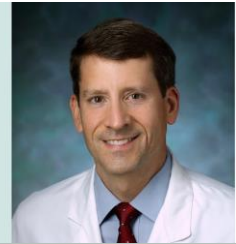




Maryland
CHAPTER

Message from the President

Joseph Marine, MD, FACC



July President's Message

July 2019

ACC and Health Policy

Issues of national health policy have been much in the news lately. Last week, the President issued an executive order which would require **greater transparency of pricing** by health care organizations. Other proposals swirling on Capitol Hill and in state legislatures would address the problem of "**surprise medical bills**" from out-of-network providers. Tentative steps have been taken by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to address the issue of **pharmaceutical prices**. And of course, as Presidential campaigning accelerates, we will all be hearing more about bigger health care reform proposals, such as "Public Options" and "Medicare for All."

If health policy interests you, please plan to join us at the annual **ACC Legislative Conference November 3-5, 2019** at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. For the first 2 days, we will be briefed on many issues of national health policy, large and small, which may affect cardiologists. There is lots of time for discussion, meeting colleagues across the country, and to ask questions of ACC leaders. On Tuesday Nov. 5, we walk to Capitol Hill to meet with legislators and staff to advocate for key legislative and regulatory issues identified by ACC. It is educational and great fun. Please **join us**.

One issue from our last Legislative Conference in 2018 that is starting to get some traction is prior authorization reform. Prior auth is a thorn in all of our sides, and ACC has been advocating for relief. As a result, significant, bipartisan federal legislation, the **Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act of 2019 (H.R. 3107)**, was recently introduced. The bill would:

- Create a "real-time" electronic prior authorization process for services that are routinely approved;
- Improve transparency by requiring plans to report to CMS on the extent of their use of prior authorization and the rate of approvals or denials;
- Require plans to adopt transparent prior authorization programs that are reviewed annually, adhere to evidence-based medical guidelines, and include continuity of care for individuals transitioning between coverage to minimize any disruption in care;
- Hold plans accountable for making timely prior authorization determinations and to provide rationales for denials;
- Prohibit additional prior authorization for medically necessary services performed during a surgical or invasive procedure that already received, or did not initially require prior authorization.

These real reforms will positively affect all physician practices. ACC asks that all members contact their Representatives to support the bill as co-sponsors. **Please do so today**. You can also help by donating to the **ACCPAC**.

Finally, a shout-out to Maryland Women in Cardiology (WIC) for hosting a lively networking event in Baltimore on June 20 (Photo below). Attendees discussed ways that ACC can encourage more excellent women medical students and residents to choose a career in cardiology and promote career development for women cardiologists. There will be a regional WIC meeting on Sunday, September 29 in Rehoboth Beach as part of the **ACC Delaware chapter meeting**. Interested members and FITs should plan to attend.



As always, please send MDACC leadership and staff your comments, questions, and suggestions at president@marylandacc.org.

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Missed last month's message? [Click here.](#)

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