organized to educate the public and policy-makers on the differences in education and training between physicians and non-physicians.

The Society also confirmed its support of an initiative to reform North Carolina’s certificate of need (CON) law. Debate on the issue has focused on:

- Health care savings
- Preserving hospitals’ viability in economically sensitive counties
- Patient mix – preventing “cherry picking”
- Free market opportunities – physician-owned, hospital-owned, or joint venture

The Society committed its support of the effort to reorganize the **NC Chapter of the Society of Otorhinolaryngology Nurses (SOHN)**. In a [letter to physicians](#) (PDF), chapter leaders detail the organizational goals of enhancing nursing knowledge and education in order to better assist ENT physicians in delivering quality care and patient satisfaction. We join the NC-SOHN in asking for your help in distributing [this brief questionnaire](#) (PDF) to Otorhinolaryngology (ORL) nurses in your practice or hospital.

Membership: Presently, the Society has 172 active members, of which **41 members have not yet renewed their membership for 2014**. If that includes you, please [renew today](#). There are 165 practicing otolaryngologists in the state who are not members of the Society.

New officers were also elected during the 2014 Business Meeting. Please join us in welcoming and congratulating your 2014-2015 Society leaders.

- President: **Eileen M. Raynor, MD, FACS** (Durham)
- President-Elect: **Robert Frederic “Ric” Leinbach, II, MD** (High Point)
- Vice President: **Brian Downs, MD, FACS** (Winston-Salem)
- Secretary-Treasurer: **Carlton J. Zdanski, MD** (Chapel Hill)
- Past President: **Calhoun D. Cunningham, III, MD** (Raleigh)
- AAOHNS Governor: **Stuart Hardy, MD** (Wilmington)
- AAOHNS Alternate Governor – State Legislation: **Brian Downs, MD, FACS** (Winston-Salem)
- AAOHNS Alternate Governor – State Public Education: **Merritt J. Seshul, MD** (Hickory)



[Return to “In This Edition”](#)

Report examples of misleading advertising by non-physicians

People deserve to know who provides their healthcare and their qualifications. However, many people are confused about who is a medical doctor and which health care providers are qualified and licensed to diagnose, prescribe, and treat. Misleading health advertisements contribute to this confusion and

put patient safety at risk. We are interested in learning about examples of false and misleading advertising by non-physician providers. If you've seen ads that you feel contribute to confusion in your community about a provider's qualifications, please email them to us at ncoto@ncmcedsoc.org.

[Return to "In This Edition"](#)

Medicaid reform discussion will be continued in 2015 as 4% physician fee cuts loom on the horizon

Following weeks of uncertainty regarding the timing of additional Medicaid reform discussions at the NC General Assembly, the House and Senate adjourned on August 20 with no plans to return at any point in 2014 to resume Medicaid reform talks. Medicaid physician fee cuts, including a 3% cut retroactive to Jan. 1, 2014 that has yet to be implemented and an additional 1% cut slated for Jan. 1, 2015, remain in place. The General Assembly is now expected to take up Medicaid early in 2015. We will continue efforts to block implementation of the cuts that would cost physicians more than \$40 million and hurt Medicaid patients' access to care. The NCSOHNS took part in the discussion of the physician community's action plan for positive Medicaid reform and to stop implementation of the cuts during a Specialty Society Summit hosted by the NC Medical Society on Saturday, Sept. 6.

During the 2014 legislative session, the House and Senate could not reach a compromise on their different approaches to Medicaid reform. Sources at the General Assembly previously indicated that lawmakers would likely be called back to Raleigh for a special legislative session in November 2014, after the general election, to take up Medicaid reform but that plan has since been canceled. At the center of the debate are competing plans between the House, Senate and the Governor's office. The House plan and the Governor's proposal are more aligned with medicine's position on the appropriate structuring of Medicaid. The Senate plan would outsource Medicaid program management to corporate managed care companies, a move that would increase administrative costs by \$1 billion and is at odds with the position that a physician-led ACO model would improve efficiency and health outcomes.

The logo for NCMS PAC features the text "NCMS PAC" in a blue, sans-serif font. The "O" in "PAC" is replaced by a circular icon containing a stylized caduceus (a staff with two snakes entwined around it and wings at the top).

