



AUDIOLOGY ADVOCACY TERMS

ACA: Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

More typically referred to as the “Affordable Care Act” or “Obamacare”; the 2010 healthcare reform bill implemented under the 111th Congress and President Obama, designed primarily to increase the affordability and quality of health insurance.

Advocacy Ambassador

The Academy's grassroots network, which is an advocacy movement based on using collective action from the local level to create unified change. Advocacy Ambassadors are trained and equipped to advocate for the profession at the state and federal levels. Advocacy Ambassadors build relationships with policymakers, mobilize colleagues to take advocacy action, represent the Academy at legislative and regulatory events, and serve as leaders within a nationwide network of audiology advocates. The Academy's Ambassador program can be found here:

<https://www.audiology.org/advocacy-ambassador-program/>

CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

An agency under the HHS umbrella; responsible for protecting public health and safety by controlling and preventing disease, injury, and disability.

DHHA: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Alliance

A coalition of consumer and professional member organizations, including the American Academy of Audiology; focuses on public policy and other issues related to improving quality of life for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and all people with hearing loss.

EHDI: Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act

Originally passed in 2000 under the 106th Congress and signed into law by President Clinton, EHDI established programs and funding for newborn hearing screenings, diagnoses, and early intervention for children identified to have hearing loss. EHDI is a highly successful program that must be reauthorized by Congress every 5 years; the 2017 reauthorization is currently pending in the Senate.

FDA: Food and Drug Administration

An agency under the HHS umbrella; responsible for protecting public health through the regulation of food, drugs (recreational and medical), cosmetics, medical devices, veterinary products, etc.

FCC: Federal Communications Commission

An independent agency of the federal government responsible for regulating interstate communications via radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable.

FCHHC: Friends of the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus

A collection of associations and organizations concerned with hearing health, including the American Academy of Audiology. The FCHHC sponsors events on Capitol Hill to promote hearing health care and raise awareness of key initiatives like EHDI.

FTC: Federal Trade Commission

An independent agency of the federal government responsible for promoting consumer protection and competitive business practices.

HHS: US Department of Health & Human Services

The department of the federal government responsible for services related to health and well-being. The FDA, CDC, and NIH are all agencies that exist under HHS' purview.

MDUFA: Medical Device User Fee Amendments

Originally passed in 2002 under the 107th Congress and President Bush, MDUFA established a system wherein medical device companies pay fees to the FDA when they register their establishments and/or devices with the FDA, when they apply to market a new medical device, or at other designated times. MDUFA must be renewed (and can be amended) every five years. The current renewal includes a provision related to the establishment of a category of OTC hearing aids and, once passed, will last from Oct. 1, 2017, to Sept. 20, 2022.

NASEM: National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

A nonprofit organization whose members are elected based on their achievements in research in their fields, made up of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the National Academy of Engineering (NAE), and the National Academy of Medicine (NAM). The Academies produce independent recommendations and reports from experts regarding current societal issues.



NIDCD: National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

An institute found within NIH, it is responsible for conducting and supporting medical and behavioral research regarding hearing, balance, smell, taste, voice, speech, and language.

NIH: National Institutes of Health

An agency under the HHS umbrella; the primary agency in the federal government responsible for medical and public health research.

OTC: Over-the-Counter

Medicine and medical devices sold directly to consumers without requiring a prescription from a healthcare professional. The drugs and devices available, and the ways they are packaged and sold, are regulated by the FDA.

PAC: Political Action Committee

A type of organization that collects campaign contributions and uses that money to campaign for or against candidates or issues. PACs must be registered with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The American Academy of Audiology's PAC's mission is to "support policy goals important to audiologists and the practice of audiology through the support of candidates for elective office; to promote better understanding among elected officials of the unique and important role of audiology in the delivery of high-quality health care to patients; and to assist audiologists and others in organizing themselves for effective political action." You can learn more and how to contribute here:

<https://www.audiology.org/advocacy/political-action-committee-pac/>

VCP: Veterans Choice Program

Established in 2014 with the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act (VACAA) under the 113th Congress and President Obama, the VCP expanded the availability of medical services for eligible Veterans with community providers when care within the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) is not readily available. The legislation is currently being revisited to improve accessibility and quality of care both within the VA and from the community providers.

ON THE HILL

Congressional Review Act (CRA) Resolution

A special legislative tool that allows Congress to overturn a final rule issued by a federal agency. Enacted in 1996, the CRA provides expedited procedures in the Senate, allowing a joint resolution of disapproval to receive a vote without being subject to a filibuster. If both the House and Senate pass the resolution and the President signs it (or Congress overrides a presidential veto), the rule is nullified and generally cannot be reissued in a "substantially the same form" unless Congress later authorizes it through new legislation.

