

APRIL 2021

# THE MONTHLY ADVOCATE

*Student Academy of Audiology*



## Legislative Update

### Drug Pricing Legislation - Tie to Medicare Expansion

- In 2019, [broad drug pricing legislation \(H.R.3\)](#) passed in the House, which included a provision to add hearing aid coverage for Medicare beneficiaries with severe to profound hearing loss.
- AAA, ASHA, and ADA were able to add elements of our joint audiology bill to this legislation, including Medicare "practitioner" status and the addition of treatment and diagnostic services. While direct access to care could not be added, lawmakers agreed to "study" direct access as part of the bill.
- H.R.3 is projected to be the starting point of the 2021 drug pricing discussion. AAA is watching this closely over the next six months-one year.

## Virtual Advocacy

- The national SAA launched a virtual advocacy campaign this year; they created and shared infographics on social media to kickstart the campaign. [Visit the SAA website](#) to view the infographics and make your plans to advocate virtually!
- Unsure if your state's legislative session is on schedule this year? Check the [National Conference for State Legislatures website](#) for news and updates by state.

For more information regarding SAA and advocacy, or for questions, comments and suggestions, contact:

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## Advocacy Spotlight



Stephanie Fleckenstein, AuD, is Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of Iowa, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Dr. Fleckenstein serves as VP of Audiology on the Iowa Speech Language Hearing Association (ISHA) board and is on the ASHA Committee of Ambassadors. Dr. Fleckenstein meets with ISHA lobbyists to discuss current bills that may affect the profession. Currently, of most interest to our profession in Iowa is the Interstate Compact Licensure bill that would allow speech-language pathologists and audiologists to practice and provide care to patients and clients across state lines. The bill passed in the House of Representatives and is being reviewed by the Senate. Dr. Fleckenstein participated in ASHA's Capitol Hill Day during which she met with legislators to request support of the Medicare Audiologist Access and Services Act which would enhance access to audiology services for Medicare beneficiaries. She was also involved in discussions leading to the approval of the Expanded Telehealth Act which expands the coverage of audiology and speech language pathology services delivered via telehealth.