

UPDATE



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Neurosurgeons Encouraged by Advancing Care for Exceptional (ACE) Kids Act

Legislation will Improve the Health and Wellbeing of Children Suffering from Complex Neurologic Conditions

Washington, DC—Today, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), AANS/CNS Section on Pediatric Neurological Surgery and American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgeons (ASPN) expressed their support for the goals of the proposed revisions to H.R. 546, the Advancing Care for Exceptional (ACE) Kids Act. Sponsored by Reps. Joe Barton (R-Texas) and Kathy Castor (D-Fla.) and 210 additional members of Congress, this bipartisan legislation would provide essential support for millions of children suffering from complex medical conditions. On Thursday, July 7, 2016, the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee held a [hearing](#) examining this bill.

“Kids with complex neurologic medical conditions such as spina bifida, epilepsy, and head and spinal cord injury need the flexibility to be treated by the specialist that best meets their needs, regardless of whether that medical practitioner is located in another state,” remarked AANS president, Frederick A. Boop, MD, FAANS, chair of the department of neurosurgery at the University of Tennessee in Memphis, Tenn.

Dr. Boop added, “For example, our pediatric hospital, Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, is in the corner of the state of Tennessee, which is five minutes from Arkansas and 15 minutes from Mississippi, and we take care of kids from a five-state area. Streamlining the Medicaid rules will help ease the way for these children to get care.”

Echoing his sentiments, CNS president, Russell R. Lonser, MD, FAANS, chair of the department of neurosurgery at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, noted that “It is essential that state Medicaid programs modernize and adapt to establish pediatric-focused systems of care for these children and their families that overcome the current limitations of the state-by-state approach to care.”

The bill seeks to achieve three primary goals:

- 1) to improve coordination of care for children to reduce the burden on families;
- 2) to address problems with potentially fragmented or uncoordinated care children may access, especially challenges accessing care across State lines; and
- 3) to gather national data on conditions to help researchers improve services and treatments for children with complex medical conditions who are covered by Medicaid.

Richard G. Ellenbogen, MD, FAANS, president of the ASPN and chairman of the department of neurological surgery at the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle, Wash., concluded, “Legislation like the ACE Kids Act should result in a better system that allows children and families improved access to the full range of pediatric providers, including children’s and other specialized hospitals, while at the same time providing us with additional Medicaid data to make care more reliable and standardized across the states.”

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The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), founded in 1931, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), founded in 1951, are the two largest scientific and educational associations for neurosurgical professionals in the world. These groups represent over 8,000 neurosurgeons worldwide. Neurological surgery is the medical specialty concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the entire nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves. The American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgeons (ASPN) is dedicated to improving the neurosurgical care of the children of the United States and Canada by advancing and advocating the specialty of Pediatric Neurosurgery. For more information, please visit www.aans.org, www.cns.org, www.pedsneurosurgery.org, www.aspn.org and www.neurosurgeryblog.org.