Your support of NCMS PAC, the political education and action committee of the NCMS, truly makes a difference.

There are many tight races this year, and it is imperative that we do our part to ensure a receptive environment when the legislative returns next year.

Please support NCMS PAC with your contribution of \$250 today.

[Return to "In This Edition"](#)

Hearing aid practitioners denied scope of practice expansion attempt

Hearing aid dealers and fitters made a run at expanding their scope of practice through House Bill 1133/Technical Corrections (H1133) in 2014. Thanks to the quick response of the NCSOHNS and the NC Medical Society, the effort was derailed. Though a technical corrections bill is not the appropriate vehicle for such substantive amendments to the state's statutes, such a maneuver is occasionally attempted. This year, the attempt to expand and revise the "Hearing aid specialist; scope of practice" section in the statutes was blocked.

[Return to "In This Edition"](#)

Approval of sleep studies problematic for some physicians

In response to concerns raised about UnitedHealthcare's Medical Policy "[Polysomnography and Portable Monitoring for Evaluation of Sleep Related Breathing Disorders](#)," (PDF) we are interested in learning if you have also experienced difficulty obtaining approval for appropriate sleep studies. According to a report from one of our members, obtaining approval for an in-house study was nearly impossible due to the medical guideline limitations. In this specific example the patient's BMI was 49 and one of the exclusion criteria to allow in-house study is for a BMI of 50 (whereas severe obesity is defined as BMI >35). In addition, the policy prefers autotitration study at home. If you are experiencing similar authorization problems with United Healthcare, please report these to us at ncoto@ncmedsoc.org.

[Return to "In This Edition"](#)

Some good news and some bad news about Meaningful Use

Reprinted with permission from the North Carolina Medical Society

First, the good news — it's not too late to qualify for Meaningful Use incentive money in 2014. This is the last year the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) will offer incentives, so practices should take advantage of this if no electronic health records system is yet in place. A practice can earn \$11,760 in incentives per provider this year if they attest to Meaningful Use by December 31, 2014. Practices may earn up to \$23,520 if the practice continues to meet meaningful use through 2016. [Here is the incentive payment information.](#)

Now, the bad news — if a practice has not yet begun the Meaningful Use process, they will incur the 1 percent Medicare penalty in 2015 because they will be unable to attest to Meaningful Use in the first nine months of 2014 as required.

Contact [Terri Gonzalez](#), the North Carolina Medical Society's Director of Practice Improvement at 919-833-3836 x123 if you need help or more information on Meaningful Use. CMS also provides [An Introduction to EHR Incentive Programs for Eligible Professionals: 2014 Clinical Quality Measure Electronic Reporting Guide](#) (PDF) that may be useful.

[Return to "In This Edition"](#)

NCMS webinars answer your questions about accountable care and payment models

Reprinted with permission from the North Carolina Medical Society

The North Carolina Medical Society will host two webinars designed to acquaint you with the much-talked-about value-based or accountable care model and why it is important to the health care community in North Carolina. The webinars will feature Dr. Terry McInnis, founder and president of Blue Thorn, Inc., a health care consulting company. Dr. McInnis has over 25 years of senior executive and clinical experience in various employer, military (US Air Force- Flight Surgeon), and hospital/group practice health management segments.

The first webinar, which will be an introduction and overview of accountable care, will be held on **Tuesday, Sept. 23 from 6-7 p.m.** The follow-up webinar on the various payment models and the

continuum from fee-for-service to risk will be on **Thursday, Oct. 16 from 6-7 p.m.** Watch the Bulletin for registration details.

[Return to "In This Edition"](#)

AAO-HNS urges members to contact Congress in opposition to audiology encroachment bill

Audiologists are seeking to expand their scope of practice through federal legislation. The bill, H.R. 5304, would give audiologists direct access to Medicare patients without a physician referral and it would establish audiologists as "limited license physicians" under the Medicare program. All ENT physicians are urged to take action. See the [AAO-HNS Action Alert](#) for more information and to take action.

The NC Society of Otolaryngology is here to support and facilitate your advocacy efforts. Please [contact us](#) for assistance coordinating and preparing for meetings with your federal or state legislators.

[Return to "In This Edition"](#)