



**March 1, 2019**

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### **ACEP President Vidor Friedman, MD, Continues Advocacy Work on Capitol Hill**

On Tuesday and Wednesday, ACEP President Vidor Friedman, MD, FACEP, made rounds on Capitol Hill as part of continued outreach to address out-of-network billing issues and other issues important to emergency medicine. With reports cropping up that the Senate Bipartisan Price Transparency Workgroup will likely introduce legislation sometime this month, as well as the House Ways and Means Committee potentially looking closer into the matter, Dr. Friedman's visit was a timely one.



*Sen. Alexander, ACEP President Dr. Vidor Friedman, Sen. Blackburn*

Tuesday morning began with a "Tennessee Tuesday" coffee reception with Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Marsha Blackburn (R-TN). Sen. Alexander serves as Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, and recently signaled that addressing surprise billing and other price transparency issues will be a priority during his last term in the Senate. Throughout the rest of the day, Dr. Friedman also met with Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Ranking Member of the HELP Committee, as well as HELP Committee Republican staff, staff for Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA), staff for House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), Representative Darren Soto (D-FL), and Representative Mike Burgess, MD (R-TX), Ranking Member for the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee.

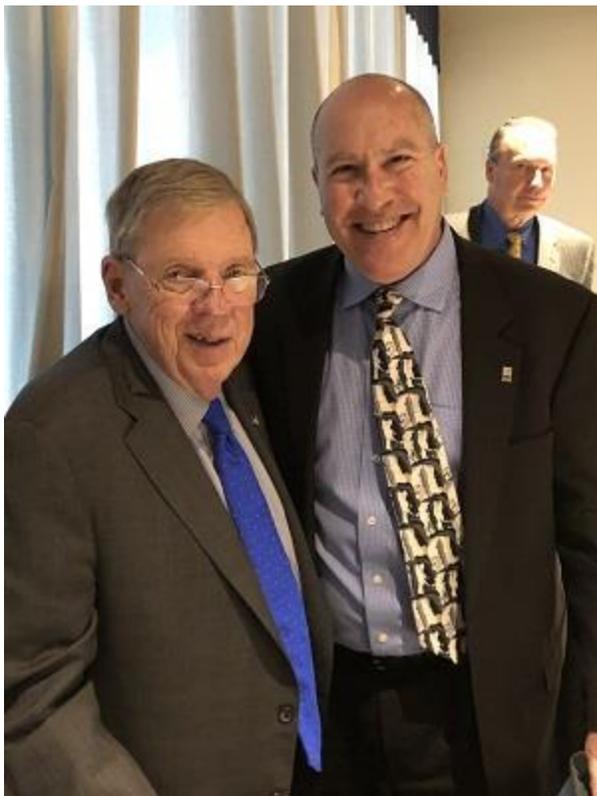


*ACEP President Dr. Vidor Friedman and Sen. Murray*

The advocacy continued on Wednesday morning, with meetings with Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-NH), a member of the Senate Bipartisan Price Transparency Workgroup and author of her own surprise billing legislation, and a fundraiser with Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-GA).



*ACEP President Dr. Vidor Friedman and Sen. Hassan*



*Sen. Isakson and ACEP President Dr. Vidor Friedman*

ACEP DC staff also continue to supplement this ongoing advocacy effort with dozens of meetings with key legislators and other stakeholders.

### **“Medicare for All” Bill Introduced in House**

On Wednesday, Representative Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) and 106 other House Democrats introduced a comprehensive “Medicare for All” bill that would transition nearly all Americans into the Medicare program within two years.

The proposal, the Medicare for All Act of 2019, would extend comprehensive Medicare coverage to other services, including comprehensive reproductive, maternity, and newborn care, pediatrics, oral health, audiology, and vision services, long-term care, and others. The bill also prohibits any cost-sharing, including deductibles, coinsurance, copayments, or similar charges on individuals. The legislation does not include any suggested payfors or offsets.

Though the issue has long been a lightning rod even within the Democratic Caucus, its introduction has highlighted the divisions between the more progressive Medicare-for-All supporters and moderate Democrats who prefer Medicare buy-in or other alternatives. House Democratic leadership is working to shift the conversation and move toward a more consensus-based approach, but this issue does not appear to be going away any time soon.

### **House Passes Poison Control Center Reauthorization**

On Monday, the House of Representatives successfully passed a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the nation’s Poison Control Centers for an additional five years. Introduced by Representatives Eliot Engel (D-NY), Susan Brooks (R-IN), Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA), and Diana DeGette (D-CO), the legislation authorizes the federal funding necessary to continue providing 24/7 access to resources to respond to poisoning injuries, including opioid and other drug overdoses. The sponsors of the bill cited the ongoing opioid crisis in particular as one of the critical reasons for timely passage of the legislation. The bill, H.R. 501, now heads to the Senate for consideration.

