
ASMBS Activity Report

April 2014

Prepared by Christopher Gallagher, ASMBS Washington Representative

HEADLINES:

Indiana Chapter Meets with Congressional Delegation

ASMBS Comments on WA HCA HTA Program

Indiana Chapter Visits DC

On May 5th, the ASMBS Indiana State Chapter visited Washington, DC and met with every member of the state's congressional delegation – cruising through 8 House and 2 Senate visits in less than 6 hours. Drs. Margaret Inman and Brenda Cacucci urged their legislators to support a sign-on letter to HHS Secretary Sebelius – urging the Department to issue guidance similar to what the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) outlined in March for the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan. In that March 20th guidance, OPM stated that excluding coverage for obesity treatment services based on lifestyle or cosmetic criteria will no longer be permissible.

ASMBS Comments on WA HCA HTA Program

Last month, ASMBS submitted comments in response to the February 28, 2014 notice regarding proposed topics for review by the Washington State Health Care Authority's (HCA) Health Technology Assessment (HTA) program. In the attached comments, ASMBS expressed concern "that the HCA has chosen to review the safety, efficacy and costs associated with bariatric surgery – especially given the mounting evidence, which speak favorably to each of the aforementioned criteria. As this evidence continues to grow regarding the benefits of metabolic surgery – even in lower body mass index (BMI) populations (between 30 and 34.9 kg/m²), payers are starting to take notice." The ASMBS's comments made powerful arguments regarding the safety, efficacy and cost effectiveness of bariatric surgery.