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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

CONGRESSIONAL

Senate Committee Passes FDA User Fee Legislation

Earlier this afternoon, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee passed the [FDA Reauthorization Act](#) (S.934) by a vote of 21-2. This legislation updates the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) user fee agreements related to drugs and devices, and makes changes to FDA approvals and priorities. Earlier in the week, the Committee updated the bill with a manager's amendment which included substantial changes, such as; the regulation of hearing aids, inspections of medical device manufacturing facilities and new requirements for the FDA to report to Congress on how user fees are utilized. An additional amendment was adopted during

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to letters being sent to providers indicating their 2017 reporting eligibility for the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), CMS has created an easy [online lookup tool](#). All that is needed is a provider's National Provider Identifier (NPI).

UPCOMING HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

the hearing that would require the FDA to prioritize the applications of drugs that would provide some of the first competition to other drugs that are at risk of price increases. It would also require the FDA to track drugs that have limited competition and are at risk of price spikes.

During the hearing, an amendment was also discussed related to importation of prescription drugs from Canada to curb the high cost of pharmaceuticals. In the hopes of keeping the legislation as non-controversial as possible, this amendment was tabled by a narrow vote. Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) indicated his willingness to set up a separate hearing related to drug pricing in the near future. Congress must act by September 30th to update the user fee agreements, and is expected to pass legislation over the summer in order to avoid layoffs at the FDA.

Senate Confirms Gottlieb as FDA Commissioner

On Tuesday, the Senate voted 57-42 to confirm Dr. Scott Gottlieb as the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration. Gottlieb is a practicing physician and served in several senior positions at the FDA under President George W. Bush.

CBO Announces Timeline on ACA Repeal Score

Yesterday, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [announced](#) it would release a score for the House-passed, [H.R. 1629, the American Health Care Act \(AHCA\)](#) the week of May 22. The legislation did not receive an updated score prior to the House vote on May 4.

A CBO score will indicate the costs and savings associated with the legislation and the estimated number of individuals who would lose insurance under the new program. The Senate must wait for the Senate Parliamentarian to review the CBO score and determine what provisions of the AHCA will be

Senate Finance Committee

5/16 at 10:00am: Full Committee hearing on "[Examining Bipartisan Medicare Policies that Improve Care for Patients with Chronic Conditions.](#)"

Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee

5/17 at 10:00am: Full Committee hearing on "[Current Issues in American Sports: Protecting the Health and Safety of American Athletes.](#)"

House Appropriations Committee

5/17 at 10:00am: LHHS Subcommittee hearing on "[Oversight Hearing - Advances in Biomedical Research.](#)"

House Energy and Commerce Committee

5/17 at 10:15am: Health Subcommittee hearing on "[Examining Initiatives to Advance Public Health.](#)"

Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee

5/17 at 2:30pm: Full Committee Hearing on "[Pending Health and Benefits Legislation.](#)"

House Ways and Means Committee

5/18 at 2:00pm: Health Subcommittee Hearing on the "[Current Status of the Medicare Program, Payment Systems, and Extenders.](#)"

allowed under the rules of Budget Reconciliation. This process will take a number of weeks. In the meantime, various groups of Republican Senators have begun discussions of their own on separate legislation to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA). It is expected that if the Senate is able to pass legislation, it would have many changes from the House version and would need to be further negotiated with the House.

WEEKLY FUN FACT

Did You Know....

The Mother's Day we celebrate today was started by Anna Jarvis in the early 1900s. Jarvis got Congress to recognize the holiday, founded the Mother's Day International Association and even trademarked the phrase "Mother's Day." Jarvis was inspired by her own mother, who had called for "Mothers Work Days" to improve conditions for soldiers on both sides during the Civil War. [Click here to find more fun facts about Mother's Day.](#)

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