

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Weekly Capitol Hill Update - Tuesday, January 26, 2016

Congressional Schedule

House:

- Not in session this week. Due to the blizzard, the House canceled legislative action for the week, teeing up the next votes for 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 1. Consideration of an Iran sanctions measure (H.R. 3662) and a GOP override of the president's veto message on a bill (H.R. 3762) to repeal provisions of the health care law (P.L. 111-148, P.L. 111-152) also will have to wait until next week.

Senate:

- Convenes at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, but the chamber will wait until Wednesday to begin debate on a bipartisan bill (S. 2012) that would mandate energy infrastructure upgrades and boost energy efficiency standards for commercial and federal buildings. The first vote of the week will be Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. on the nomination of John Michael Vazquez to be a judge for the District of New Jersey.

Legislative Updates

- **Senate Working Group Considers Telehealth Policy Changes to Medicare:** The Senate Finance Committee's Bipartisan Chronic Care Working Group released a policy document last month on telehealth policy. The five potential telehealth policy changes include the following: expanding access to home dialysis therapy; amending Medicare advantage plans to foster innovation and new technology; allowing ACOs to use telehealth; expanding access to telestroke technology; and empowering the patient care team. See more at: <http://www.natlawreview.com/article/senate-working-group-considers-telehealth-policy-changes-to-medicare#sthash.X4snb8oz.dpuf>
- **Senate Will Take a Piecemeal Approach to Medical Innovations Bill:** "The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee announced this week they will slowly start work on a companion to the House's 21st Century Cures Bill and consider a series of smaller bills to start. The first several bills, which are all bipartisan, will be marked up next month. Democrats have only committed to the first markup so far. A more comprehensive bill isn't off the table, though. Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) says he hopes to pass enough smaller bills to match the House bill, which passed the lower chamber this past summer. Partisan disputes over drug pricing and

additional funding for agencies like the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration have so far held up broader legislation.” See the following link for the full article: <https://morningconsult.com/briefs/morning-consult-health-week-in-review-whats-ahead-sunday-124/>

Regulatory Updates

- **HRSA Nomination Request for Advisory Committee on Organ Transplantation (ACOT):** “The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is requesting nominations to fill vacancies on the Advisory Committee on Organ Transplantation (ACOT). All nominations should be submitted to the Executive Secretary, ACOT, Healthcare Systems Bureau, HRSA, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 08N182, Rockville, Maryland 20857. (Federal Express, Airborne, UPS, etc.). Mail delivery should be addressed to Executive Secretary, Advisory Committee on Organ Transplantation, Healthcare Systems Bureau, HRSA, at the above address, or via email to: PStroup@hrsa.gov and PTongele@hrsa.gov. The Agency will receive nominations on a continuous basis.”

The announcement can be accessed here:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2016/01/21/2016-01126/advisory-committee-on-organ-transplantation-request-for-nominations-for-voting-members>

- **Congressional Budget Office:** The Congressional Budget Office on Monday cut by more than a third its estimate for how many people will buy health insurance this year through government exchanges, dropping the projection to 13 million from 21 million. CBO earlier had projected that an average of about 15 million people would receive subsidies to discount their coverage in 2016 and that an additional 6 million people would purchase unsubsidized coverage through an exchange. The new estimate predicts that 11 million more people on average would get subsidized coverage and 2 million would buy unsubsidized coverage. To learn more about CBO’s estimate, please visit: <http://healthaffairs.org/blog/2016/01/26/cbo-lowers-marketplace-enrollment-projections-increases-medicaid-growth-projections/>
- **Accountable Health Communities Model:** The five-year program, called the Accountable Health Communities Model, is the first Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Innovation Center model to focus on the health-related social needs of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, including building alignment between clinical and community-based services at the local level. The Accountable Health Communities Model will support up to 44 bridge organizations, through cooperative agreements, which will deploy a common, comprehensive screening assessment for health-related social needs among all Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries accessing care at participating clinical delivery sites. The model will test three scalable approaches to addressing health-related social needs and linking clinical and community services – community referral, community service navigation, and community service alignment.

See the full press release here: <http://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2016/01/05/first-ever-cms-innovation-center-pilot-project-test-improving-patients-health.html>

- **CMS Finalizes ACA Rule to Save Taxpayers Billions by Improving Medicaid Prescription Drug Rebates and Reimbursements:** “The rule establishes the long term framework for implementation of the Medicaid drug rebate and reimbursement programs. The new definitions detailed in the rule will ensure that Medicaid rebates accurately account for market prices, maximizing taxpayer savings. The rule will also close loopholes, incentivize pharmacies to utilize generic drugs by ensuring proper reimbursements for their cost, and give territories additional tools to manage Medicaid drug costs.” Please see the following link for the full press release: <https://www.cms.gov/Newsroom/MediaReleaseDatabase/Press-releases/2016-Press-releases-items/2016-01-21.html>
- **NQF Measures Available for Comment:** “Because of the importance of a healthy childhood for achieving good health and quality of life in adulthood, NQF will take a concerted look at pediatric measures. This project launched in July 2015. It will evaluate measures related to child health that can be used for accountability and public reporting for all pediatric populations and in all settings of care.” Comments are due February 12th, and please see the following link to comment: https://login.qualityforum.org/login.aspx?ActionId=&ReturnUrl=http%3a%2f%2fwww.qualityforum.org%2fcomments_By_Project.aspx%3fprojectID%3d130%26ActivityID%3d1026

Articles of Interest

- **Surgery patients do better when hospitals are good to nurses:** Surgery patients do better when nurses have better working environments, according to a new study. Hospitals with well-staffed, top-notch nursing departments had fewer deaths after surgery than hospitals without those high-quality nursing departments, researchers found. Please see the following link for the full article: <http://reut.rs/1TIQdR4>
- **Fewer than 1 in 5 nurses comply with guidelines for standard precautions:** A recent study published in the *American Journal of Infection Control* reports that less than 20 percent of ambulatory care nurses comply with all nine standard precautions for infection control. Some of the standard precautions include washing hands after the removal of gloves, wearing gloves when exposed to bodily fluids, wearing a face mask, and discarding sharp materials in sharps containers. For the full article, please see the following link: http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2016-01/ehs-ft1012016.php

Events

Wednesday:

- Brookings Institution panel on health care connectivity @ 2:00 p.m. See the following link for more information: <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2016/01/27-health-care-connectivity-west>

Thursday:

Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC) will hold its January Public Meeting @ 10:30 a.m. See the following link for more information:

<https://www.macpac.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Public-Agenda-Jan2016.pdf>

- American Enterprise Institute lunch discussion with Gov. Rick Scott on hospital price transparency @ 12 p.m. See the following link for more information: <http://bit.ly/1JC8wiM>

Hearings

- **Wednesday, January 27th:**

House Committee on the Budget hearing on the Congressional Budget Office's budget and economic outlook @ 9:30 a.m. See the following link for more information:

<http://budget.house.gov/hearingschedule2016/cbo-s-budget-and-economic-outlook.htm>

Senate Judiciary Committee hearing about heroin and prescription drug abuse @ 10 a.m. See the following link for more information:

<http://www.judiciary.senate.gov/meetings/attacking-americas-epidemic-of-heroin-and-prescription-drug-abuse>

- **Thursday, January 28th:**

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee hearing on the Generic Drug User Fee Amendments @ 10 a.m. See the following link for more information:

<http://www.help.senate.gov/hearings/generic-drug-user-fee-amendments-accelerating-patient-access-to-generic-drugs>