

Academy Notebook

NEWS • TIPS • RESOURCES

WHAT'S HAPPENING

State Societies Honored

On Oct. 28 during AAO 2018, the Academy Secretariat for State Affairs recognized 3 state ophthalmology societies with its Star Award for outstanding efforts on programs or projects implemented in the previous year. The winning societies are as follows:

Kentucky Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons for its Advocacy Campaign to Protect Telemedicine, which opposed legislation that would have limited Kentucky physicians' right to evaluate and adopt new technologies that might improve patient care.

Puerto Rico Society of Ophthalmology for its Hurricane Maria Relief Effort, which coordinated ophthalmologist volunteers to deliver much-needed eye care.

Washington Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons for its Military Outreach Project to increase membership as well as participation of active-duty military ophthalmologists in the society's programs and services.

Since the Star Award program's inception in 2001, the Secretariat for State Affairs has recognized 67 state ophthalmology society programs. State ophthalmology societies may apply for this award by responding to the Secretariat for State Affairs' survey of



STARS OF PUERTO RICO. The Puerto Rico Society of Ophthalmology (PROS) was awarded a 2018 State Affairs Star Award during AAO 2018 for its Hurricane Maria Relief Effort (HMRE). From left to right: Carmen E. Amaral, MD (HMRE Project Coordinator), Jackie Del Valle (PROS Executive Director), Lorna A. Vargas, MD (HMRE Project Coordinator), Wandys M. Vélez, MD (PROS President), John D. Peters, MD (Academy Associate Secretary for State Affairs), and Kurt Frederick Heitman, MD (Academy Secretary for State Affairs).

state societies, emailed every summer to state society executive directors/administrators and presidents.

State Societies' Outstanding Executive Directors

Each year, the Academy Secretariat for State Affairs publicly honors select state ophthalmology society executive directors for their contributions to their societies and for their partnership and collaboration with the Academy on its national efforts. During AAO 2018 in Chicago, the Secretariat recognized Nanette R. Gilbertson of the Montana Academy of Ophthalmology and Elizabeth G. Roach of the Kentucky Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons. They received the 2018 Outstanding Executive Director awards in Organizational Development and in Political Action, respectively.

The Academy Secretary for State Affairs, Kurt F. Heitman, MD, praised the efforts of all executive directors on behalf of state societies and ophthalmologists

across the country. "Through their professionalism, energy, and commitment to ophthalmologists and their patients, state society executive directors help to elevate the profession. We in State Affairs appreciate their expertise and respect their dedication to preserving quality eye care."

TAKE NOTICE

Nominate a Colleague for the Laureate Award

Every year, ophthalmologists distinguish themselves and the profession by making exceptional scientific contributions toward preventing blindness and restoring sight worldwide. The Academy Board of Trustees will recognize these extraordinary contributions with its Laureate Award, the Academy's single highest honor.

The award recipient is announced each fall, and the Laureate is recognized during the Opening Session of the annual meeting.



AMERICAN ACADEMY
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Nominate a colleague using the application at aao.org/about/awards/laureate by Jan. 31, 2019.

Need a Holiday Gift Idea? Donate to the Foundation

This is the perfect time of year to make a gift to the Academy Foundation in honor or memory of a mentor, colleague, or family member. Donations at the Partners for Sight level (\$1,000-\$2,499) are especially encouraged. Your tax-deductible donation will be used to support the Academy programs that are important to you, including the Museum of Vision campaign to build a permanent space for the 38,000-piece collection at Academy headquarters. Be sure to make your gift by Dec. 31 to receive the tax deduction for 2018.

Learn more at aao.org/foundation.

Glaucoma Researcher?

This summer, the Academy and the American Glaucoma Society collaborated in launching *Ophthalmology Glaucoma*. This new journal provides an opportunity to disseminate your glaucoma research directly to those who find it most relevant. Joining the ranks of *Ophthalmology* and *Ophthalmology Retina*, *Ophthalmology Glaucoma* provides readers with innovative, peer-reviewed works.

