

EDITION: February 6, 2017

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

TRUMP TRANSITION

Tom Price Confirmation Moves to Senate Vote

On Wednesday, after a boycott by Democrats from voting on the confirmation, the Senate Finance Committee suspended the rules to approve Congressman Tom Price, M.D. (R-GA) without a quorum. The nomination was approved with 14 Republican votes and will advance to the full Senate as early as this week.

New Executive Order on Reducing Regulations

Last Monday, President Trump released an [executive order](#) instructing government agencies to remove two previous regulations for every newly proposed regulation.

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

CMS provides previous [webinar recordings and slides](#) on topics ranging from the Merit-based incentive payment (MIPS) categories to Alternative Payment Models (APMs).

UPCOMING HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES

House Energy and

On Thursday, the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released [guidance](#) on the executive order indicating that the order only applies to "significant" rules and would not include many annual Medicare spending rules.

CONGRESSIONAL

Insurance Market Stabilization Bills Examined in Committees

On Thursday, the Energy and Commerce Committee [held a hearing](#) to examine four bills to promote market stabilization for insurance plans as Congress works to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

- [Plan Verification and Fairness Act](#)
- [State Age Rating Flexibility Act](#)
- [Health Coverage State Flexibility Act](#)
- [Preexisting Conditions Protection and Continuous Coverage Incentive Act](#)

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee also held a similar [hearing](#) on Wednesday.

FEDERAL

340B Rule Withdrawn

Last Monday, the OMB [withdrew](#) the Final 340B Program Omnibus Guidelines defining the patients for the program and outline responsibilities of drug companies. This will be sent back to the Department of Health and Human Services to be reviewed and would need to be submitted again to OMB if the administration wants to move forward.

Commerce Committee

2/7 at 10:00am: Health Subcommittee hearing to [vote on H.R. 829 and H.R. 181](#).

House Small Business Committee

2/7 at 11:00am: Full Committee hearing titled; "[Reimagining the Health Care Marketplace for America's Small Businesses](#)".

WEEKLY FUN FACT

Elaine Chao was just approved as the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. She previously served as Secretary of Labor under George W. Bush and is married to the Senate Majority Leader. What other former cabinet official has the exact three credentials? Find the answer [here!](#)

DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Round 2019 Announced

On Tuesday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the [2019 Round](#) for the Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies (DMEPOS) Competitive Bidding Program. CMS indicated it will consolidate into a single round for 2019. Round 2019 will include 141 competitive bidding areas (CBAs) and have a total of 11 product categories.

CMS Releases Draft 2018 Medicare Advantage and Part D Advance Notice

This past Wednesday, CMS released its 2018 Medicare Advantage and Part D Advance Notice and [Draft Call Letter](#) providing the [rates and updates](#) for the 2018 plan year. For Medicare Advantage, payments are expected to increase by .25 percent while also delaying expected cuts to the program. CMS will accept comments on the draft through March 3rd and is expected to release the final notice on April 3rd.

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