

HLB Weekly Newsletter

[View this email in your browser](#)**EDITION:** April 9, 2018

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

*Your weekly dose of health care policy*

### CONGRESSIONAL

#### Congress Working on Opioid Legislation

On Wednesday, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee released its bipartisan [discussion draft](#) on their [Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018](#). They are asking for feedback from stakeholders through April 11, when they will hold a hearing on the legislation. The Committee has indicated they plan to hold six hearings on opioids, with witnesses from various stakeholders. Additionally, the House Energy and Commerce Committee has continued to add to its package of [opioid related bills](#) it will examine. It will hold its final of three hearings this Wednesday with hopes of moving their legislation before Memorial Day. Senate Finance and

#### MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

Check your 2018 Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) [participation status](#) and review the available [quality measures](#).

#### HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

[House Appropriations  
Committee](#)

4/11 at 10:00am: Labor, Health

House Ways and Means Committees also have jurisdiction on this as a health care issue, along with other Committees looking at oversight and judicial reforms. The other health committees plan on putting out their own legislation in the coming weeks.

## ADMINISTRATION

### CMS Releases Rules on Medicare Advantage and Part D

Last Monday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the 2019 Medicare Advantage and Part D Rate [Announcement and Call Letter](#) and [Final Rule](#). The [Call Letter](#) includes 2019 rate announcements, and updates to risk adjustment, supplemental benefits, encounter data, and Employer Group Waiver Plans (EGWPs). The [Final Rule](#) includes additional transparency in star ratings, implementation of Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA), and details on its Patients Over Paperwork initiative, among other program updates.

### New HHS Appointments

On Friday, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar [announced](#) the appointment of five individuals to lead critical programs at the agency.

- Adam Boehler as Deputy Administrator and Director of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI)
- Dan Best as Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Drug Pricing Reform
- Heather Flick as Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration
- Judy Stecker as Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
- Jeff Rosenberg as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs

and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing on [FY 2019 Budget Oversight](#).

**4/12 at 10:00am:** Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing on [FY 2019 Budget Investments in our Health Workforce and Rural Communities](#).

### **House Oversight and Government Reform Committee**

**4/11 at 10:00am:** Subcommittee on Healthcare, Benefits, and Administrative Rules hearing titled; "[Local Response and Resources to Curtail the Opioid Epidemic](#)".

**4/12 at 10:00am:** Government Operations & Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee hearing titled; "[Improper Payments in State-Administered Programs: Medicaid](#)".

### **Senate HELP Committee**

**4/11 at 10:00am:** Full Committee hearing on [The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018](#).

### **House Energy and Commerce Committee**

**4/11 at 2:15pm:** Health Subcommittee hearing titled; "[Combating the Opioid Crisis: Improving the Ability of Medicare and Medicaid to Provide Care for Patients](#)".

**House Foreign Affairs  
Committee**

**4/12 at 2:00pm:** Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee hearing titled; "[Global Health Supply Chain Management: Lessons Learned and Ways Forward](#)".

**WEEKLY TRIVIA**

Which First Lady planted the first set of cherry blossom trees in Washington D.C.'s tidal basin?

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

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