

ASHI Prepares for Year-End Legislative Push; OPTN Transition Continues

As we enter the final stretch before the November elections, ASHI is preparing for a year-end push to thwart impending laboratory reimbursement cuts during the upcoming lame duck session of Congress. The lame duck session, which occurs during the period after the November elections and before the beginning of the new Congress, provides a critical opportunity to advance legislative priorities. Laboratories once again face reimbursement uncertainty this year, as Congress' fourth and most recent temporary delay of Protecting Access to Medicare Act (PAMA)-related reimbursement cuts is currently slated to expire at the end of 2024.

In recent months, committees or jurisdiction in the U.S. House of Representatives have proposed an additional one-year delay of the cuts. While another delay would be a significant advocacy victory and prevent cuts from taking effect in January of 2025, ASHI and our coalition partners are working to stress the need for long term reforms that provide stability and remove financial uncertainty for our labs. To that end, ASHI and the broader laboratory stakeholder community continue advocating in support of the Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act (SALSA; H.R. 2377 / S. 1000), which would prevent reimbursement cuts from taking effect in January of 2025 and overhaul Medicare laboratory reimbursement in a sustainable manner going forward. Awareness of and support for labs facing reimbursement uncertainty continues to increase, with 65 lawmakers now co-sponsoring SALSA in the House and five in the Senate. ASHI and our coalition partners will continue our advocacy in the coming months and keep members apprised of our progress.

Developments continue to transpire as the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) works to implement the Securing the U.S. Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network Act and undertake its own OPTN Modernization Initiative to modify how the OPTN is funded and managed. An important aspect of this overhaul being closely monitored by ASHI is the establishment of a new OPTN board of directors. ASHI has been advocating for assurances of transparency in the selection of members that will make up the OPTN board and in developments ongoing in the OPTN Modernization Initiative, including by penning a letter to HRSA and urging members to contact their members of Congress regarding this issue. Most recently, HRSA awarded an OPTN Board Support contract to The American Institutes for Research (AIR) to support the newly incorporated OPTN Board of Directors. ASHI will continue monitoring developments surrounding the OPTN Modernization Initiative closely, including Congress' ongoing interest in this topic.