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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

CONGRESSIONAL

House Leadership Releases AHCA Manager's Amendment Ahead of Vote

Last night, House Republican Leadership released a [manager's amendment](#), making [changes](#) to the American Health Care Act (AHCA), legislation to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Changes to the legislation in the manager's amendment include:

- Giving states flexibility for their Medicaid programs by choosing between a per capita allotment or block grants and including the option of establishing work requirements for Medicaid recipients,
- Repealing of ACA taxes in 2017 rather than 2018,

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

CMS has released three new resources for providers preparing for the Quality Payment Program:

- [Updated List of Alternative Payment Models](#)
- [Merit-based Incentive Payment System \(MIPS\) Measures for Cardiologists](#)
- [Support Resources for Small Practices](#)

UPCOMING

- Prohibiting states from newly expanding Medicaid after January 1, 2018, and
- Enhancing tax credits for individuals aged 50-64 who may need additional financial assistance for their health care premiums.

These changes were included in the hopes of gaining more Republican votes for final passage of the legislation. Both Conservative and Moderate Republicans remain concerned about certain aspects of the bill as they continue to refine. The legislation will be examined by the rules Committee Wednesday followed by an expected vote on the House floor on Thursday.

House to Vote on Health Insurance Measures

In addition to the vote on the AHCA, House Republican Leadership announced that they would send two additional health insurance measures to a vote on the House floor this week as a complement to the ACA repeal legislation.

- [Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act](#) (H.R. 372) would close an antitrust loophole for health insurance companies
- [Small Business Health Fairness Act](#) (H.R. 1101) would allow an expansion of the ability of trade and business associations to sponsor association health plans.

These bills are expected to pass the House today or tomorrow but have an uncertain future in the Senate.

ADMINISTRATIVE

CMS Delays Cardiac Bundle and Changes to Comprehensive Joint Replacement Models

Yesterday, the Centers for Medicare the Medicaid Services (CMS) released an [interim final rule with comment period](#) (IFC) on the Advancing Care Coordination Through Episode

HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES

Senate HELP Committee

3/21 at 10:00am - [Committee hearing on FDA's User Fee Agreements -Improving Medical Product Regulation and Innovation for Patients Part I.](#)

House Energy & Commerce Committee

3/21 at 10:15am - [Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee hearing on Fentanyl and the Opioid Crisis.](#)

House Rules Committee

3/22 at 10:00am - [Committee hearing on the American Health Care Act of 2017.](#)

House Energy & Commerce Committee

3/22 at 10:15am - [Committee hearing on Examining FDA's Prescription Drug User Fee Program.](#)

WEEKLY FUN FACT

Since its inception, how many people have been named Secretary of the United States Health and Human Services? The answer can be found [here.](#)

Payment Models (EPMs); Cardiac Rehabilitation Incentive Payment Model; and Changes to the Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement (CJR) Model published in January. The IFC delays the Cardiac Care models and expansion of the CJR model from July 1, 2017 to October 1, 2017. The implementation date of the rule has also been extended from March 21 to May 20, 2017. This rule does not change the existing CJR programs which began in April 2016, but only the expansion and changes to the model that were proposed last year. CMS is requesting comment on delaying the new and expanded models further, signaling a later start date of January 2018. Comments on the IFC are due April 19, 2017.

340B Rule Further Delayed

On Monday, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) released an [interim final rule](#) delaying the effective date of the 340B Drug Pricing Program final rule on ceiling prices and civil monetary penalties from March 21 to May 22, 2017. HRSA has also asked for comment on further delaying the rule through October 1, 2017.

President Trump Releases 2018 Budget

On Thursday, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released the [America First: A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again](#). The budget includes a \$54 billion increase in defense spending that is offset by reductions in discretionary programs. This includes an 18% decrease in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) budget, a reduction of spending at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by \$5.8 billion, and eliminates some health care workforce programs. The HHS budget includes increases for health care fraud and abuse programs, opioid programs, and mental health programs. The budget does not address mandatory programs including Medicare. The President's budget is not binding, but is indicative of the Administration's priorities. A more detailed

budget is expected in May. Congress will go through its appropriations process to provide funding for government programs after the current April 28th deadline.

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