


**Getting Involved in Advocacy**

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Chair  
ASRS Federal Affairs Committee



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**Financial Disclosure**

- EyePoint – public stock

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**It's a Great Time to Get Involved!**



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**No, Really. It is.**

- Fellows and early career physicians represent the future of the profession
  - You'll be taking care of today's leaders someday
- Make connections and relationships now to help you throughout your career
- **Make sure your patients' needs don't get lost in the political debate**



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**Why is Advocacy Important?**

- Medicine is one of the most-highly regulated professions
  - Federal policy sets Medicare payment rates and quality metrics
  - The FDA regulates drugs, devices, and outsourcing facilities
  - State agencies regulate licensure, scope of practice, and liability
  - Federal and state entities oversee insurance coverage and payer decisions
- If you don't have a say in these issues, someone else will

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**Why is Advocacy Important for Retina Specialists?**

- High percentage of Medicare-eligible patients
- Anti-VEGFs for retinal disease are some of the top Medicare expenditures for Part B drugs
  - #2 Eylea, #8 Lucentis – in 2022
- Medicare Advantage and commercial payers routinely require step therapy and/or prior authorization for anti-VEGF
- The supply chain for repackaged Avastin is fragile
- ODs and other non-physicians seek to expand their scope of practice

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**What Does ASRS Do?**

- Advocates to Congress and the executive branch on key issues:
  - Ensuring adequate Medicare physician reimbursement
  - Maintaining physician and patient choice of treatments
  - Limiting payer utilization management practices of prior authorization and step therapy

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**What is ASRS's Message?**

- Retina specialists have the most training expertise in treating potentially-blinding vitreoretinal disease and are the most appropriate practitioners to make clinical judgements and provide care for those conditions
- We can protect patient access to this highest quality care by:
  - Minimizing burdensome regulations
  - Adequately reimbursing physicians for their work and practice expense
- **When we meet these goals, retina specialists can focus on what's most important: patient care**

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**How Does ASRS Advocate?**

- ASRS speaks with one voice for all retina specialists
  - Meeting with policymakers and payers
  - Submitting comments, statements, etc.
  - Engaging with coalitions – Alliance of Specialty Medicine, Surgical Coalition, AMA, other ophthalmic organizations
- Educate members on key policy developments
  - **We let you know when to act!**

Pass HR 879

**No More Cuts!**

Reform Medicare Payment

Alliance of Specialty Medicine

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**Advocacy Works: ASRS Wins**

- ✓ **Reduced MIPS Penalties** by advocating for CMS to exclude retina specialists from the diabetes cost measure
- ✓ **Expanded retina specialists' ability to succeed** in MIPS by developing three new quality measures
- ✓ **Protected patients from under-dosing** by achieving an exemption for a discarded drug rebate program for small volume single-use injectable drugs

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**How Can I Make a Difference?**



- Lawmakers want to hear from the people they represent and how they are affected by the policies enacted in Washington
- Only you can tell your story
  - Use your experiences to demonstrate how policies impact patients, the care you provide, and the way your practice runs
- Let politicians know how many of their voters you treat!

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11

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**Why Now?**

- Political issues change and volatility fluctuates
- Today's hot button issues may be forgotten tomorrow
- **But you have to start somewhere**

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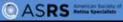
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### How Do I Get Started?

- Sign-up to be an ASRS Grassroots Contact
- **Respond to ASRS calls to action**
  - Instant, pre-written messages
- Visit [asrs.org/grassroots](http://asrs.org/grassroots) for tips and resources
- Find out who your legislators are and learn about them
  - [House.gov](http://House.gov) & [senate.gov](http://senate.gov)
- Make sure you're registered to vote – even if you don't plan on staying where you are for long
  - Re-register when you move

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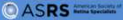
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### How Do I Learn About the Issues?

- Visit [ASRS.org](http://ASRS.org) and read the weekly newsletter *Advocacy and Practice News* on Tuesday afternoon
  - Keep an eye out for additional timely alerts to take action
- Read the newspaper
  - National ones – NYT, WaPo, WSJ, LA Times
  - Local news
  - Sign up for legislator newsletters
- **Don't worry – ASRS will give you talking points!**

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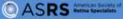
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### Want to Get More Involved?

- Represent ASRS at the annual Alliance of Specialty Medicine Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C.
  - July 14-16, 2025
- Meet with your legislator back home, or invite them to your practice
  - ASRS can help facilitate

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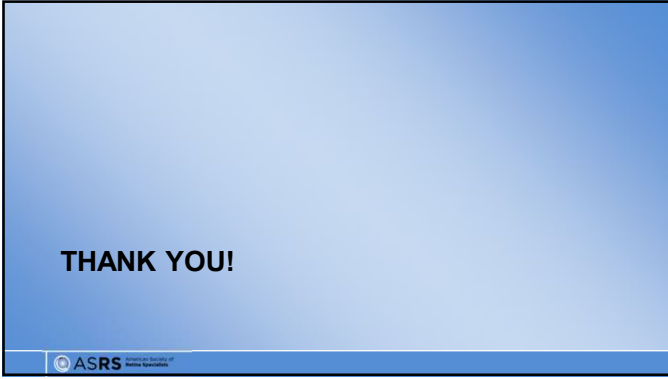
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**THANK YOU!**

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