

HLB Weekly Newsletter

[View this email in your browser](#)**EDITION:** March 26, 2018

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

***NOTE:** Due to the Congressional recess there will be no Health Policy Update next week. We will resume the week of April 9*

CONGRESSIONAL

Congress Passes Omnibus Spending Bill

On Friday, the President signed the \$1.3 Trillion [omnibus appropriations bill](#) funding the government through September 30, 2018 and providing appropriations agreed to above the current cap amounts. It also included a \$10.1 billion increase in funding for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including boosts for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as \$4 billion directed to combating the opioid epidemic.

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

Check out the latest on MACRA implementation from the CMS [presentation](#) at HIMSS!

HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

The House and Senate are in Recess over the next two weeks. The Senate will return Monday, April 9 and the House

Despite efforts, the final bill did not include [Affordable Care Act \(ACA\) stabilization](#) measures due to disagreements in abortion language. Senate Republicans unsuccessfully attempted to add the stabilization measures as an amendment to the legislation.

Right to Try Bill Fails in Senate After Passing House

Late Thursday night, the Senate failed to pass right-to-try legislation passed by the House earlier in the week after concerns were raised by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and patient advocacy groups. The [Right to Try Act \(H.R. 5247\)](#) passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 267-149 after failing to pass under suspension of the rules the previous week. Both chambers have passed different versions of the legislation, but cannot agree on the differences now that concern has been raised.

House Health Care Innovation Caucus Launched

On March 16, Reps. Mike Kelly (R-PA), Ron Kind (D-WI), Markwayne Mullin (R-OK), and Ami Bera, M.D. (D-CA) announced the creation of a new bipartisan [Health Care Innovation Caucus](#) encouraging innovative policy initiatives to lower health care costs and provide greater quality to consumers through alternative payment models and technology.

ADMINISTRATION

White House Announces Opioid Agenda

On March 19, President Trump announced [long-awaited details](#) of the Administration's initiative to address the opioid crisis. The agenda focuses on common public health initiatives including awareness and education, as well as efforts to prevent over-prescribing, developing non-addictive alternatives, and cutting off the flow of illicit drugs. Leaders

will return Tuesday, April 10.

WEEKLY TRIVIA

Who was the first Speaker to make a televised address in the House Chamber?

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

from HHS joined in the announcement to begin rolling it out over the next several months.

CMS Provides Coverage for Next Generation Sequencing

On March 16, after review of the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a [national coverage decision](#) to cover diagnostic laboratory tests using Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) for certain Medicare patients with advanced cancer (i.e., recurrent, metastatic, relapsed, refractory, or stages III or IV cancer).

CMS Proposes Regulation to Alleviate State Burden

On Thursday, CMS issued a [notice of proposed rulemaking](#) (NPRM) that would provide state flexibility from certain regulatory access to care requirements within the Medicaid program. In hopes of alleviating administrative burden, the NPRM would exempt states from data requirements when the vast majority of their covered lives receive services through managed care plans. Comments will be accepted through May 22.

HOOPER, LUNDY & BOOKMAN, P.C.

Government Relations and Public Policy

401 9th Street NW, Suite 550 Washington, DC 20004 | Telephone 202.580.7700

www.health-law.com | [@HLBHealthLaw](https://twitter.com/HLBHealthLaw)

Copyright © 2016 Hooper, Lundy & Bookman, P.C. All rights reserved.