

AACN's

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Your Inside Track to Federal Policy

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## CMS Expands Participation in Medicare Coverage Policies to Nurses, Other Professions

A recent [revision](#) by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) allows nurses and other healthcare professionals to participate in Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) decisions on coverage policies, or local coverage determinations (LCDs). LCDs determine whether services offered by participating providers are reasonable, necessary, and assist providers in submitting correct claims for reimbursement. LCDs provide guidance to the public and medical community within a MAC's jurisdiction. The expansion to include more providers' voices on Contractor Advisory Committees (CACs) was one of several [significant changes](#) to the Medicare Program Integrity Manual intended to improve upon the LCD process.

Former guidance stated that physicians were the only healthcare providers allowed membership on MAC advisory committees. The members serve as advisors in the development of an LCD and, ultimately, form a close relationship between Medicare and the healthcare communities it serves. The expanded definition to include a more accurate representation of healthcare professionals is a great success for nursing. AACN, in collaboration with the APRN community and colleagues, has advocated for this substantial change as one solution to the barriers that inhibit an efficient Medicare system. Over several years, AACN submitted comments (e.g. [comments on Medicare Relief Red Tape Project](#)) on allowing APRNs and other qualified professionals as members on MAC advisory committees.

## All of Us Research Program Mini-Grant Applications Due October 15

AACN schools of nursing and their community partners are eligible to receive up to \$25,000 for committing to increase awareness of the need for individuals from underrepresented communities to participate in biomedical research. AACN recently released a [second call for applications](#) for the [All of Us Research Program](#) Mini-Grant Awards. AACN hosted an informational call for member schools to learn more about the program and the application process. To listen to the recorded call, [click here](#).

Applicants must submit applications by Monday, October 15. Grantees will be announced in late October. [Learn more and apply here](#).

## Featured Resource: Opioid State Targeted Response Technical Assistance Grant

In light of the bipartisan opioid package currently awaiting the President's signature, AACN would like to highlight a resource for communities to address the opioid crisis. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration grant, [State Targeted Response Technical Assistance \(STR-TA\)](#), identifies local healthcare providers with expertise in treatment and recovery services for opioid use disorders to help ensure U.S. State and territory has access to evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery support programs and services. The [STR-TA grant](#) was created to support the states/territories who received [STR grants](#), but anyone can submit a request at [www.getSTR-TA.org](http://www.getSTR-TA.org).

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