

HLB Weekly Newsletter

[View this email in your browser](#)**EDITION:** May 24, 2018

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

NOTE: There will not be an update next week due to the Memorial Day Holiday.

CONGRESSIONAL

Finance Releases Opioid Bills

Yesterday, the Senate Finance Committee released [22 bipartisan bills](#) from Committee members to address the opioid epidemic. These bills, separate from the work of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, contain changes to Medicare and Medicaid including expanding the use of telehealth, support for mothers and babies, medication-assisted treatment, non-opioid treatment, and information sharing. The work on legislation to address opioids is ongoing and includes separate work from all four

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

health care committees of jurisdiction as well as the House and Senate Judiciary committees. Legislation will continue to be worked on over the summer and will inevitably need to be scored and conferenced before final passage.

Senate Passes Veterans Health Bill

Yesterday, the Senate passed the updated [VA MISSION Act \(S. 2372\)](#) by a vote of 92-5 to extend funding for the Veterans Choice Program before the funds dry up in the coming weeks. The legislation provides \$5.5 billion before consolidating the VA Choice with other programs in future years. The House passed this legislation last week and the President is expected to sign it into law.

Congress Passes Right-to-Try Bill

On Tuesday, the House passed the Senate's version of the [Right-To-Try Act \(S. 204\)](#) by a vote of 250-169. The legislation will allow terminally ill patients to directly request experimental treatments that have not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The House had previously passed an earlier version of the legislation with additional consumer protections which did not gain support in the Senate. The President supports the legislation and is expected to sign it in the coming days.

Pandemic Preparedness Reauthorization Passes Committee

On Wednesday, the Senate HELP Committee passed the [Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act \(S. 2852\)](#), legislation to renew programs to respond to bioterrorism and pandemics such as Zika virus and the flu. The legislation includes an authorization of an increase in funding for the Hospital Preparedness Program. The legislation will now go to the full Senate and must still be addressed by the House of Representatives.

Senate Finance Committee

5/29 at 1pm: On the Road Health Subcommittee [hearing](#) on Examining Efforts to Prevent Opioid Overutilization and Misuse in Medicare and Medicaid.

Senate HELP Committee

6/12 at 10:00am: Full Committee [hearing](#) on The Cost of Prescription Drugs: Examining the President's Blueprint "American Patients First" to Lower Drug Prices.

WEEKLY TRIVIA

True/False

How many bathrooms are in the White House?

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

ADMINISTRATION

HHS Releases Title X Proposed Rule

On Tuesday, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a [proposed rule](#) to revise its Title X regulations to "revise its Title X regulations to ensure compliance with, and enhance implementation of, the statutory requirement that none of the funds appropriated for Title X may be used in programs where abortion is a method of family planning and related statutory requirements." The proposed rule will have a 60 day comment period.

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