

EDITION: February 9, 2018

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

CONGRESSIONAL

Congress Passes Funding Bill - Includes Many Important Health Care Provisions

This morning, Congress passed and the President signed [the Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2018](#), legislation that funds the government through March 23, provides updates to government spending levels, increases the debt limit for a year, and includes a number of critical health care provisions. The health provisions in the legislation were fully offset and include [extension and repeal of Medicare extenders that expired December 31](#), [provisions in the CHRONIC Care Act](#), among other bipartisan pieces that have been in various

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

For the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS), [groups](#) have until March 16, and other providers until March 31 to submit data for [2017 reporting](#).

HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

Senate HELP Committee
2/8 at 10:00am: Full

legislation and work from health care committees of jurisdiction. Among a long list of health care changes, the legislation includes:

- Two years of funding for Community Health Centers
- Additional four years of funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) (now totaling 10 years of funding)
- \$6 billion to combat the opioid epidemic
- \$2 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- Repeal of the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB)
- Extension of many hospital and payment Medicare "extenders"
- Permanent repeal of the Medicare therapy cap
- Permanent reauthorization of Medicare Advantage (MA) Special Needs Plans (SNPs)
- Expansion of telehealth in MA, home dialysis and Accountable Care Organizations
- Medicare payment updates

Passage of these provisions comes after years of work to permanently address many of the Medicare extenders and chronic care needs. Many of these items were considered "must pass", as well as some additional provisions that have garnered bipartisan support, but did not have a legislative vehicle or appropriate offsets to pass.

ADMINISTRATION

CMS Releases Part 2 of the Advance Notice and Draft Call Letter

On February 1, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released [Part 2](#) of the 2019 Medicare Advantage and Part D Advance Notice and Draft Call Letter including [proposed changes](#) for the upcoming contract year.

committee hearing on [The Opioid Crisis: Impact on Children and Families](#).

Senate Budget Committee

2/13 at 10:00am: Full committee hearing on [President Donald Trump's budget request for fiscal 2019](#).

House Budget Committee

2/14 at 10:00am: Full committee hearing on [President Donald Trump's budget request for fiscal 2019](#).

House Way and Means Committee

2/14 at 10:00am: Full Committee hearing on [Fiscal 2019 Budget Proposals for HHS](#).

House Energy and Commerce

2/14 at 10:15am: Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee hearing on [Examining the Impact of Health Care Consolidation](#).

Senate Finance Committee

2/15 at 9:00am: Full Committee hearing on [HHS Budget Request](#).

House Energy and Commerce

2/15 at 12:30pm: Health Subcommittee hearing on [Oversight of the Department of the Department of Health and Human Services](#).

WEEKLY TRIVIA

CMS had previously released Part 1, addressing Risk Adjustment. Consistent with the new Administration's priorities, there are a number of proposals to reduce regulatory burden and provide MA and Part D plans with additional flexibility. As has been the case for several years, CMS places additional emphasis on addressing opioid abuse. CMS will accept comments through March 5, 2018, before publishing a final Notice on April 2, 2018.

Who are the only set of sisters to serve in Congress?

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

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