DCCC: Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee

The political committee that works to elect Democrats to the House of Representatives by recruiting, assisting, supporting, donating to, and fundraising for candidates.

DNC: Democratic National Committee

The formal governing body for the Democratic Party, responsible for developing and promoting the Democratic political platform, coordinating fundraising, developing election strategy, providing party leadership, and organizing the Democratic National Convention.

DSCC: Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee

The political committee that works to elect Democrats to the Senate by recruiting, assisting, supporting, donating to, and fundraising for candidates.

NRCC: National Republican Congressional Committee

The political committee that works to elect Republicans to the House of Representatives by recruiting, assisting, supporting, donating to, and fundraising for candidates.

NRSC: National Republican Senatorial Committee

The political committee which works to elect Republicans to the Senate by recruiting, assisting, supporting, donating to, and fundraising for candidates.

RNC: Republican National Committee

The political committee responsible for developing and promoting the Republican political platform, coordinating fundraising, developing election strategy, providing party leadership, and organizing the Republican National Convention.

Energy and Commerce Committee

The committee in the House of Representatives with legislative oversight regarding interstate and foreign commerce, consumer protection, public health, environmental health, food and drug safety, energy, and telecommunications.

Ways and Means Committee

The committee in the House of Representatives having legislative oversight regarding taxation and tariffs, as well as other federally-funded programs, including Social Security and Medicare.

HELP Committee: Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

The committee in the Senate with legislative oversight regarding the issues in the title, including medical research and development and student loans.

Finance Committee

The committee in the Senate with legislative oversight regarding numerous finance-related issues, including taxation, revenue sharing, and federally-funded health programs such as Medicare and Medicaid.

CODING & REIMBURSEMENT

APM: Alternative Payment Model

One of the two pathways for participation under MACRA. An APM is a payment approach that gives added incentive payments to provide high-quality and cost-efficient care. APMs can apply to a specific clinical condition, a care episode, or a population.

APC: Ambulatory Payment Classification

The coding system that hospitals use to bill CMS for outpatient services provided to Medicare and Medicaid patients.

CMS: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

A federal agency within the US Department of Health and Human Services that oversees many federal health care programs, including Medicare and Medicaid.

CPT: Current Procedural Terminology

A listing of descriptive terms and identifying codes for reporting medical procedures and services. Uniform language that accurately describes medical, surgical, and diagnostic services. AMA has owned and copyrighted since 1966.

EHR: Electronic Health Record

A digital version of a patient's paper chart. EHRs are real-time, patient-centered records that make information available instantly and securely to authorized users.

EMR: Electronic Medical Record

A digital version of a paper chart that contains all of a patient's medical history from one practice. An EMR is mostly used by providers for diagnosis and treatment.

HCPCS: Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System

Standardized coding system used by providers to submit claims to commercial health insurers and government health care programs.

HIPAA: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996

A law that provides data privacy and security provisions for safeguarding medical information. The law is designed to ensure patient health care privacy.

ICD-11: The International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision

A system used by healthcare providers to classify and code all diagnoses, symptoms, and procedures recorded in conjunction with health care in the United States.

MPFS: Medicare Physician Fee Schedule

Medicare Part B pays for health care provider services based on the MPFS. The MPFS lists more than 7,000 codes and their payment rates and also sets related health care policies. CMS releases the MPFS proposed rule is released in July and the final rule in December.

MACRA: Medicare Access and Chip Reauthorization Act

Signed into law in 2015, MACRA transitions Medicare payments from fee-for-service payment model to value-based reimbursement. MACRA establishes two pathways for participation: the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) and Alternative Payment Models (APMs).



MIPS: Merit-based Incentive Payment System

One of the two pathways for participation under MACRA. Providers earn a positive or negative payment adjustment based on their performance in four categories—Quality, Resource Use, Advancing Care Information (HER use), and Clinical Practice Improvement.

OPPS: Outpatient Prospective Payment System

Payment system where hospitals receive a set payment rate to provide certain outpatient services to Medicare patients. Payments are determined by APCs.

RUC: Relative Value Scale Update Committee

The AMA/Specialty Society RVS Update Committee (RUC) was formed in 1991 to make recommendations to CMS on the relative values to be assigned to new or revised codes in the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) manual. Meets three times per year to consider specialty society code value proposals and make relative value recommendations to CMS