

*scope...*

## AGS 2018 Conference approved for CME

AGS has received notification from the Medical Foundation of Alabama that our 2018 Conference has been approved for 8 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*<sup>™</sup>.

Find registration information, agenda and hotel accommodations for our Feb. 17-18 Conference in New Orleans on our Annual Conference page, [www.alagastro.org/annual-conference](http://www.alagastro.org/annual-conference).

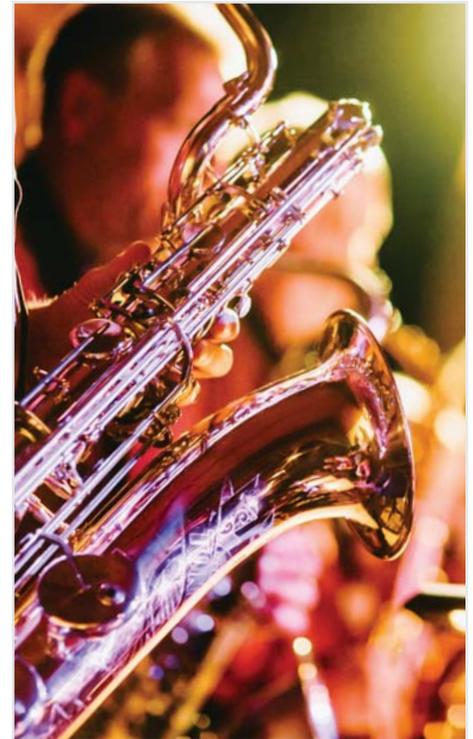
### Accreditation Statement

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama through the joint providership of the Medical Foundation of Alabama and the Alabama Gastroenterological Society. The Medical Foundation of Alabama is accredited by the Medical Association of the State of Alabama to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

### Designation Statement

The Medical Foundation of Alabama designates this live activity for a maximum of 8 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*<sup>™</sup>. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity. 

See details of  
AGS' 2018 Conference  
on pages 4 & 5.



## AGS executive director says farewell



After five years of serving as executive director of the Alabama Gastroenterological Society, I must bid a sad farewell as I move on to a new endeavor.

Working with AGS's board and members has been a wonderful experience and I believe the society is poised for continued success.

Continuing to serve AGS in the interim is Jill Smith, CME and exhibit coordinator, and Charlotte Morris, who handles our membership, newsletters and meeting promotion. I want to personally thank them for their support. I know I'm leaving you in good hands.

My last day with the society was Jan. 9. I wish each of you and the society continued success.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hayes 

## BCBS implements new opioid management strategy effective Feb. 1

### [AlabamaMedicine.org](http://AlabamaMedicine.org)

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama (BCBS) is launching an opioid management strategy in an effort to battle the growing opioid epidemic in Alabama, as well as a response to concerns for customers' care and safety and the rising costs of health care. The new requirements will be effective Feb. 1, 2018.

BCBS Alabama's opioid management strategy implements the following requirements:

- Extended-release opioids will require a prior authorization for all initial fills of long-acting opioid medications. Members currently receiving these drugs will not be impacted.

- Immediate-release opioids will not require prior authorization but will have quantity limits. The first prescription fill will be limited to a seven-day initial supply. After an initial seven-day supply is filled, additional prescriptions may be obtained without pre-authorization. Members currently receiving these drugs will not be impacted.
- Naloxone, the antidote for an opioid overdose, will be available to Blue Cross members for a generic copay. These include the forms of prefilled syringes and nasal spray. Evzio, the branded auto-injector, will no longer be covered because of egregious pricing.

In 2015, Alabama ranked first in the

nation in the number of opioid scripts per capita. The recent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association's Health of America report on the opioid epidemic showed more than 26 percent of its commercial members in Alabama filled at least one opioid prescription in 2015, and 16 per 1,000 members were diagnosed with opioid use disorder. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports between 2000 and 2015 more than half a million people across the U.S. died from drug overdoses, and 91 Americans die each day from an opioid overdose.

See the January 2018 issue of BCBS's *Pharmacy News* for all drug list updates effective Jan. 1, 2018. 

## Landmark tax reform bill passes

### [Jackson Thornton](#)

The new tax reform law – commonly referred to as the “Tax Cuts and Jobs Act” (TCJA) – is the most significant tax legislation in decades. Now businesses and individuals are trying to digest the details and evaluate how the changes will impact their tax situation.

Fortunately, your tax advisors can help you figure things out. Let's start with a basic overview of what's covered in the new law. (Except where noted, these changes are effective for tax years beginning after Dec. 31, 2017.)

### For Businesses

In general, the law significantly reduces the income tax rate for corporations and eliminates the corporate alternative minimum tax (AMT). It also provides a large new tax deduction for owners of pass-through entities and makes major changes related to the taxation of foreign income. But it also reduces or eliminates many business tax breaks.

