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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

CONGRESSIONAL

Congress Passes Deal to Address September Deadlines

Last Friday, after negotiating with Minority Leaders Schumer (D-NY) and Pelosi (D-CA), President Trump signed a legislative [package](#) to fund the government and raise the debt ceiling through December 8, 2017 as well as provide a first round of hurricane emergency aid for Hurricane Harvey. These items were set to expire at the end of the month. Despite concerns from Republicans to negotiate a longer term update for appropriations and the debt ceiling, this legislation passed and frees up time in the legislative calendar to address other issues. The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) still

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

CMS has created specialty guides for the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) for [Anesthesiologists and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists \(CRNAs\)](#), [Emergency Medicine Clinicians](#), [Ophthalmologists](#), and [Orthopedists](#). Additionally, they have provided [additional resources](#) for group participation in the MIPS program.

HEALTH CARE

faces a September 30 deadline as well as any final efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee is also seeking to address a short-term insurance market stabilization bill before insurers must set their rates for 2018 on September 27.

New Health Care Reform Bills Released

On Wednesday, Senators Graham (R-SC), Cassidy (R-LA), Johnson (R-WI) and Heller (R-NV) introduced a [new iteration](#) of Senate Republican's ACA repeal and replace strategy in a last attempt to pass a bill through budget reconciliation prior to the September 30 deadline. The "[Graham-Cassidy Bill](#)" would terminate the ACA's Medicaid expansion, premium tax credits, cost sharing reduction payments and other ACA funding programs and redistributes the funding to the states to be used to assist with premiums, reduce cost-sharing, reinsurance programs or for market stabilization. Among other provisions, the legislation keeps many of the ACA taxes other than the medical device tax and lessens restrictions on Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). The legislation also imposes a per capita cap on Medicaid funding and allows for 1332 waivers to be used to change premiums based on health, age and other factors. The bill would still need to be reviewed by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the parliamentarian, but it remains unclear if it has enough support to bring to a vote before the deadline.

Alternatively, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) along with 16 other Senate Democrats introduced the [Medicare for All Act](#) establishing a national health insurance program through expanded Medicare. The [legislation](#) is expected to cost a significant amount to which Senator Sanders has provided [options to finance](#). This legislation would not have support to pass given Republican control of the House and Senate, but indicates a striking contrast to current Republican efforts.

ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee

9/12 at 10:00am: Full Committee hearing titled; "[Stabilizing Premiums and Helping Individuals in the Individual Insurance Market for 2018: State Flexibility.](#)"

Senate Finance Committee

9/12 at 10:00am: Full Committee hearing titled; "[Health Care: Issues Impacting Cost and Coverage.](#)"

House Energy and Commerce Committee

9/13 at 10:15am: Health Subcommittee hearing on [Modernizing FDA's Regulation of Over-the-Counter Drugs.](#)

House Energy and Commerce Committee

9/14 at 10:15am: Health Subcommittee hearing on [Supporting Tomorrow's Health Providers: Examining Workforce Programs Under the Public Health Service Act.](#)

WEEKLY FUN FACT

Can you name the statue that sits at the top of the Capitol Dome? Click [here](#) to find the answer.

CHIP Funding Deal Reached in Senate

The Senate Finance Committee reached a [bipartisan agreement](#) to address CHIP funding for five years for \$8 billion and a phase out of the funding increases for the program included in the ACA over time. The deal would keep the ACA's 23 percent increase in CHIP funding through 2019, dropping it to 11.5 percent in 2020, before being eliminated completely to regular levels. The Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on the CHIP program, but a date has not been set for a vote since an agreement was reached.

Committees Pass Health Care Legislation

On Wednesday the House Ways and Means Full Committee and Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee held markups of a number of bipartisan health care bills, advancing them through the Committees. Some of the bills advanced on Wednesday are similar to provisions included in the Senate's bipartisan [Creating High-Quality Results and Outcomes Necessary to Improve Chronic \(CHRONIC\) Care Act](#).

On Wednesday, [Ways and Means Committee](#) passed:

- [Comprehensive Operations, Sustainability, and Transport Act](#) (H.R. 3729)
- [To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to include additional telehealth services for purposes of Medicare Advantage organization bids, and for other purposes](#) (H.R. 3727)
- [Stark Administrative Simplification Act](#) (H.R. 3726)

On Wednesday, the [Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee](#) passed:

- [Furthering Access to Stroke Telemedicine Act](#) (H.R. 1148)
- [Steve Gleason Enduring Voices Act](#) (H.R. 2465)

- [Prostate Cancer Misdiagnosis Elimination Act](#) (H.R. 2557)
- [A bill to reduce the volume of future electronic health record-related significant hardship requests](#) (H.R. 3120)
- [Medicare Civil and Criminal Penalties Act](#) (H.R. 3245)
- [A bill to extend the Medicare Independence at home Medical Practice Demonstration program](#) (H.R. 3263)
- [Protecting Access to Diabetes Supplies Act](#) (H.R. 3271)

ADMINISTRATION

CMS Reveals New Medicare Card and Resources

On Thursday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) revealed the new Medicare card design to replace cards listing social security numbers in the future. New cards will begin to be mailed in April 2018 to replace all cards by April 2019. CMS has provided [resources](#) for providers, health and drug plans, employers, and states.

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