



American Society for
Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

3300 Woodcreek Drive
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515
630-573-0600 / 630-963-8607 fax
info@asge.org / www.asge.org

2019-2020 GOVERNING BOARD

President

JOHN J. VARGO II, MD, MPH, FASGE
Cleveland Clinic – Cleveland
vargoj@ccf.org
216-445-5012

President-elect

KLAUS MERGENER, MD, PhD, MBA, FASGE
Washington Gastroenterology – Tacoma
kdmergener@gmail.com
206-852-3034

Treasurer

DOUGLAS K. REX, MD, FASGE
Indiana University Medical Center – Indianapolis
drex@iupui.edu
317-948-8741

Secretary

BRET T. PETERSEN, MD, FASGE
Mayo Clinic – Rochester
petersen.bret@mayo.edu
507-284-2687

Treasurer-elect

PRATEEK SHARMA, MD, FASGE
University of Kansas – Kansas City
psharma@kumc.edu
816-861-4700

Past Presidents

STEVEN A. EDMUNDOWICZ, MD, FASGE
Aurora, Colorado

KAREN L. WOODS, MD, FASGE
Houston, Texas

Councilors

TODD H. BARON, SR., MD, FASGE
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

JENNIFER A. CHRISTIE, MD, FASGE
Atlanta, Georgia

JONATHAN COHEN, MD, FASGE
New York, New York

JASON A. DOMINITZ, MD, MHS, FASGE
Seattle, Washington

ASHLEY L. FAULX, MD, FASGE
Cleveland, Ohio

VANESSA M. SHAMI, MD, FASGE
Charlottesville, Virginia

Chair of the ASGE Foundation

JOHN L. PETRINI, MD, FASGE
Santa Barbara, California

Gastrointestinal Endoscopy – Editor

MICHAEL B. WALLACE, MD, MPH, FASGE
Jacksonville, Florida

Chief Executive Officer

BARBARA CONNELL, CAE, CMP
Downers Grove, Illinois

December 9, 2019

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Neal, Chairman Pallone and Chairman Scott:

For nearly eight years, the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) has been advocating to fix an oversight in law that requires Medicare beneficiaries to foot the bill for their colorectal cancer screening colonoscopy when the physician removes a precancerous polyp or small cancer. The “Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act” (H.R. 3), will ensure that, in the future, Medicare beneficiaries are not stuck with a bill after their preventive colonoscopy. ASGE strongly supports Section 805 of the bill, and your efforts overall to help our nation’s seniors by making the cost of their medications more affordable.

Colorectal cancer is a preventable cancer thanks to effective screening tools. Yet, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that about one-third of adults aged 50 or older (about 22 million people) — the age group at greatest risk of developing colorectal cancer — have not been screened as recommended. Fixing the cost-sharing glitch will eliminate a deterrent to screening colonoscopy, especially for lower income beneficiaries who have among the lowest colorectal cancer screening rates.

ASGE also strongly supports Section 807 of the bill which would provide a 0.5 percent Medicare physician payment update in 2020 and 2021. Because of the lack of specialty-oriented alternative payment models (APMs), there has not been an opportunity for gastroenterologists to migrate from the Merit-based Incentive Payment System to APMs that offer bonus payments and greater upside potential. Therefore, the need to maintain positive payment updates for MIPS participants is essential at this time.

On behalf of ASGE’s members and their patients, thank you for your leadership on behalf of America’s physicians and their patients.

Sincerely,

John. J. Vargo, II, MD, MPH, FASGE
President
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy