

**EDITION:** December 4, 2020



## COVID-19 Resources

[HLB COVID-19 Resource Center](#)

## Congressional

### House Committee Leadership Elections

This week, both House Democrat and Republican caucuses elected individuals to lead each committee. Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA) was reelected Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee along with the reelection of Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX) as Ranking Member. Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) was reelected as Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee along with Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) as the new Ranking Member. Senate Committees and their leadership will not be chosen until after the results of the Georgia runoff elections on January 5, when there is confirmation on who will hold the majority in the Senate.

### Federal Funding & COVID Relief

Congress still needs to pass legislation to fund the federal government past December 11 to avert another shut down. Leadership is continuing to negotiate a possible deal, which may include COVID relief provisions.

## QUALITY PAYMENT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

**EXTENDED DEADLINE:**  
Certain Clinicians will need to [update](#) their billing information by **December 13** in order to receive their APM Incentive Payment. If you have not received a payment and find your name on this [public notice](#), you will need to verify your Medicare billing information or you will not be issued your payment.

## UPCOMING HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

**There are no hearings scheduled at this time.**

## Administration

### 2022 Exchange Proposed Rule Released

On November 25, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the [proposed annual Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters](#) for the 2022 benefit year. The [proposed rule](#) would allow states to use web-based brokers or other entities instead of healthcare.gov to enroll people in exchange plans beginning in 2023, reduce the exchange user fee, and codify the current Section 1332 guidance into regulation. In addition states would be required to strengthen verification for special enrollment periods. Comments are due December 30. It is expected that the new administration would likely rescind or alter a number of these policies in the future as they seek to uphold the Affordable Care Act and Exchanges.

### Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule Released

On Tuesday, CMS released its 2021 Physician Fee Schedule [Final Rule](#). The [final rule](#) makes permanent certain expansions of telehealth services beyond the Public Health Emergency (PHE), updates the evaluation and management (E/M) payment rates and policy, and provides updates to the [Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program](#) (MDPP) and Quality Payment Program for 2021.

### OPPS Final Rule Released

On Tuesday, CMS also released its 2021 Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) [final rule](#). The [rule](#) updates the 2021 payment rate 2.4 percent, updates its 340B payment policy, eliminates the inpatient-only list, and updates hospital reporting requirements during the PHE.

### Radiation Oncology Model Delayed

As part of the OPSS Final Rule and as expected, the Radiation Oncology model was formally delayed from January 1 to July 1, 2021. The first performance year (PY) will be from July 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021. CMS has updated its [FAQ](#) and their scheduled [webinar](#) accordingly.

### ETC Model Benchmarks & Webinar Announced

This week, CMS released its Measurement Year 1 [benchmarks](#) for its end-stage renal disease (ESRD) Treatment Choices (ETC) Model, a new mandatory model for certain nephrologists and dialysis facilities beginning January 1, 2021. It will also

host an introductory [webinar](#) on the model on December 9, 2020 from 1-2pm EST.

### **Geographic Direct Contracting Model Announced**

Yesterday, CMS announced its [Geographic Direct Contracting \(Geo\) Model](#) which will test whether a geographic-based approach to value-based care can improve quality of care and reduce costs for Medicare beneficiaries by building relationships with health care providers and community organizations in a region to coordinate care. The model will target 15 regions across the country. The first performance period will be January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024. CMS is currently accepting non-binding [letters of intent](#) (LOIs) through December 21 and expects applications to be due April 2, 2021 with participants being announced by June 30, 2021. A second performance period will take applications in 2024 and have a performance period from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2027.

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