### **CMS Actuaries Release Healthcare Spending Projections**

On Wednesday, February 20, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Office of the Actuary released a [report](#) projecting that the average annual growth in national health care spending

over the next decade will be 5.5 percent. Due in large part to the growth in Medicare spending, total expenditures increased by 4.4 percent to \$3.6 trillion in 2018. Healthcare made up 17.9 percent of the American economy in 2017, and CMS estimates that it will comprise 19.4 percent of the economy by 2027.

With respect to physician and clinical services, spending is projected to grow an average of 5.4 percent per year from 2018 to 2027. This includes faster growth in prices for these services over the period of 2020 to 2027 due to anticipated rising wage growth related to increased demand from the aging population.

### **ACEP Responds to the 2020 Medicare Part C and D Advance Notice and Draft Call Letter**

On Thursday, ACEP submitted comments on a CMS proposed regulation called the 2020 Advanced Notice and draft Call Letter for the Medicare Advantage program and the Part D Prescription Drug Benefit Program. This notice proposes methodological and policy changes to the Medicare Advantage (Part C) and Medicare Prescription Drug (Part D) programs.

In ACEP's comments, we address a few issues that have an impact on emergency physicians and our patients, including:

- Encouraging Medicare Advantage benefit designs for supplemental benefits that address medically-approved non-opioid pain management and complementary and integrative treatments;
- Providing more flexibility for Medicare Advantage plans to offer supplemental benefits to the chronically ill;
- Improving the accuracy of provider directories;
- Encouraging the co-prescribing of naloxone with opioid prescriptions to beneficiaries who are at an increased risk for opioid overdose; and
- Ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries have appropriate access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT).

ACEP's full comment letter can be found [here](#).

### **ACEP 911 Network Members – We Need your Help in Gearing up for this new and busy 116th Congress**

With the 116th Congress underway and over 100 new lawmakers in office, we are taking a comprehensive look at our 911 Network member list to identify ACEP members around the country whom we consider "grasstops" members of the Network. These ACEP members will have an established, strong working relationship with a federal legislator and have already developed a line of consistent communication through telephone, text, email, social media and or personal meetings. The relationships may originate from:

- repeated meetings in DC during LAC;
- hosting an ED visit or coffee for that legislator;
- getting to know the legislator's staff;
- delivering a NEMPAC check or representing NEMPAC at a local event for that legislator;
- knowing them first on the state level;
- a relative or friend in your community; or
- other contacts.

We are developing this "grasstops" list so that we can be ready to deploy our grassroots influence effectively on a specific issue with targeted and immediate action. While we have a good idea of who qualifies for our "grasstops" or "key contact" list but want to be sure that we are as inclusive as possible.

Please let us know if you would like us to include you on the list and the legislator to whom you are connected. We will be sending you a confirmation email later next month as we will be reaching out to our grasstops in the future through a special communication network under development now. Contact [Jeanne Slade](#) or [Caitlin Demchuk](#) with your information or if you have questions.

Please "Save the Date" for the 2019 ACEP Leadership and Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC which will be held May 5-8, 2019. If you want to make a difference or aspire to be a leader in emergency medicine, this is a must-attend conference with something for everyone. Opportunities abound to interact with elected officials and policymakers, and network with emergency medicine's

top leaders.

This conference will highlight reimbursement issues in EM and how we can work with Congress to improve the EM work environment along with combatting insurance company bad behavior and addressing patient access issues.

LAC 2019 will also bring back Wednesday's Solutions Forum, where this year we will present and discuss emergency medicine-led solutions in telemedicine and the mental health crisis.

For more information, please go to <https://www.acep.org/lac/>.

### **Scout Safe! New Public Service Announcement Shares Emergency Physicians' Tips for Electronic Scooter Riders**

ACEP launched a public health and safety campaign to urge millions of electronic scooter riders to scoot safely. The campaign features a [public service announcement](#) and downloadable poster that offers commonsense tips for scooter riders as these vehicles become more prevalent nationwide and scooter-related emergency department visits are on the rise.

"Scooters are fun and convenient, but they can be very dangerous if you don't ride them correctly or follow the rules of the road," said Vidor Friedman, MD, FACEP, president of ACEP. "Emergency physicians are treating an increasing number of scooter-related injuries. And, many avoidable injuries can be life-changing. The number one thing you can do to avoid serious harm is to wear a helmet."

The press release is available [here](#). More information: [www.emergencycareforyou.org/ScoutSafe](http://www.emergencycareforyou.org/ScoutSafe)

Spread the word on twitter using the hashtag #ScoutSafe.



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