

Healthcare Reform's Long and Winding Road: Neurosurgeons Provide Direction

There are 365 days in a year and in this last year, there were about that many changes, developments, and issues surrounding the health care reform battle brewing in the nation's capital and around the country's water coolers. Needless to say, it's been a long and winding road, and the Washington Committee and Washington Office staff, representing the AANS and CNS, have been along for the ride -- navigating every twist, turn, speed bump, and detour. Here's a look back at many of the significant healthcare events and efforts over the last 12 months:

Feb. 24, 2009 - Pres. Obama, in a joint address to Congress, calls for healthcare reform.

- **May 14 and 29, 2009** - The Surgical Coalition, including the AANS and CNS, sends a letter to the Senate Finance Committee regarding healthcare reform options.
- **May 15 and 29, 2009** - The Alliance of Specialty Medicine, including the AANS and CNS, sends a letter to the Senate Finance Committee regarding healthcare reform options.
- **June 15, 2009** - The AANS and CNS sign onto a coalition letter to the House and the Senate to express concern about the inclusion of "for profit" radiology benefit managers (RBMs) in healthcare reform.
- **June 30, 2009** - The Surgical Coalition, including the AANS and CNS, sends a letter to the House Tri-Committee to express feedback on healthcare reform.
- **July 6, 2009** - The Alliance of Specialty Medicine, including the AANS and CNS, sends several letters to lawmakers opposing the "Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) Reform Act of 2009" (H.R. 2718).
- **July 8, 2009** - The Alliance of Specialty Medicine, including the AANS and CNS, sends a letter to the House Tri-Committee to express feedback on healthcare reform.
- **July 10, 2009** - The Alliance of Specialty Medicine, including the AANS and CNS, sends a letter to Representative Bart Gordon to support the "Medical Malpractice Alternatives Act of 2009."
- **July 10, 2009** - The Surgical Coalition, including the AANS and CNS, sends a letter to Representative Henry Waxman urging Congress to include meaningful medical liability reform as a critical component of any health system reform legislation.

July 14, 2009 – The House introduces a healthcare reform bill.

July 15, 2009 - Senate Health, Education, Pensions, and Labor Committee passes reform bill.

- **July 14, 2009** - The Surgical Coalition, including the AANS and CNS, sends several letters to Congressional Committees to oppose requiring the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to evaluate graduate medical education (GME) training programs.
- **July 14, 2009** - The Alliance of Specialty Medicine, including the AANS and CNS, runs [healthcare reform print advertisements](#) with the message of, "Everyone needs access to medical specialists."
- **July 20, 2009** - The Surgical Coalition, including the AANS and CNS, sends a letter to the Hill opposing the Weiner Imaging Amendment, the "Integrity in Medicare Advanced Diagnostic Imaging Act of 2009" (H.R. 2962).
- **July 21, 2009** - The Surgical Coalition, including the AANS and CNS, sends a letter to the Hill opposing the "Independent Medicare Advisory Council (IMAC) Act of 2009" and the "Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) Reform Act of 2009" (H.R. 2718, S. 1110, S. 1380).
- **July 22, 2009** - The Alliance of Specialty Medicine, including the AANS and CNS, sends a letter to the Hill opposing the Weiner Imaging Amendment, the "Integrity in Medicare Advanced Diagnostic Imaging Act of 2009" (H.R. 2962).

August 2009 – At town hall meetings, lawmakers come under fire from the public for their healthcare reform legislation.

- **July 29, 2009** - Coalition of State & Specialty Medical Societies, including the AANS and CNS, issues a statement outlining essential principles to be maintained in a patient-centered healthcare system, in the midst of health reform.
- **Aug. 7, 2009** - The AANS and CNS send a letter to the American College of Surgeons expressing disappointment in the ACS endorsement of "the America's Affordable Health Choices Act" (H.R. 3200).
- **Aug. 7, 2009** - The AANS and CNS send a letter to the American Medical Association expressing disappointment in the AMA endorsement of "the America's Affordable Health Choices Act" (H.R. 3200).
- **Sept. 9, 2009** - The AANS and CNS send a letter to the American Medical Association to provide the AMA with additional feedback on the health reform provisions that most concern us and to urge the AMA to consider these when conducting lobbying and negotiations with policymakers.
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Sept. 16, 2009 – Senate Finance Committee releases a healthcare reform plan without a public option.

- **Sept. 21, 2009** - The Surgical Coalition, including the AANS and CNS, issues a statement outlining specific healthcare reform principles.
- **Oct. 9, 2009** - The AANS and CNS issue a Healthcare Reform Grassroots Action Alert to members.

Nov. 7, 2009 - House passes healthcare bill (H.R. 3962).

- **Nov. 13, 2009** - The Surgical Coalition, including the AANS and CNS, sends a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi urging SGR reform.

Nov. 18, 2009 - Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid unveils the merged Senate plan.

- **Dec. 1, 2009** - The Surgical Coalition, including the AANS and CNS, sends a letter opposing the Senate health reform bill.
- **Dec. 8, 2009** - The Coalition of State & Specialty Medical Societies -- including the AANS and CNS as well as three past AMA presidents -- sends a letter to Sen. Reid opposing the "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" (H.R. 3590).
- **Dec. 17, 2009** - The AANS and CNS launch a national ad campaign, joining thousands of other physicians from 12 medical specialty organizations to deliver an urgent message to the public and to Congress, "we need reform, but this isn't the right reform; urge your Senator to vote 'NO' on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3590)." Learn more about the [Physicians United for Patients Campaign](#).

Dec. 19, 2009 - Sen. Reid introduces a healthcare bill with no public option.

Dec. 24, 2009 - Senate passes healthcare bill (H.R. 3590).

Jan. 11, 2010 - House and Senate leaders begin talks to merge the two healthcare reform bills.

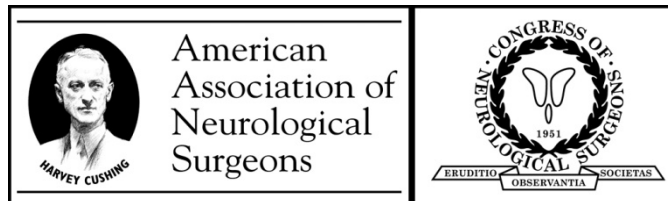
- **Jan. 15, 2010** - The Alliance of Specialty Medicine members, including the AANS and CNS, join with more than 70 patient and provider organizations by signing a letter to lawmakers opposing the establishment of an Independent Payment Advisory Board.

Jan. 19, 2010 - Republican Scott Brown wins U.S. Senate seat in Massachusetts.

Jan. 21, 2010 - Speaker Nancy Pelosi announces she does not have enough votes in the House to move forward with the current healthcare plan.

Jan. 27, 2010 – In his State of the Union address, Pres. Obama urges lawmakers to pass a healthcare reform bill and “get it done for the American people.”

The future path of healthcare reform remains uncertain. The outlook for the passage of health reform continues to change on a daily basis, so please continue to monitor the [AANS](#) and [CNS](#) Web sites for updated information on organized neurosurgery and health reform. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need further information, please contact Katie O. Orrico, Director of the AANS/CNS Washington Office at korrico@neurosurgery.org.



*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 approximately 7,600 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. For more information, please visit www.aans.org or www.cns.org.*