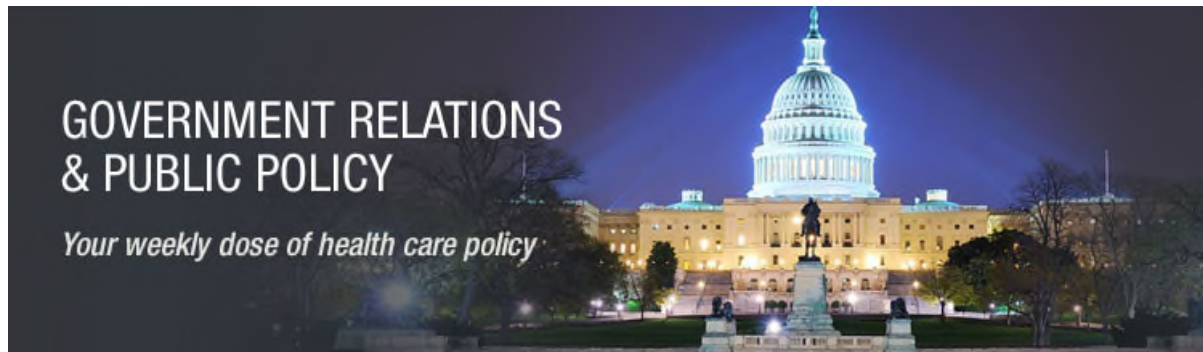


**EDITION:** December 23, 2020



## COVID-19 Resources

[HLB COVID-19 Resource Center](#)

## Transition

### **Biden Announces Health Care Nominations**

Earlier this month, President-Elect Biden announced several health care nominations including [Xavier Becerra](#) as the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In addition, President-elect Biden [announced](#) his nomination of Dr. Vivek Murthy as Surgeon General, Dr. Rochelle Walensky as Director of the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as a number of individuals to lead COVID-19 efforts.

## Congressional

### **Year-End Omnibus and COVID Relief Bill Passed**

Earlier this week, Congress passed a \$900 billion combined omnibus appropriations and Coronavirus relief package. The massive bill, totaling 5,593 pages, funds the federal government through September 2021, and includes relief through direct stimulus payments of \$600 per family member for those who make under \$75,000, an additional \$300 in unemployment for eleven weeks, and an extra \$284 billion for

## QUALITY PAYMENT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In the year-end spending bill, Congress included a provision to continue the current Alternative Payment Model (APM) thresholds for two additional years (performance years 2021-2022; payment years 2023-2024), allowing more providers to qualify for the 5 percent APM payment set to increase in 2021.

## UPCOMING HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

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

the Paycheck Protection Program. The legislation included additional funding for COVID-19 efforts, updates to the Provider Relief Fund, health care extensions, and a number of health care provisions including addressing surprise billing. HLB has prepared a summary of health care provisions [here](#).

### **House Health Committees Add New Democrats**

Last week, House Democrats appointed new members to key committees. We expect to see the Republican assignments in January.

#### House Energy and Commerce Committee

- Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN-2)
- Rep. Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX-7)
- Rep. Kathleen Rice (D-NY-4)
- Rep. Kim Schrier (D-WA-8)
- Rep. Lori Trahan (D-MA-3)

#### House Ways and Means Committee

- Delegate Stacey Plaskett (D-Virgin Islands)

## **Administration**

### **HIPAA Proposed Rule Released**

On December 10, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued [proposed changes](#) to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule. The goal of the proposed regulation is to support individuals' engagement in their care, to remove administrative barriers to coordinated care, and to reduce regulatory burdens on the health care industry. OCR also released a fact sheet about the proposed modifications, available [here](#). HLB has prepared a Client Alert summarizing the proposed changes [here](#).

### **Medicare Advantage VBID RFA Announced**

On December 9, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced their Calendar Year (CY) 2022 Request for Applications (RFA) for the Value-Based Insurance Design (VBID) [Model](#). CMS will host a [webinar](#) on the model January 14 and applications will be accepted through April 16.

### **Prior Authorization Proposed Rule Released**

On December 10, CMS released its Prior Authorization and

Promoting Electronic Access [proposed rule](#) for Medicaid and CHIP managed care plans and Qualified Health Plans (QHPs).  
The [proposal](#) builds off of the previous CMS Interoperability and Patient Access final rule. Comments are due January 4.

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