



**ACEP 911 Network Weekly Update:
March 10, 2017**

Congress will be in session next week and we look forward to seeing you at the [ACEP 2017 Leadership and Advocacy Conference](#) in Washington, D.C., March 12-15. *If you are not attending the conference, please stay tuned for an **Action Alert on Monday that will provide the option for you to participate in a “Virtual Fly-In” and send a message to your legislators on Capitol Hill in conjunction with the meeting.***

- **ACA Repeal Legislation in the House**
- **Senate Advances CMS Nominee**
- **House Approves Lawsuit Abuse Bill**
- **House Education and Workforce Committee Legislation**
- **Observation Status Legislation Reintroduced to Improve Access to Medicare**

ACA Repeal Bill Advances in House

Following a combined 44 hours of debate this week, the House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means committees approved the "American Health Care Act," the Republican proposal to repeal major portions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) through the budget reconciliation process that provides special procedural protections for the bill when (and if) the Senate considers it.

The committees sent their recommendations to the House Budget Committee, which will combine the measures into one bill before it is sent to the full House for a vote. The Budget Committee is expected to begin its consideration of the plan on Wednesday. However, unlike the Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees, the Budget Committee members are likely to have the official Congressional Budget Office (CBO) score to reference during their mark-up. The highly anticipated CBO score will state how much the bill will cost/save and how the bill's provisions will affect the number of individuals who will be able to obtain insurance. Various groups have speculated that the bill will significantly reduce the number of insured and at a greater cost (as compared to current law established by the ACA).

ACEP will continue to work with lawmakers in both parties and both chambers to ensure patient protections are maintained and meaningful coverage is established for all Americans and this will be one of the key issues discussed during ACEP members' meetings with lawmakers next week during the Leadership and Advocacy Conference.

To view the House Ways and Means Committee mark-up, [click here](#). To view the House Energy and Commerce Committee mark-up, please [click here](#).

To view ACEP's summary of the key provisions in the "American Health Care Act" and our talking points, [click here](#).

Senate Advances CMS Nominee Seema Verma

Seema Verma's nomination to run the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) cleared a major procedural hurdle in the Senate Thursday afternoon by a vote of 54 to 44. The Senate is slated to vote on her confirmation early next week where she will likely be approved. As an Indiana-based health consultant, Ms. Verma gained national recognition by working with GOP states to add conservative elements to their Obamacare Medicaid expansion programs. If confirmed as CMS administrator, she would oversee efforts by all the states wishing to revamp their Medicaid programs, as well as major changes to Medicare payment policy under MACRA, the 2015 law that was passed with strong bipartisan support to reform Medicare's delivery and payment systems.

House Advances Lawsuit Abuse Bill

This morning, the House approved the ACEP-supported "Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act" (H.R. 720), sponsored by Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX), by a vote of 230 to 188. The bill would penalize lawyers, through sanctions and possibly fines, who file frivolous lawsuits in federal court.

House Education and Workforce Advances Three Health Bills

The House Education and Workforce Committee on Wednesday advanced three health care bills separate from the "American Health Care Act" along party lines. However, the health care law reform dominated the committee discussion. The measures approved include the "Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2017," introduced by Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI), which would allow small businesses to group together and offer health coverage through association plans. Another bill entitled the "Preserving Employee Wellness Programs Act," introduced by Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-AL), clarifies rules on employee wellness programs. The third bill, the "Self-Insurance Protection Act," introduced by Rep. Phil Roe (R-TN), protects self-insured plans from federal regulation.

Observation Statuses Bills Reintroduced

This week several Members of Congress joined together to reintroduce the bipartisan legislation entitled, "Improving Access to Medicare Coverage Act of 2017" (S. 568/H.R. 1421). The bills were introduced by Reps. Joe Courtney (D-CT) and Glenn Thompson (R-PA) and Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Susan Collins (R-ME), Bill Nelson (D-FL) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) in their respective chambers. The legislation ensures that time spent under "observation status" in a hospital counts toward satisfying the three-day inpatient hospital requirement for coverage of skilled nursing care services under Medicare.



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