

EDITION: January 22, 2018

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

CONGRESSIONAL

Congress Passes CR to Reopen the Government

Earlier today, both the Senate and the House voted to pass a Continuing Resolution (CR) to reopen the government and provide funding through Feb 8. President Trump is expected to sign it tonight and end the government shutdown. Senate Democrats were promised by Senate Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell (R-KY) that they would hold a vote on immigration before Feb 8. In addition to funding the government, the bill also contained some key health care provisions:

- 6 year extension of funding of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

You can still participate in MIPS for 2017. CMS offers free technical assistance [here](#).

HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

Senate HELP Committee

1/23 at 10:00am: Full Committee hearing on [Facing 21st Century Public Health Threats: Our Nation's Preparedness and](#)

- 2 year extension of the medical device tax moratorium
- 2 year extension of the Cadillac tax moratorium
- 1 year extension of the health insurance tax moratorium

ADMINISTRATION

HHS Announces Conscience & Religion Division

On Jan 18, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the formation of a new [Conscience and Religious Freedom Division](#) in the HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR). HHS states that the creation of the new division provides them the focus it needs to more vigorously and effectively enforce existing laws protecting the rights of conscience and religious freedoms.

CMS Tells Providers to Only Hold Therapy Claims

Several Medicare legislative provisions affecting providers and beneficiaries expired on Dec 31, including *exceptions to the outpatient therapy caps, the Medicare physician work geographic adjustment floor, add-on payments for ambulance services and home health rural services, payments for low volume hospital, and payments for Medicare dependent hospitals*. However, last week [the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services \(CMS\) stated](#) that they are ONLY holding claims for the therapy cap exceptions and are only holding them for a short time, if Congress doesn't act.

[Response Capabilities, Part II.](#)

Senate Homeland Security and Government

Affairs Committee

1/25 at 10am: Investigations

Subcommittee hearing on

[Combatting the Opioid Crisis:](#)

[Exploiting Vulnerabilities in](#)

[International Mail.](#)

WEEKLY TRIVIA

Can you name the United States Presidents that served during a federal government shutdown?

Click [here](#) to find the answer.

401 9th Street NW, Suite 550 Washington, DC 20004 | Telephone 202.580.7700
www.health-law.com | [@HLBHealthLaw](https://twitter.com/HLBHealthLaw)

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