Some of the key business-related changes include:

- Replacement of graduated corporate tax rates ranging from 15% to 35% with a flat corporate rate of 21%
- Repeal of the 20% corporate AMT
- New 20% qualified business income deduction for owners of flow-through entities (such as partnerships, limited liability companies and S corporations) and sole proprietorships – only through 2025
- Doubling of bonus depreciation to 100% and expansion of qualified assets to include used assets – effective for assets acquired and placed in service after Sept. 27, 2017, and before Jan. 1, 2023
- Doubling of the Section 179 expensing limit to \$1 million and an increase of the expensing phaseout threshold to \$2.5 million
- Other enhancements to depreciation-related deductions
- New disallowance of deductions for net interest expense in excess of 30% of the business's adjusted taxable income (exceptions apply)

- New limits on net operating loss deductions
- Elimination of the Section 199 deduction, also commonly referred to as the domestic production activities deduction or manufacturers' deduction – effective for tax years beginning after Dec. 31, 2017, for noncorporate taxpayers and for tax years beginning after Dec. 31, 2018, for C corporation taxpayers
- New rule limiting like-kind exchanges to real property that is not held primarily for sale
- New tax credit for employer-paid family and medical leave – only through 2019
- New limitations on excessive employee compensation
- New limitations on deductions for employee fringe benefits, such as entertainment and, in certain circumstances, meals and transportation

### For Individuals and Estates

The new law makes small reductions to income tax rates for most individual tax brackets, and it significantly increases individual AMT and estate tax exemptions. But there's also some bad news for individuals: The TCJA eliminates or limits many tax breaks. In addition, much of the tax relief for individual taxpayers will be available only temporarily.

Here are some of the key changes; except where noted, these changes will sunset after 2025:

- Reductions in individual income tax rates ranging from 0 to 4 percentage points (depending on the bracket) to 10%, 12%, 22%, 24%, 32%, 35% and 37%
- Near doubling of the standard deduction to \$24,000 (married couples filing jointly), \$18,000 (heads of households), and \$12,000 (singles and married couples filing separately)
- Elimination of personal exemptions
- Doubling of the child tax credit to \$2,000 and other modifications intended to help more taxpayers benefit from the credit

# AGA enrolls first patient in fecal transplant registry

[www.healio.com](http://www.healio.com)

The first participant has enrolled in a large national registry designed to gather data on fecal microbiota transplantation, according to a press release issued by the American Gastroenterological Association.

The AGA is partnering with the American Gut Project and OpenBiome to administer the NIH-funded registry, which will track 4,000 patients at 75 sites for 10 years to provide data about fecal microbiota transplantation's (FMT) effectiveness, as well as its short and long-term effects.

"What's ahead is a significant repository of data for investigators working to advance FMT research, better

information for physicians on when and how to use FMT, and reassurance for patients that we now understand the risks and benefits of this procedure," Gary D. Wu, MD, founding chair of the AGA Center for Gut Microbiome Research and Education scientific advisory board, said in the press release.

The registry's first participant – treated for multiply recurrent *Clostridium difficile* infection, the most common indication for FMT – will have four doctor follow-ups in the next 2 years and will provide yearly reports for up to 10 years.

The American Gut Project, an academic effort based at the University of California, San Diego, will build

and biobank for the registry, which will contain pre- and post-FMT stool samples. Microbiota from every sample will be sequenced, and any remaining material will be frozen for future research. Information obtained through this testing could help doctors select the best donor samples for each individual patient, according to the press release.

OpenBiome – the country's only public stool bank – will provide screening information and samples for enrolled patients who receive FMT material from OpenBiome to support the registry's research analysis. 

## Tax reform bill continued from page 2

- Reduction of the adjusted gross income (AGI) threshold for the medical expense deduction to 7.5% for regular and AMT purposes – for only 2017 and 2018
- New \$10,000 limit on the deduction for state and local taxes (on a combined basis for property and income taxes; \$5,000 for separate filers)
- Reduction of the mortgage debt limit for the home mortgage interest deduction, to \$750,000 (\$375,000 for separate filers), with certain exceptions
- Elimination of the deduction for interest on home equity debt
- Elimination of the personal casualty and theft loss deduction (with an exception for federally declared disasters)
- Elimination of miscellaneous itemized deductions subject to the 2% floor (such as certain investment expenses, professional fees and unreimbursed employee business expenses)
- Elimination of the AGI-based reduction of certain itemized deductions
- Elimination of the moving expense deduction (with an exception for members of the military in certain circumstances)
- AMT exemption increase, to \$109,400 for joint filers, \$70,300 for singles and heads of households, and \$54,700 for separate filers
- Doubling of the gift and estate tax exemptions, to \$10 million (expected to be \$11.2 million for 2018 with inflation indexing)

In addition, the new law permanently eliminates the individual mandate under the Affordable Care Act requiring taxpayers not covered by a qualifying health plan to pay a penalty. The elimination of the individual mandate

is effective for months beginning after Dec. 31, 2018. Also permanent is the expansion of tax-free Section 529 plan distributions to include those used to pay qualifying elementary and secondary school expenses, up to \$10,000 per student per tax year.