Submit your research at <https://www.eviser.com/profile/#/OGLA/login>.
Subscribe at www.ophtalmologyglaucoma.org.

Meet These MIPS Deadlines

Dec. 31: Deadline for EHR hardship exception. In the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), the electronic health record (EHR)-based performance category is called promoting interoperability (PI). It is 1 of 4 MIPS performance categories and contributes up to 25 points to your MIPS final score (0-100 points). Typically, if you were to report no PI measures, your PI score would be zero and your maximum MIPS final score, 75.

The significant hardship exception. You can apply to be exempted from PI if you are facing a significant hardship, such as insufficient internet connectivity or extreme and uncontrollable

circumstances.

If the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) accepts your application for a hardship exception, PI's contribution to your final score will be reweighted to zero, and the quality performance category's contribution will be reweighted upward; thus you could still earn the maximum MIPS final score of 100 points despite not reporting any PI measures.

New for 2018: If small practices can demonstrate that obtaining and maintaining certified EHR technology would cause undue hardship, CMS may grant them a PI hardship exception.

For guidance on submitting this application, see aao.org/medicare/advancing-care-information-exceptions.

Jan 15: Deadline for IRIS Registry submissions. If you are using the IRIS Registry (Intelligent Research in Sight) to report MIPS, Jan. 15 is a key date on 2 counts.

1. Finish manual entry. This deadline applies if you are using the IRIS Registry web portal to manually report quality measures, PI measures, or improvement activities. If you successfully integrated your EHR with the IRIS Registry, your MIPS quality data are automatically extracted, but you can only report PI measures and improvement activities manually.

New for 2018: If you are manually reporting patients for a quality measure, you must submit to the IRIS Registry the total number of patients eligible, excluded, and excepted from that measure.

2. Submit a signed data-release consent form. The IRIS Registry won't submit a provider's MIPS data to CMS unless it has received the signed consent form. Providers who are reporting as individuals should sign their own consent forms; providers who are reporting as a group can be included on a single consent form, which can be signed by the administrator. You must submit a new consent form each year and can do so via the IRIS Registry dashboard. For instructions, see aao.org/consent-form.

Learn more about the IRIS Registry

and MIPS at aao.org/iris-registry and aao.org/medicare.

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Troutman Prizes

Troutman Cornea Prize for Young Clinician Investigators. This award, established by a Castroviejo Cornea Society Founder, Richard C. Troutman, MD, DSc (Hon), is awarded annually to the investigator under 41 years of age who authored the best paper published in *Cornea* the year before.

This year's recipient was **Gregory Moloney, BScMed (Hon), MBBS, MMed, FRANZCO, FRCS**, an ophthalmologist at Sydney Eye Hospital in Sydney, Australia, specializing in cataract, corneal, and oculoplastic surgery. His paper, "Descemetorhexis Without Grafting for Fuchs Dystrophy-Supplementation With Topical Ripasudil," investigates the effect of topical ROCK (Rho-kinase) inhibitor as an adjuvant to the descemetorhexis procedure.

Dr. Moloney was awarded a \$5,000 honorarium from the Troutman Endowment and had the opportunity to present his work at the annual scientific meeting of the Cornea Society prior to AAO 2018.

Dr. Moloney said, "I am extremely honored to receive the Troutman award, which recognizes many people's work at Sydney Eye Hospital. This work would not have been possible without the efforts of our eye bank staff, fellows, and clinicians, and the funding provided by the Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation. We hope to continue this research to find more treatment options for patients with Fuchs dystrophy."

Richard C. Troutman, MD, DSc (Hon) Prize. This prize is awarded on behalf of the International Society of Refractive Surgery to a young author published in the *Journal of Refractive Surgery*.

