

HLB Weekly Newsletter

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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

CONGRESSIONAL

House Passes Bipartisan Health care Bills

Last Wednesday, the House of Representatives passed four bipartisan health care bills by voice vote.

- [The Empowering Seniors' Enrollment Decision Act \(H.R. 6662\)](#)
- [The Fighting Fraud to Protect Care for Seniors Act \(H.R. 6690\)](#)
- [The Comprehensive Care for Seniors Act \(H.R. 6561\)](#)
- [The Local Coverage Determination Clarification Act \(H.R. 3635\)](#)

These bills will now go to the Senate. Both the Comprehensive

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

Last Thursday, CMS [announced](#) an update to the 2017 Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) Performance Feedback and adjustments based on errors found from the targeted review process. The updated feedback and adjustments have been made as of September 13. To offer clinicians additional to to review their performance feedback, CMS is extending

Care for Seniors Act and the Local Coverage Determination Clarification Act already have Senate companion bills.

Energy and Commerce Committee Passes Health Care Bills

Last Thursday, the House Energy and Commerce Committee passed five bipartisan health care bills.

- [To amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to clarify the authority of State Medicaid fraud and abuse control units to investigate and prosecute cases of Medicaid patient abuse and neglect in any setting, and for other purposes \(H.R. 3891\)](#)
- [Ensuring Medicaid Provides Opportunities for Widespread Equity, Resources \(EMPOWER\) and Care Act \(H.R. 5306\)](#)
- [Advancing Care for Exceptional \(ACE\) Kids Act \(H.R. 3325\)](#)
- [Know the Cost Act \(H.R. 6733\)](#)
- [Strengthening the Health Care Fraud Prevention Task Force Act \(H.R. 6753\)](#)

The Know the Cost Act (H.R. 6733) bans gag clauses that prevent pharmacists from telling customers that they could save money paying out of pocket for their drugs instead of using their insurance benefits. H.R. 6733 would apply to both private insurance and Medicare. On Monday, the Senate passed the [Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act \(H.R. 2554\)](#) which would similarly ban the practice in private insurance and exchange plans. Earlier this month, the Senate passed the [Know the Lowest Price Act \(H.R. 2553\)](#) which would apply to Medicare Advantage and Part D.

Senate Passes Funding Bill

Yesterday, the Senate voted 93-7 to pass the conferenced spending bill, [Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act \(H.R.](#)

the targeted review deadline to October 15, 2018.

HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

Senate HELP Committee

9/25 at 3:30pm: Subcommittee on Primary Health and Retirement Security [hearing](#) on Health Care in Rural America: Examining Experiences and Costs.

9/27 at 10:00am: Full Committee [hearing](#) on Reducing Health Care Costs: Improving Affordability Through Innovation.

WEEKLY TRIVIA

How Many U.S. Presidents were left-handed?

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

[6157](#)), which includes a full year of funding for those Departments and an extension of funding for other agencies through December 7, 2018. The House is expected to vote on the bill when they return next week and the President has until September 30 to sign the legislation to avoid a government shut down. Additionally, the President has yet to sign the [Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act \(H.R. 5895\)](#), [funding other programs for FY2019](#). It is unclear whether the President intends to sign the bill due to border funding concerns, but each bill is linked to all government program spending, making it necessary for passage to avoid a government shutdown before the November elections.

Senate Passes Opioid Bill

On Monday, the Senate [passed](#) their version of legislation to combat the opioid epidemic, the Opioid Crisis Response Act (H.R. 6), which includes roughly 70 bills from five Senate committees. The [bill](#) authorizes funding for a number of new programs, but Congress would still need to appropriate money in the future. The legislation includes many similar provisions to the House passed version, but must still be conferenced to address various differences. Congressional leadership hope to unveil a final compromise version later this week and have both chambers vote next week.

ADMINISTRATION

CMS Released Regulatory Relief Proposed Rule

On Monday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released its [Regulatory Provisions to Promote Program Efficiency, Transparency, and Burden Reduction Proposed Rule](#). An ongoing effort of the Administration, this proposal aligns with CMS' Patients over Paperwork and Meaningful Measures Initiatives. A number of [regulatory changes](#) are being proposed for hospitals, Federal Qualified Health Centers

(FQHCs) and Rural Health Centers, Ambulatory Surgical Centers (ASCs), Hospices, Transplant Centers, Home Health Providers, Outpatient Rehabilitation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers. The proposal has a 60 day comment period.

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