### Need Help?

The new tax law is broad-reaching and complicated. And more tax reform may be coming. Other proposals that Republican congressional leaders have discussed would address retirement and education savings, reorganize the IRS, delay some taxes funding the Affordable Care Act (such as the medical device tax and the health insurance provider fee), prevent abuses of the earned income tax credit and extend the benefits of some tax credits for renewable energy property, nuclear energy production and biodiesel.

In this time of change, your tax advisor can be a valuable resource, helping you stay atop the latest developments. 



### Alabama Gastroenterological Society

19 S. Jackson Street | Montgomery, AL 36104 | (334) 954-2500 | Fax (334) 269-5200

### Alabama Gastroenterological Society 2016-2018 Officers

DeWayne Tooson, MD — President  
 Bradley Rice, MD — Vice President  
 Kenneth Sigman, MD — Secretary  
 Mohamad Eloubeidi, MD — Treasurer  
 Robert Shaffer, MD — Immediate Past President

DeWayne Tooson, MD — Publisher  
 Jennifer Hayes — Executive Editor  
 Charlotte Morris — Senior Editor

Send article submissions and comments to Charlotte Morris at [cmorris@alamedical.org](mailto:cmorris@alamedical.org) two weeks in advance. Scope is printed bimonthly. Comments and letters to the editor are welcome.

# AGS 2018 Annual Conference

Feb. 17-18, 2018

Hyatt Centric French Quarter  
New Orleans



www.alagastro.org



## AGS Conference Agenda

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

Breakfast with Exhibitors

8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

J. DeWayne Tooson, MD, AGS President

8:15 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

HCV Transplant Cholestatic Liver Disease

Phillip Henderson, DO, Clinical Instructor of Medicine,  
USA College of Medicine

9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Advances in Pancreatic and Biliary Endoscopy

Kenneth Sigman, MD, Birmingham Gastroenterology  
Associates

10:15 a.m.

Morning Break with Exhibitors

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Management and Treatment of Chronic Hepatitis B

David Fettig, MD, Birmingham Gastroenterology  
Associates

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Management of Refractory IBD

Steve Hanauer, MD, Professor of Medicine,  
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Mardi Gras Lunch Party with Exhibitors

2:30 p.m.

Enjoy the rest of your day in the City of New Orleans

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

7:00 a.m. – 7:30 a.m.

Breakfast with Exhibitors

7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

Business Session, Installation of 2018-2020 Officers

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Coding Pitfalls in Ambulatory Surgery Centers

Kristin Vaughn, CPC, Ask Mueller Consulting, LLC

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

GI Practice Management, Ancillary Opportunities in GI

Reed Hogan, MD, GI Associates and Endoscopy Center

10:00 a.m.

Morning Break with Exhibitors

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Management of Achalasia

Mouen Khashab, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine  
and Director of Therapeutic Endoscopy, Johns Hopkins  
Hospital, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Advances in Therapeutic Endoscopy

Mouen Khashab, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine  
and Director of Therapeutic Endoscopy, Johns Hopkins  
Hospital, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology

12:15 p.m.

Evaluation and Adjourn

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## 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_  MD  DO  CRNP  PA  PharmD  Medical Science Liaison\*  
 Resident/Fellow  Student  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Practice Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Office Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Office Manager's E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Needs \_\_\_\_\_  First time attendee? (check if yes)

### FEES (After Feb. 9 add \$100)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AGS Physician Member or Out of State Physician \$375               | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician Nonmember \$475 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AGS Associate Member or Out of State Non Physician Clinician \$275 | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Nonmember \$375 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retiree - \$150  | <input type="checkbox"/> Resident - Free           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Science Liaison* \$475                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Student - Free            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice Manager \$150   |  |

\*The medical science liaison's company must be a registered vendor at the conference. Contact Jennifer Hayes for details.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total number of adults attending reception

Guest Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### ONLINE REGISTRATION

Go to [www.tinyurl.com/AGS2018](http://www.tinyurl.com/AGS2018) to register online.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

Reserve a room at the Hyatt Centric French Quarter online at [www.tinyurl.com/2018AGSReservations](http://www.tinyurl.com/2018AGSReservations) or call 888-421-1442 and ask for the Alabama Gastroenterological Society room block. Rates begin at \$229 per night and are valid for three days before and three days after the conference based on availability. **The room block expires Jan. 24, 2018, but the room block is almost sold out.** Call the AGS office at (334) 954-2531 if you have trouble getting a room.

If you have special needs or need assistance, please contact Charlotte Morris at (334) 954-2531 or [cmorris@alamedical.org](mailto:cmorris@alamedical.org).

### PAYMENT

Credit Card:  VISA  MasterCard  American Express  Check made payable to AGS

Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address for receipt \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### MAIL REGISTRATION FORM AND PAYMENT TO

AGS Annual Conference | Attn. Charlotte Morris | PO Box 1900 | Montgomery, AL 36102-1900 | Fax (334) 269-5200