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Dr. Chris Roberts

Trustee GLAO eNews Report

Progress in the AAO's Advocacy Efforts!

There is an old aphorism often attributed to Otto von Bismarck which says "Laws are like sausages. It's best not to see them being made." For several years, the AAO has been advocating on Capitol Hill to change the laws relating to Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA's) which came into existence to help pay for the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). Our persistence is finally paying off!

Several years ago, during a meeting of our Council on Governmental Affairs with Rep. Steve Stivers (R-OH), the RAISE Act was born. It proposed allowing individuals more freedom with their contributions and spending of their FSA's. After many years of lobbying in Washington, on July 25 a version of the Raise Act was passed by the House of Representatives.

As currently written, the bill would allow individuals to roll over FSA funds to a maximum balance of \$7,950. (The current maximum balance is \$2,650). This essentially eliminates the current "use it or lose it" mandate.

There are still a couple steps to go before the bill becomes law. The bill must pass in the Senate and then be signed by the President. Along the way, the wording may continue to change. But the fact that we have gotten this far is a huge win for the AAO, its members, and most importantly, our patients. Most suggested bills never see the light of day in the House.

In addition, on July 24 the House passed a permanent repeal of the medical device tax, another item the AAO has long been lobbying for.

Our progress is due to persistence and patience. Yes, your AAOPAC dollars are working. The process hasn't been quick nor always pretty, but it highlights what I call the antithesis of von Bismarck's saying, "If you don't have input in the making of laws (or sausage), you'll never know what you're getting until it's too late."