

**EDITION:** July 28, 2017

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

*Your weekly dose of health care policy*

### CONGRESSIONAL

#### **Senate Fails to Pass Repeal and Replacement of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)**

After a week of negotiations and attempts to pass some sort of repeal of the ACA, early Friday morning, Senate Republican's last effort failed to garner enough votes. Earlier this week, despite some uncertainty, Senator John McCain (R-AZ) arrived back in DC to vote 'yes' on the motion to proceed on debate of the House passed American Health Care Act.

During the course of 20 hours of debate, votes on an updated [Better Care Reconciliation Act](#), the Senate's version of repeal and replace of the ACA and a straight repeal bill of certain ACA provisions were voted down by Democrats and a handful

### MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

CMS has provided [resources](#) to help providers transition from the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS) to the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS).

### HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

The House of Representatives will recess this afternoon for the August District Work Period.

of Republicans. The intention during the days-long debate was to at the end, have Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) propose a 'skinny' repeal bill which would include a pared down repeal based on whatever could get the Republican caucus to the necessary 50 votes necessary, with the intention of conferencing the legislation with the House-passed version in order to continue negotiations. Even after assurances from House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) to go to conference on the bills, it was still uncertain what would happen to a 'skinny' repeal should it pass. Early this morning Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and unexpectedly, John McCain (R-AZ) voted with all Democrats to vote down the third and final effort for ACA repeal.

After this failure to get the necessary 51 votes to pass, it is unclear how Congress will move forward on the effort. Many Republican Senators, including Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) have indicated willingness to hold hearings on bipartisan market stabilization efforts in the future. The Senate, at least for now, will remain in session for two more weeks and may or may not continue to address health care.

### **House Ways & Means Announces Administrative Burden Initiative**

On Monday, House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee Chairman Pat Tiberi (R-OH) [announced](#) a new initiative to reduce Medicare regulations with the goal of delivering relief, reducing costs, and promoting innovation. The initiative will have three stages including feedback from stakeholders, round tables with stakeholders, and possible Congressional action on certain initiatives. Initial feedback from stakeholders will be accepted by the Committee through August 25th. A submission form can be found [here](#).

## **ADMINISTRATION**

They are expected to return September 5.

### **Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee**

8/1 at 2:30pm: Full Committee

[Nomination Hearing for various health related positions.](#)

### **WEEKLY FUN FACT**

In what year did C-Span 2 start regularly televising the Senate floor proceedings? Click [here](#) to find the answer.

### **CMS Releases Home Health Proposed Rule**

On Tuesday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released its [proposed rule](#) on the 2018 payment rates for home health agencies and a redesign of the payment system for 2019. Overall, CMS projects payments will be reduced by .4 percent in 2018. The [proposed rule](#) also proposes changes to the case-mix adjustment methodology, home health quality reporting provisions, the home health value-based purchasing model and a request for information related to reducing clinician burden and ideas for regulatory changes. Comments will be accepted through September 25, 2017.

### **CMS Releases ACA Medicaid DSH Reduction Proposed Rule**

Yesterday, CMS issued a [proposed rule](#) to implement the aggregate reductions to Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) allotments required by the ACA. CMS proposes reduction methodology and applying a 90 percent stop-loss percentage, so that no state would have their DSH allotment reduced by more than 90 percent. The comment period is only 30 days and ends Monday, August 28th.

### **CMS Releases Payment Summary Reports for Hospital VBP Program**

CMS also released the Percentage Payment Summary Reports (PPSRs) for the FY 2018 Hospital Value-Based Purchasing Program to participating hospitals yesterday. The FY 2018 PPSRs provide hospitals with their total performance scores and value-based incentive payment adjustment factors. CMS released a [fact sheet](#) and [help guide](#) to assist.

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