

HLB Weekly Newsletter

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## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

*Your weekly dose of health care policy*

### CONGRESSIONAL

#### Congress' To-Do List

With approximately two weeks left until Christmas Day, Congress still has a lot of health care-related items on their plate that they have to accomplish. Some of the high priority items include:

- Children's Health Insurance Program (expired Sept 30)
- Medicare Extenders (expires Dec 31)
- Funding the Government (expires Dec 22)
- Health Insurance Tax (expires Dec 31)
- Affordable Care Act Stabilization (CSR, etc.)
- Cadillac Tax (expires Dec 2019)

### MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

CMS added new user guides! The [MIPS 101 Guide](#) and [MIPS Scoring 101 Guide](#) are now on the [Quality Payment Program Library website](#).

### HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

#### Senate HELP Committee

12/12 at 10:00am: Full Committee Hearing on [The Cost of](#)

- Tax Reform (currently in Conference Committee)

Negotiations have been occurring on all the above, but even though some policies are bipartisan in nature, an agreement on how to fund those items has not come together yet. In addition to finding ways to move the legislation with both Republican and Democratic support - it also must have both House and Senate support, which can be difficult as well. With the two-week continuing resolution (CR) to keep our government open expiring next week, we should have a better sense of what items mentioned above will be included in a larger funding bill to get us into 2018. Stay tuned.

## ADMINISTRATION

### CMS Finalizes Hip and Joint Rule

On Nov 30, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) [finalized](#) the cancellation of the mandatory hip fracture and cardiac bundled payment models that were to be operated by the CMS Innovation Center and implemented changes to the Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement (CJR) Model.

### CMS updates MA VBID Model for 2019

On Nov 22, CMS [announced several updates](#) to the Medicare Advantage Value-Based Insurance Design (VBID) Model for 2019 that encourages customized benefit designs and flexibilities that meet the health needs of beneficiaries in a total of 25 states.

### CMS Announces 2018 Premiums & Deductibles

On Nov 17, CMS announced the [2018 premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance amounts](#) for the Medicare Part A and Part B programs. The standard monthly premium for Medicare Part B enrollees will be \$134 for 2018, the same amount as in 2017. The Medicare Part A annual inpatient hospital deductible that beneficiaries pay when admitted to the hospital will be \$1,340

[Prescription Drugs: An Examination of The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Report "Making Medicines Affordable: A National Imperative.](#)

### Senate Judiciary Committee

12/12 at 10:00am: Full Committee Hearing on [Patient Access and Drug Enforcement.](#)

### House Energy and Commerce Committee

12/12 at 10:15am: Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee Hearing on [Patient Brokering and Addiction Treatment Fraud.](#)

### Senate HELP Committee

12/13 at 10:00am: Full Committee Hearing on [Implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act: Responding to Mental Health Needs.](#)

### Senate Armed Services Committee

12/13 at 10:00am: Personnel Subcommittee Hearing on [Update on Research, Diagnosis, and Treatment for Traumatic Brain Injury/Concussion in Servicemembers.](#)

### House Energy and Commerce Committee

12/13 at 10:00am: Health Subcommittee Hearing on [Examining the Drug Supply Chain.](#)

### House Science, Space, &

per benefit period in 2018, an increase of \$24 from \$1,316 in 2017.

### **CMS Releases MA and Part D Rule**

On Nov 16, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services released their Contract Year 2019 Policy and Technical Changes to the Medicare Advantage, Medicare Cost Plan, Medicare Fee-for-Service, the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Programs, and the PACE Program [Proposed Rule](#). Comments are due January 16 by 5pm ET.

### **Technology Committee**

12/13 at 10:00am: Research & Technology Subcommittee Hearing on [Preventing Head Trauma from Football Field to Shop Floor to Battlefield](#).

### **WEEKLY TRIVIA**

Why was the False Claims Act ("FCA") originally passed? [Click here to find the answer.](#)

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