

HLB Weekly Newsletter

[View this email in your browser](#)**EDITION:** May 17, 2018

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

CONGRESSIONAL

House Committees Pass Additional Opioid Bills

Both the House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committees advanced opioid bills this week, setting up action by the House in the coming months. Yesterday, the Ways and Means Committee advanced [seven opioid bills](#) which make changes to Medicare to prevent misuse of prescription painkillers and provide access to addiction treatment, as well as legislation that reduces international shipments of synthetic drugs. In addition, earlier today, the Energy and Commerce Committee held their second markup of [34 bills](#), of which they passed XYZ. These bills will be added to the previous 25 bills the Committee passed last week and are expected to be

MACRA HIGHLIGHTS

CMS has changed the name of the Advancing Care Information category of Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) to [Promoting Interoperability](#). CMS will hold a webinar on this performance category [June 12](#).

HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

packaged with other House opioid bills for a vote from the House this Summer. The Senate is working on separate legislation through both the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) and Finance Committees.

House Passes Veterans Health Bill

Yesterday, the House of Representatives passed the [VA MISSION Act \(S. 2372\)](#) by a vote of 347-70 to extend funding for the Veterans Choice Program before the funds dry up in the coming weeks. The legislation provides \$5.2 billion before consolidating the VA Choice with other programs in future years. This updated legislation comes after the House and Senate came to an agreement on the changes to move the program forward. The Senate must now pass the updated bill before the May 31 deadline.

ADMINISTRATION

HHS Releases Drug Pricing Plan as RFI

On Friday, President Trump and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Azar [announced](#) their Drug Pricing Blueprint in an effort to lower prescription drug prices. The document examines potential areas the Administration may seek to make changes to within their authority at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Ideas in the blueprint include ways to increase access to generics, require list prices to be included in advertising, move Medicare Part B Drugs into Part D and changes to biosimilars, drug rebates and the 340B program. The [document](#) was included in the Federal Register on Monday, as an official Request for Information (RFI) with comments due July 16.

Senate HELP Committee

5/22 at 10:00am: Full Committee [hearing](#) on the Health Care Workforce: Addressing Shortages and Improving Care.

House Energy and Commerce Committee

5/23 at 1:00pm: Health Subcommittee [hearing](#) on Reauthorization of the Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education Program.

WEEKLY TRIVIA

True/False

Apples are made of 15% air, which is why they float?

Ginger can reduce exercise-induced muscle pain by 25%

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

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