The Advocacy Tools to Fight for Our Future

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I chose to get involved with AAN advocacy because the AAN actively engages with policymakers to improve our practices. I saw that the AAN was working to increase the research funding for neurosciences, advocating for better access for patients with neurological disease, and working to reduce the regulatory burdens on practicing neurologists. I became involved because these efforts need every one of us to work together to affect change for unique burdens faced by patients with neurological disease.

Now, as chair of the Government Relations Committee (GRC), I see firsthand the importance of the AAN’s legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts. The GRC is tasked every year with recommending the top federal and state legislative advocacy priorities for the AAN. Once the GRC takes into consideration input from members across the United States, we fight for the profession and our patients using the following tools:

- **BrainPAC** is the only federal political action committee that specifically represents neurology, and allows the AAN to increase the influence and profile of neurology on Capitol Hill.
- **Meeting with Legislators** to educate and urge action on AAN’s priority issues.
- **Position Statements** represent the AAN’s official stand and reasoning on a variety of legislative issues.
- **Comment & Sign-on Letters** communicate timely information to decision makers such as Congress and federal agencies.
- **Partnerships & Collaborations** are key in improving care for patients with neurologic conditions.

Because YOU are the most effective advocate for your patients and profession, we also equip AAN members with tools and resources to take a stand to support neurology, both in their communities and on Capitol Hill:

- **Training & Education Programs** such as Neurology on the Hill and the Palatucci Advocacy Leadership Forum provide members with opportunities to directly advocate for neurology.
- **Direct Member Engagement**, whether responding to AAN advocacy action alerts to contact Congress to support legislation favoring neurology, or by inviting lawmakers to visit neurology clinics.

Along with the Medical Economics and Management Committee, which represents the regulatory and payer perspective, we continue to make a difference in the laws and regulations that govern our practice. In this period of change, get involved in advocacy to ensure neurology is valued in the future.
### How Does AAN Advocacy Work for You and Your Patients?

#### LEGISLATIVE
- Lobby to raise the profile of neurology on Capitol Hill
- Engage with policymakers and staff to advocate for laws that are positive for neurologists and patients with neurologic disease
- Develop relationships with lawmakers to gain trust and confidence in AAN positions
- Collaborate with fellow organizations to demonstrate unity in applying pressure on lawmakers

#### REGULATORY
- Develop relationships with key agencies such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to influence regulations that impact the practice of neurology
- Advocate for the inclusion of neurology-specific measures and activities into the Merit-based Incentive System (MIPS)
- Increase reimbursement for cognitive services

#### PAYER
- Establish trust-based working relationships with the largest commercial payers in the US so that they always come to the AAN first with their neurology questions
- Review proposed payer revisions to medical coverage policies and recommend improvements prior to implementation
- Develop model coverage policy language and encourage its widespread use by payers

#### GRASSROOTS
- Empower AAN members to raise their voice for neurology through programs such as Palatucci Advocacy Leadership Forum and Neurology on the Hill
- Provide easy ways for AAN members to contact their legislators
- Collaborate with state neurologic societies
- Communicate current issues and concerns to AAN members through Capitol Hill Report, AANnews®, AANe-news™, and timely emails

### What Has AAN Advocacy Done for You and Your Patients Lately?

- Reversed Cigna’s non-coverage of responsive cortical stimulation
- Won flexible Meaningful Use EHR program hardship exemption
- Won victories in Medicare Physician Fee Schedule
- Increased BRAIN Initiative funding by $85 million
- Urged payers to adopt AAN quality measures
- Secured 168+ cosponsors for telestroke legislation (the FAST Act)
- Successfully advocated for MACRA pick-your-pace participation for 2017
- Developed epilepsy and headache APM frameworks to test under MACRA
- Gained AAN member on CMS MIPS working group
- Advocated for needed systematic study of E/M coding and payment
- Created AAN’s Axon Registry™, enrolled it as a QCDR for quality reporting
- Supported the adoption of the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact in 18 states
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### AAN Priority Issues
- Cognitive reimbursement
- Neuroscience research funding
- Reducing regulatory burdens
- Medical liability reform
- GME financing
- Telemedicine
- Medical marijuana research
- Scope of practice issues
- Neuroimaging
- MACRA implementation
- Drug pricing & access
- Opioid issues

### STAY CONNECTED
Follow #AANAdvocacy and AAN lobbyists @MikeAmeryDC and @DerekBrandtDC for the latest advocacy updates.

### GET INVOLVED
Look for the Advocacy Experiential Learning Area at the AAN Annual Meeting to learn how you can get involved.
AAN members and staff discuss neurology’s legislative concerns with members of Congress and their staff on a daily basis. These conversations happen through different forms and tools. One critical tool that opens doors for the AAN on Capitol Hill is BrainPAC, the Academy’s political action committee.

BrainPAC provides the AAN with direct access to congressional candidates, incumbent members of Congress, and their staff during special events hosted specifically to raise funds for their election. Through these events, the AAN has the opportunity to build relationships with key decision makers that prove invaluable year after year. These events typically happen in Washington, DC, but dozens of AAN members also attend local events across the US.

**What exactly is a political action committee (or PAC)?**
A PAC is a term for a political action committee organized for the purpose of raising money to elect or defeat candidates. PACs are formed by all kinds of organizations, ranging from business, to labor, to other various political interests. Donations to PACs are used to help re-elect or elect candidates who might have a favorable view towards the organizations’ specific interest or concern. While there are several PACs in existence created to advocate for the physician community, BrainPAC is the only political action that specifically represents neurology.

**Where does the money for a PAC (and for BrainPAC) come from?**
PACs raise their money from members of the organization they represent. For BrainPAC, only AAN members who are US citizens or permanent residents are eligible to donate. BrainPAC’s success would not be possible without their generous voluntary support, since federal law prohibits the AAN from using membership dues for this purpose. Only voluntary personal (non-business) contributions can be used to help support candidates for Congress. No personal donations to BrainPAC are used for administrative expenses.

**How are donations to BrainPAC used?**
Donations to BrainPAC are pooled with contributions from other AAN members and are used to support candidates for Congress from across the political spectrum who support neurology. Since its founding in 2007, BrainPAC has fostered relationships with more than 200 current members of Congress from both parties. Like it or not, PACs have become an integral part of the political process in Washington, DC.

**Donate Today!**

*BrainPAC.org*