



**Both chambers are in recess until Monday, Feb. 26 for the President's Day Holiday.**

### **[ACEP Capital Minute](#)**

[Click here](#) to see ACEP Associate Executive Director Laura Wooster's quick update on current topics being considered by the U.S. Congress.

This week, we report on:

- the end of the second federal government shutdown;
- the federal government's new spending agreement and the effect on emergency care;
  - the president's budget;
  - FDA meeting on opioids;
  - CDC director steps down;
- and LAC18 registration available.

Also – if you haven't already done so, [please subscribe](#) to ACEP's YouTube Channel!



### **Anthem Revisions to ED Denials Program Still Not Enough**

In response to significant pressure, Anthem announced changes this week regarding their ED denials program which apply to all six affected states (GA, MO, KY, IN, NH, and OH). However, these changes are not sufficient and still leave patients at risk from Anthem's policy to deny coverage for emergency care.

ACEP put out an initial statement on Wednesday that these changes are not nearly enough, and still call on Anthem to get rid of the policy altogether. Senator Claire McCaskill (D-

MO), who sent Anthem a letter in December asking for all their internal documents leading to the policy's creation, also issued a statement saying Anthem's response "isn't going to cut it," and called on Anthem again to take more meaningful action share the documents which they have yet to provide.

**ACEP maintains that nothing short of full reversal of the policy by Anthem will be acceptable.**

### **HHS Secretary Azar Testifies Before House Panels; Open to Research on Gun Violence**

This week, Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar testified before the House Ways and Means Committee and Energy and Commerce Committee regarding the Administration's fiscal year (FY) 2019 budget request. The Secretary shared the Administration's priorities, including addressing the opioid epidemic, improving the treatment of mental illness, and promoting health reforms within the Medicare and Medicaid programs, among others.

Notably, in the wake of Wednesday's school shooting in Parkland, FL, Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee member Rep. Kathy Castor (D-FL) asked the Secretary about the agency's position on conducting research on gun violence. Specifically, Rep. Castor's question focused on the ability of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct gun violence research, as a policy rider known as the "Dickey Amendment" has long prevented the CDC from using federal funds to advocate or promote gun control. Azar responded that his understanding is that this policy rider does not preclude the agency from conducting research on gun violence, rather that it only prohibits advocacy efforts, and committed to improving efforts to address mental health and gun violence.

### **Good Samaritan Bill Approved by Full E&C Committee.**

On Wednesday, the House Energy and Commerce Committee approved the ACEP-supported "Good Samaritan Health Professionals Act of 2017." This Good Samaritan liability legislation (H.R. 1876), sponsored by Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), shields a health care professional from liability for harm caused by any act or omission if: (1) the professional is serving as a volunteer in response to a disaster and (2) the act or omission occurs during the period of the disaster, in the professional's capacity as a volunteer, and in a good faith belief that the individual being treated is in need of health care services.

The bill now heads to the full House of Representatives for its consideration.

ACEP continues to advocate for its passage, whether as a standalone bill or as part of a larger potential legislative vehicle.

### **Registration Now Open for the 2018 Leadership & Advocacy Conference (LAC18)**

**May 20-23**

The conference will celebrate emergency medicine's accomplishments and continue to work

for a better political environment for our specialty and our patients. First-timers will receive special training on how to meet and educate your Members of Congress while seasoned participants will build upon valuable Congressional connections.

Our goal at this Conference is to highlight and advocate for legislation advancing emergency care, regardless of party labels.

Experts on health care policy and political and grassroots advocacy will lead our discussions. We'll tackle problems facing our specialty, develop tools to advocate at all levels, and build relationships with your Members of Congress and their staff.

To register or for more information, [click here](#).

View our [gallery of photos from the LAC17 here](#).



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