



ACEP 911 Network Weekly Update May 26, 2017

Both chambers of Congress will be out of session next week for Memorial Day recess. They will return on Monday, June 5.

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ACEP Promotes HC Reform Principles with Senate Committee

Earlier this week, ACEP submitted its [response](#) to a Senate Finance Committee request for stakeholder input regarding health care reform efforts in that chamber. After the House narrowly approved the “American Health Care Act” (AHCA) three weeks ago, all attention has turned to Senate and whether Republicans there will use the AHCA as the basis for their plan or start from scratch.

As reported previously, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is leading a task force of 12 other Republican senators to develop an ACA repeal and replace proposal, although they have indicated they will be working with all 52 members of the Republican conference. It is also expected that the two main committees with jurisdiction over health care issues -- Finance and Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) – as well as the Budget Committee (since they are using budget reconciliation as a vehicle to potentially pass the legislation) will be integrally involved with the process as well.

Senate Budget Committee Chairman Mike Enzi (R-WY) has begun drafting the initial framework of the bill. However, there are still significant issues that must be resolved before a draft can be presented to other Republican senators, including how aggressively to control Medicaid spending, when to begin rolling back the ACA Medicaid expansion, which ACA provisions to eliminate or modify, and how to control premiums or otherwise address coverage for people with pre-existing conditions. These decisions will be heavily influenced by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) score of the AHCA that came out this week (see next story).

ACEP continues to meet with key senators to promote the Emergency Medicine Health Care

Reform Principles and ACEP President Rebecca Parker, MD, FACEP, is scheduled to meet with several of these lawmakers when they return after the Memorial Day recess.

CBO Score of AHCA Released

On Wednesday, CBO provided its analysis of how much the House-approved AHCA will cost/save and its potential impact on health insurance coverage. According to the CBO estimate, the House bill would result in 23 million more uninsured Americans over a decade and reduce the national deficit by \$119 billion. Other important findings by CBO include:

- In 2026, 51 million people under age 65 would be uninsured (nearly twice as many as those who would lack coverage under the ACA);
- Spending on Medicaid would be cut by \$834 billion and cover 14 million fewer people;
- Premiums would rise in 2018 and 2019 and would then vary significantly depending on whether someone lives in a state that opts out of covering the 10 Essential Health Benefits, which includes emergency services;
- In states that do waive some of these benefits, premiums would decline by 20% (by 2026);
- One out of six Americans would live in an area with an unstable insurance market in 2020 where sick people could have trouble finding coverage, but five out of six would have access to relatively stable markets;
- The average 64-year-old earning just above the poverty line would have to pay about nine times more in premiums; and
- The bill repeals \$664 billion in taxes/fees that financed the ACA.

Trump Submits FY 2018 Budget Request

On Tuesday, President Trump released his fiscal year 2018 budget proposal that seeks to cut \$3.6 trillion in government spending over the next decade, relying on cuts to health care and food assistance programs for the poor in a budget that also favors defense spending. However, given the austere budget and what many believe to be unrealistic program cuts and budget assumptions, most lawmakers consider this proposal to be “dead on arrival.”

The Trump budget calls for a cut of at least \$610 billion from Medicaid (by moving to a per-capita cap or block grants), more than \$192 billion from food stamps, \$6 billion from NIH, \$1.3 billion from CDC, \$800 million from FDA (to be offset by increased fees paid by drug- and device-makers), \$20 million (to \$0) from Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC). The budget does assume medical liability reforms would become law and save more than \$50 billion.

ACEP joined the American Ambulance Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, Emergency Nurses Association, NAEMT, NASEMSO, and several other groups to publicly oppose the elimination of EMSC after the budget was released.

FDA Commissioner Calls for More Forceful Actions on Opioid Epidemic

FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb in a [blog post](#) published this week called on FDA staff to explore "more forceful" ways to address the opioid misuse epidemic and announced a new FDA committee targeting the epidemic, which will possibly include prescription limits and mandatory training, among other things. ACEP will monitor these efforts closely and work

with the FDA to ensure their policies account for current physician training, the use of evidence-based prescribing guidelines, and that they do not harm patients with legitimate pain or chronic conditions.

Hearing Examines Public Health Response to Zika Virus

The House Energy and Commerce Committee on Tuesday held a subcommittee hearing on the U.S. public health response to Zika; the mosquito-borne virus that can cause birth defects in infants born to women infected during pregnancy. About 94% of the more than 5,200 Zika cases reported in the continental U.S. since 2015 were in travelers returning from other affected areas. The committee also cited a recent report on the U.S. public health response to the virus, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommended that the FDA and CDC provide information to help ensure that users of diagnostic tests can compare performance, among other actions. To view the hearing, [click here](#).

House Ways and Means Advances Three Obamacare Repeal Bills

The House Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday approved three health care bills that make up a small part of the Republicans' larger ACA replacement strategy. The bills, all approved largely on party lines, are part of the GOP's "third bucket" of its health reform plan, which is expected to include other measures. They were written to work in conjunction with the GOP's repeal bill that is being considered through the budget reconciliation process (see first story).

The first bill, H.R. 2372, introduced by Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX), was approved with no Democratic support and it would allow veterans to retain eligibility for Obamacare's subsidies in the event that the AHCA becomes law.

Another bill, H.R.2579, introduced by Rep. Pat Tiberi (R-OH), would allow tax credits available under the AHCA to be applied to COBRA plans. The panel approved that measure with one Democrat, Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), voting with Republicans.

The final bill, H.R. 2581, introduced by Rep. Lou Barletta (R-PA), also approved along party lines, would require individuals to verify their income eligibility and citizenship or legal immigration status with the Social Security Administration before accessing premium tax credits.

Democrats earlier in the markup deployed delay tactics, offering about a dozen anti-Obamacare repeal amendments, which prolonged votes until after the CBO score was released. To view the committee mark-up, please click [here](#).

Senate Committee Discusses Stopping Synthetic Drug Shipments

On Thursday, the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations held a hearing entitled, "Stopping the Shipment of Synthetic Opioids: Oversight of U.S. Strategy to Combat Illicit Drugs." The hearing examined the rise of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, how they're getting into the United States and the government's response. Senator Rob Portman (R-OH) also his ACEP-supported legislation, the "Synthetics Trafficking and Overdose Prevention (STOP) Act" (S. 372), during the

hearing and urged his colleagues to take swift action on the legislation. To view the hearing, click [here](#).

ACEP Participates in National EMS Week Exhibit and CPR Training on Capitol Hill

On Thursday, ACEP joined other first responder organizations to conduct an exhibit in one of the House office buildings to honor National EMS Week (May 21-27). The exhibit recognized the life-saving care provided by EMS practitioners across the country. In addition, ACEP in partnership with American Medical Response, provided Compression-Only CPR training for Members of Congress and their staffs. Along with ACEP, participating organizations included the American Ambulance Association, International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians, National Association of EMS Physicians, National Association of State EMS Officials and National Volunteer Fire Council.



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