This year's recipient, **Yumeng Wang, MBBS, MMed, PhD**, is a postdoctoral fellow specializing in cornea and glaucoma at the Department of Ophthalmology



Dr. Moloney

mology and Visual Sciences in the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her paper, "Histological and MicroRNA Signatures of Corneal Epithelium in Keratoconus," discusses the histopathology of keratoconic corneal epithelia and its micro-ribonucleic acid (miR-

NA) regulation as compared to corneal epithelia of normal eyes. Dr. Wang received a \$5,000 honorarium from the Troutman Endowment and presented an honorary lecture



Dr. Wang

during Refractive Surgery Subspecialty Day 2018.

Dr. Wang said, "Receiving the Troutman Award is a true honor for both myself and our team at the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences. We look forward to more opportunities to further investigate diagnostic options for keratoconus patients."

ACADEMY RESOURCES

Position Your Practice for Success

With the health care industry continuing to shift dramatically, the Academy will host its second annual, business-focused "boot camp" designed to address the complex challenges facing ophthalmic practices. Attend the Ophthalmology Business Summit from March 23-24, 2019, in Chicago.

This event is now open to both physician leaders and practice administrators.

For more information, visit aao.org/business-summit.

Get 10% Off Patient Education Brochures Until Dec. 31

Save time, improve recall, and mitigate malpractice risk by giving your patients easy-to-understand, ophthalmologist-reviewed brochures from the Academy. Now through Dec. 31, get 10% off when you use code PEB2018. Take advantage of this limited-time offer. No minimum purchase is required.

Order today by visiting aao.org/

D.C. REPORT

Yearlong Academy Effort Succeeds in Restoring Vitrectomy Codes

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has officially reinstated a majority of previously deleted ICD-10 codes to the Vitrectomy National Coverage Determination (NCD 80.11). This mitigates CMS' decision in October 2017 to authorize the deletion of 25% of vitrectomy's diagnosis codes, including those for vitreous hemorrhage, macular hole, and macular pucker. The 2017 decision was part of an agency effort to clean up its volume of ICD-10 codes associated with national coverage decisions.

Nearly a year ago, the Academy successfully took immediate action to halt implementation of the code deletions. Next, the Academy worked with the CMS Coverage Team to restore the vast majority of appropriate diagnoses. As a result of these efforts, CMS is putting forward a new vitrectomy coverage policy that ensures that all appropriate diagnoses are covered as of Jan. 1, 2019.

If you are still experiencing denials from Medicare Advantage plans or have previously denied claims that are still unpaid, the Academy urges you to forward the information to HealthPolicy@aao.org.

[patientbrochures](#), or by contacting Member Services at 415-561-8581, 866-561-8558 (U.S. toll free), or member_services@aao.org.

Register for 2019 Ophthalmology Coding Update Webinar

Stay up to date on coding changes and audit regulations with the Academy's most popular annual webinar. This year's 2019 Ophthalmology Coding Updates takes place on Jan. 15. Sue Vicchirilli, Academy Director of Coding and Reimbursement, and David Glasser, MD, Academy Associate Secretary of Health Policy, will present.

For practice management webinars, visit aao.org/webinars.

MEETING MATTERS

Submit a Practice Management Course

Each year, the American Academy of Ophthalmic Executives (AAOE) offers a wide range of new courses as part of the AAOE program during the Academy's annual meeting. These sessions address current practice management challenges. You can have a hand in creating this content by submitting an

instruction course abstract between Dec. 13, 2018, and Jan. 8, 2019.

To submit, visit aao.org/abstracts. For more information, contact Licia Wells, AAOE Program Manager, at lwells@aao.org.

Submit an Instruction Course or New Skills Lab

Want to create content for AAO 2019? Submit your ideas for an instruction course or new Skills Transfer lab. Abstracts will be accepted from Dec. 13, 2018, through Jan. 8, 2019.

To submit, visit aao.org/presenter-central.

Claim CME for AAO 2018

AAO 2018 and Subspecialty Day registrants whose attendance was verified onsite in Chicago received an email with instructions for claiming Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits online. Starting Thursday, Dec. 13, attendees can claim credits (if they did not already do so onsite) and obtain transcripts with overall credits earned at aao.org/cme-central. The Academy transcript will not list individual course attendance.

For more information, visit aao.org/annual-meeting/cme.