

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

Society Adopts MOC Position Statement

STS recently adopted a [position statement on maintenance of certification](#). The statement was issued in response to proposed legislation in several states that would prohibit maintenance of certification requirements from being used for admitting privileges, employment, insurance reimbursement, and licensure. STS opposes such legislation because it interferes with the right of the profession to set its own standards and with the ability of hospital staff to set quality standards for their institutions, as well as denies patients the right to know whether the physicians caring for them are up to date in their fields.

STS Signs Coalition Letters

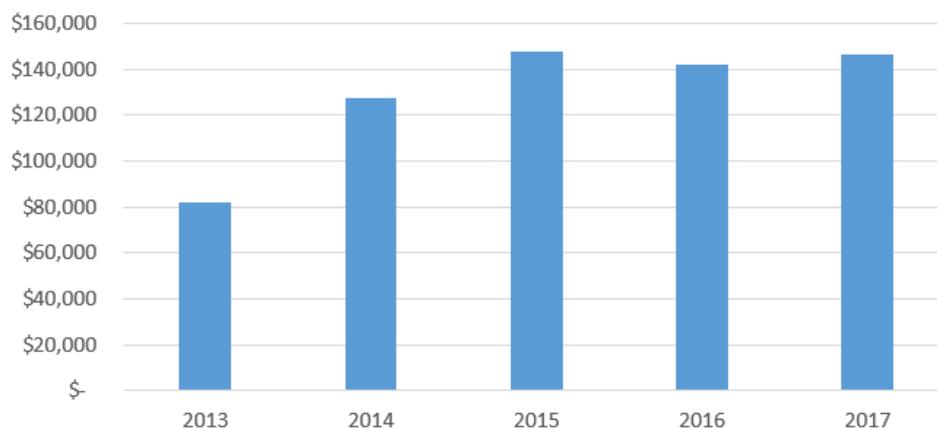
The Society recently signed multiorganizational letters that:

- Urged [Senate](#) and [House](#) appropriators to set the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's 2018 budget at no less than \$324 million. The agency is an essential element of the nation's health care ecosystem, charged with improving the quality and delivery of health care, and has provided grants to several STS members.
- Challenged an assertion by the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) that the [Physician Fee Schedule requires rebalancing](#) because primary care services are undervalued relative to other specialties. The letter provided data showing that primary care is not undervalued and also questioned the effectiveness of increasing payments to certain specialties as a means of addressing workforce issues, as was proposed by MedPAC staff.
- Provided feedback to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding [Quality Payment Program updates](#). While the letter praised certain changes, such as increasing points for reporting to a clinical data registry, it also asked CMS to address a lack of transparency and consistency in the Qualified Clinical Data Registry measure review process, among other issues.

STS-PAC Contributions Increase in 2017

In 2017, STS-PAC raised \$146,490—short of its \$200,000 fundraising goal for the year, but more than the \$141,839 raised in 2016. STS-PAC received contributions from 394 STS members, compared to 368 members in 2016. Show your support for STS-PAC in 2018 by [contributing online](#) or by calling 202-787-1230.

STS-PAC Contributions



Key Contact Connect

Learn Advocacy Tips at STS Annual Meeting

The [STS 54th Annual Meeting](#) begins this weekend! If you'll be joining your colleagues in Fort Lauderdale, make room on your schedule to attend several advocacy-related events:

- **STS Key Contacts: Advocates for Cardiothoracic Surgery** (Monday, January 29): This session will explain how the Key Contact program works, discuss the current health care debate, and describe how STS-PAC enhances these advocacy efforts. In addition, experienced Key Contacts will role-play a meeting with a member of Congress, the Key Contact of the Year and other awards will be announced, and attendees will be able to socialize and network.
- **STS-PAC Reception** (Monday, January 29): Join Society surgeon and staff leaders for a special reception in support of STS-PAC, the only political action committee that exclusively represents cardiothoracic surgeons. This event is open to US members of STS who contribute to STS-PAC in 2018. Contributions will be accepted at the event.
- **Health Policy Forum** (Tuesday, January 30): Speakers will describe the changes resulting from the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act and help attendees learn how they can be successful under either aspect of the Medicare Quality Payment Program: the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System or Alternative Payment Models.

STS Government Relations staff also will be available in the Tech-Con exhibit area and at the STS Booth (#807) in the Exhibit Hall to bring you up to date on the Society's many efforts on Capitol Hill, from coding and reimbursement issues to the future of health care reform legislation and regulation.