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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

CONGRESSIONAL

ACA Repeal & Replace Reconciliation Expires

Senate Republicans tried one last attempt to pass Affordable Care Act (ACA) Replace & Repeal last week with the [Graham-Cassidy bill](#), but they couldn't get enough votes to make it work before the September 30 deadline. With the expiration, Senate HELP Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) have resumed discussions on a bipartisan bill to stabilize the exchange markets. No details have been released yet of what that package would look like. In addition to the policy, they are still seeking support, which is difficult after coming off a week of partisan fighting over the Graham-Cassidy bill.

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

Stay up to date on MACRA with CMS' [recent webinars!](#)

HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

House Energy and Commerce Committee

10/3 at 10:15am: Subcommittee Hearing on "[Examining Patient Access to Investigational Drugs.](#)"

House Ways & Means

For now, Congress will turn its focus to tax reform. There is still talk that they could return to ACA Repeal and Replace in 2018.

CHIP Reauthorization Hits Deadline

Saturday, Sept 30 was the deadline to renew the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The reauthorization deadline is not expected to have an immediate impact on most state programs, but it does leave states with plenty of uncertainty. However, Congress has made it a priority with two markups occurring this week on the matter. Both Senate Finance and House Energy & Commerce Committees will be marking up their legislation this Wednesday (Oct. 4). A few weeks ago, Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR) announced bipartisan legislation, [S. 1827, Keeping Kids' Insurance Dependable and Secure \(KIDS\) Act](#) to renew CHIP funding for five years and phase out the 23 percent ACA funding bump. The bill that will be marked up this Wednesday is unchanged from that agreement.

Congress is expected to vote on a final CHIP bill sometime later this fall, with a hope to have it be bipartisan. The extra time is being used for agreements to occur on how to pay for the bill.

Senate Passes CHRONIC Care Act

Last Tuesday, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed [S. 870, the Creating High-Quality Results and Outcomes Necessary to Improve Chronic \(CHRONIC\) Care Act of 2017](#) by voice vote. This legislation expands access to telehealth, provides care coordination, and updates government programs through new payment models and Medicare Advantage to address the needs of individuals with chronic conditions. The bipartisan legislation comes after over two years of work and stakeholder feedback. The legislation will now have to be voted on by the House, however they will not likely take up the bill in its entirety, but will pass many of the provisions separately.

Committee

10/4 at 10:30am: Full Committee Markup of ["H.R. 849, The Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2017"](#)

House Energy and Commerce Committee

10/4 at 1:00pm: Full Committee Markup of ["H.R. 849, H.R. 1148, H.R., 2465, H.R. 2557, H.R. 3120, H.R. 3245, H.R. 3263, H.R. 3271, H.R., CHAMPION Act, and H.R., HEALTHY KIDS Act"](#).

Senate Finance Committee

10/4 at 9:30am: Full Committee Markup of [S.1827, the "Keeping Kids' Insurance Dependable and Secure \(KIDS\)"](#).

Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee

10/5 at 10:00am: Full Committee Hearing on ["The Federal Response to the Opioid Crisis."](#)

WEEKLY FUN FACT

True or False?

Congress has the "power of the purse" and must approve all government spending and appropriate the amount of money to be spent?

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

Congress Passes FAA Bill, Including 3 Health Measures

Last week, Congress passed and the President signed into law, [H.R. 3823, the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017](#), which funds the Federal Aviation Authority for an additional six months past their Sept 30 expiration date. Included in the bill were three health care measures: the extension of the Medicare Patient IVIG Access Demonstration, graduate medical education (GME) funding for teaching health centers through the first quarter of FY2018, and three additional months of funding to the Special Diabetes Program for Indians.

ADMINISTRATION

HHS Secretary Tom Price Resigns

On Friday, Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price [resigned](#) after backlash occurring over his use of private and military aircraft for government business. Don J. Wright, Assistant Secretary for Health was appointed as Acting Secretary Friday evening.

The list of possible replacements for former Secretary Price has begun and include such individuals as Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Seema Verma, Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin, former Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal (R) and Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY), amongst others. The Senate would once again have to vote on whomever President Trump's new nominee would be.

CMS Announces Special Enrollment for Hurricane Victims

Last Thursday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced special enrollment periods for those

impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma & Maria. The special enrollment applies to both those who are enrolled in [Medicare](#) or the [Exchanges](#) in the impacted areas.

HOOPER, LUNDY & BOOKMAN, P.C.

Government Relations and Public Policy

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

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