

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons is pleased to present this issue of *STS Advocacy Monthly*, an e-newsletter with the latest and most important legislative and regulatory news relevant to cardiothoracic surgery. If you have comments or suggestions, please e-mail advocacy@sts.org.

STS Comments on Physician Fee Schedule

The Society [provided technical comments](#) to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on the 2017 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule. The feedback addressed the determination of malpractice Relative Value Units and the valuation of several specific codes. The letter thanked CMS for correcting several coding errors in the Proposed Rule, but expressed disappointment that other errors remained.

Society Supports APM Proposal

In a [multisociety letter](#) and a separate [comment letter](#) to the Physician-Focused Payment Model Technical Advisory Committee, STS expressed its support for an Alternative Payment Model (APM) proposed by the American College of Surgeons. The Society noted that currently approved APMs do not provide meaningful participation options for surgeons, and the College's model can be applied across a variety of specialties. The ACS proposal includes an [STS whitepaper on APMs](#) as an addendum.

STS Signs Letter on Health Care Priorities

The Society was among several medical specialty organizations signing a [letter to President Trump and Vice President Pence](#) outlining suggested health care policy priorities during the new administration. It also urged assistance in advancing the highest quality, most cost-effective health care system in the world. In particular, the letter highlighted bipartisan investments in APM development and emphasized the importance of value over volume in care delivery going forward.

Key Contact Connect

Key Contact of the Year Awarded

Jess L. Thompson, MD, of the University of Oklahoma, has been named STS Key Contact of the Year for 2016. Dr. Thompson traveled to Washington, DC, twice last year to participate in STS Legislative Fly-Ins, attending a total of 14 Capitol Hill meetings. He also hosted Rep. Steve Russell (R-OK) on a tour of his facility. Dr. Thompson received the award for displaying a commitment to advocacy on behalf of patients and the specialty.



Dr. Thompson (right) with STS Director of Government Relations Courtney Yohe

STS-PAC Update

In 2016, STS-PAC raised \$142,369 from 373 members. This is a decrease from 2015, when \$148,969 was raised by 417 contributors. STS-PAC is one of the best ways for the specialty to forge relationships with elected officials in Washington. [Make your 2017 contribution today!](#)