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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

CONGRESSIONAL

Senate Continues Work on Repeal and Replacement of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)

After last week's release of the updated Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA), including a controversial amendment to offer skinny plans by Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) and limited changes to increase Medicaid funding for moderate Republicans, four Senators indicated their disapproval of the legislation, killing the chances for passage in its current form.

Shortly following that announcement, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) announced he would have the Senate vote on a previously passed version of ACA repeal from 2015 that repealed parts of the ACA with a two year transition to replace

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

CMS has produced [slides](#) on the proposed rule for Year 2 of the Quality Payment Program.

HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

House Energy and Commerce Committee

7/18 at 10:00am: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee hearing on [Examining HRSA's Oversight of the 340B Drug](#)

the program. This legislation passed the Senate with only one Republican defector, but was, as expected, vetoed by President Obama in January 2016. This additional option for the Senate was soon also shut down by three Republicans indicating they would not support the legislation.

Conversations continue to identify ways to bring moderate Republicans to support one of the two repeal options now available but much remains uncertain. With Senator John McCain (R-AZ) out from a recent diagnosis of a brain tumor, the ability for Republicans to reach the necessary 51 votes is difficult. Leader McConnell still intends to bring forward one of the bill options early next week for a vote, but at this time it is not clear whether they will have enough support to procedurally move forward, let alone pass repeal legislation. In addition, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has come out with updated scores of both bills. They predict BCRA, without analyzing the addition of the Cruz amendment, will leave [22 million more people uninsured](#) by 2026. Meanwhile the legislation to repeal and delay a replacement to the ACA is predicted to leave [32 million more people uninsured](#) over the next decade.

House Appropriations Committee Passes 2018 Health Spending Bill

On Wednesday, the House Appropriations Committee passed their Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Education and Related Agencies [spending bill for FY 2018](#). The [bill includes](#) \$77.6 billion in spending for HHS, which is \$542 below current levels. Despite cuts in some departments such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health received \$35.2 billion, an increase of \$1.1 billion above the fiscal year 2017 enacted level, including increases for Alzheimer's disease research, the Brain

[Pricing Program.](#)

House Ways and Means Committee

7/19 at 10:00am: [Subcommittee Hearing on Efforts to Combat Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in the Medicare Program](#)

House Energy and Commerce Committee

7/20 at 10:00am: Subcommittee Hearing on [Examining Bipartisan Legislation to Improve the Medicare Program](#)

House Small Business Committee

7/20 at 10:00am: Subcommittee Hearing on ["21st Century Medicine: How Telehealth Can Help Rural Communities."](#)

Senate Aging Committee

7/26 at 9:30am: Hearing to [Examine Progress Toward a Cure for Type I Diabetes, Focusing on Research and the Artificial Pancreas](#)

WEEKLY FUN FACT

Did you that on July 20, 1969 a live transmission from the Moon was viewed by 720 million people around the world with the landing of Apollo 11, at 10:56 p.m. EDT, as Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin stepped onto the surface of the Moon.

For more information, [click here](#).

Research through Application of Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) initiative, the Cancer Moonshot and regenerative medicine research. The House is expected to take up appropriations bills next week before they leave for the August Congressional recess.

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