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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

CONGRESSIONAL

Walden Introduces Legislation to Protect Patients with Pre-Existing Conditions

Last Thursday, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR) introduced [Pre-existing Conditions Protection Act](#) (H.R. 1121), legislation that would guarantee health care access and ensure benefits cannot be excluded from a plan, or charged more based on a pre-existing condition. This comes as the Energy and Commerce and other health care Committees begin work to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

CMS has a number of short videos on their [YouTube channel](#) walking through certain aspects of the Quality Payment Program.

UPCOMING HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES

Both the House and the Senate are in recess and will return to D.C. the week of

February 27, 2017.

FEDERAL

National Health Expenditure Data Released

Last Wednesday, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Office of the Actuary (OACT) released the [2016-2025 Projections of National Health Expenditures Data](#). The data shows a 5.6 percent growth annually over 2016-2025. The report also projects the health share of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to rise from 17.8 percent in 2015 to 19.9 percent by 2025. Medicare spending growth is projected to have been 5.0 percent in 2016 and is to increase to 7.1 percent over the full projection period.

QHP Deadline Delayed

On Friday, CMS [announced](#) it would allow plans additional time to submit applications for participation in the 2018 insurance exchanges. In the letter, CMS pushes the deadline to June 21, 2017 for Qualified Health Plans (QHP).

WEEKLY FUN FACT

Which president played a big role in popularizing golf by installing a putting green at the White House and played more than 800 rounds while in office and holds a spot in the World Golf Hall of Fame in the Lifetime Achievement Category. The answer can be found [here!](#)

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