

HLB Weekly Newsletter

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EDITION: November 14, 2017



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

**Due to the Thanksgiving Holiday, our next edition will be sent the week of Dec 4th.*

CONGRESSIONAL

Tax Reform

Last Thursday, Senate Republicans released their version of tax reform; "[Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.](#)" Unlike the House bill, [H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act](#), which was introduced a week prior – the Senate version did not include the elimination of the medical expense deduction, nor did it eliminate nonprofit health care entities' ability to access low-cost capital financing through tax-exempt private activity bonds.

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

Quality Payment Program Resources were moved to a [New Location](#) on CMS.gov. Resources include fact sheets, user guides, and other helpful materials.

HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

House Appropriations Committee

11/15 at 9:30am: Military

While both the House and Senate original tax reform drafts did not contain the repeal of the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate, there was a steady push to do so by the White House. With the increased pressure, the Senate indicated today that the provision was being added to their version and the House is looking to possibly add it to their H.R. 1 as well.

The House is planning to vote and pass tax reform this week, while the Senate Finance Committee continues their mark-up and is planning to vote next week.

ADMINISTRATION

CMS Medicaid Announcement

Last Tuesday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator, Seema Verma, made an [announcement](#) on the future of Medicaid. The agency says the new policies will "encourage states to propose innovative Medicaid reforms, reduce federal regulatory burdens, increase efficiency, and promote transparency and accountability. In addition, their new efforts would streamline and improve the 1115 demonstration, state plan amendments, and 1915 waiver processes.

Trump Nominates Alex Azar to Lead HHS

Yesterday, President Trump nominated Alex Azar as the next Secretary of Health and Human Services. Azar previously worked at Eli Lilly and in the George W. Bush administration. Several Senate Democrats have already voiced their concerns with the nomination.

Construction, VA, & Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing on [Veterans Affairs Electronic Health Record Oversight](#).

Senate HELP Committee

11/15 at 10:00am: Full Committee hearing on [Encouraging Healthy Communities: Perspective from the Surgeon General](#).

Senate Appropriations Committee

11/15 at 2:30pm: Military Construction, VA, & Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing on [VA Efforts to Prevent and Combat Opioid Overmedication](#).

Senate Judiciary Committee

11/16 at 10:00am: Full Committee markup of [Alzheimer's and autism-related bill, S. 2070, Kevin and Avonte's Law](#).

WEEKLY TRIVIA

In 1987, Bernie Sanders put his Brooklyn accent to music by recording what type of music? [Click here to find the answer.](#)

Which fruit is considered the symbol of hospitality? [Click here to find the answer.](#)

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