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## Drug Pricing Proposal

On Friday, President Trump outlined the Administration's new strategy on reducing the price of prescription drugs in the U.S. The highly-anticipated speech came after being postponed several times, with the President laying out changes to a wide variety of federal policies affecting drug prices. The effort, titled "American Patients First," lists four major challenges the Administration seeks to address: high list prices for drugs, a lack of negotiation tools for government programs like Medicare, high and rising out-of-pocket costs for consumers, and "foreign governments free-riding off of American investment in innovation." The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a [blueprint](#) of the proposal with four key strategies the Administration intends to pursue – improved competition, better negotiation, incentives for lower list prices, and lowering out-of-pocket costs. While the proposal stopped short of the full Medicare drug price negotiation that some advocates have sought, both the President and HHS Secretary Alex Azar offered some specific immediate and future actions they intend to take. The blueprint also requests comments on additional initiatives the Administration can take to lower drug prices beyond those listed. Among the proposed immediate actions are experimenting with value-based purchasing in federal programs and providing Medicare Part D plans with more negotiating power, promoting innovation and competition for biologics, and even potentially requiring drug manufacturers to list prices in their direct-to-consumer advertising. Some of the future potential actions include taking steps to address issues surrounding drug rebates, requiring site-neutrality for reimbursement of physician-administered drugs, and promoting the use of biosimilars. In his remarks following the President's during the Rose Garden announcement, Secretary Azar indicated that HHS is considering more than 50 actions. ACEP will continue to monitor the Administration's efforts and work with the relevant agencies and Congress to represent the voice of emergency medicine as part of this ongoing effort.

## **E&C Opioids Markup**

On Wednesday, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a full committee markup of 25 opioid bills, including the ACEP-developed and supported Alternatives to Opioids (ALTO) in the Emergency Department Act (H.R. 5197) and the Preventing Overdoses While in Emergency Rooms (POWER) Act (H.R. 5176). ALTO and the POWER Act, along with the rest of the bills, were all approved by voice vote and now await consideration before the full House of Representatives. Over the past year, ACEP has worked closely with Members of Congress and the Energy and Commerce Committee to develop these important bills to help fight the opioid epidemic through both prevention and treatment. These efforts were further supported by testimony by Mark Rosenberg, DO, FACEP, before the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee on March 22, 2018, on behalf of ACEP in support of these bills. With the committee's action this week, these two important ACEP-led bills are one step closer to enactment into law by Congress, and ACEP staff continues to work to secure their success.

## **Emergency Physician Testifies before House Judiciary Committee Hearing on Opioid Epidemic**

On Tuesday, Tim Westlake, MD, FACEP, testified before the House Judiciary Committee in a hearing titled "Challenges and Solutions in the Opioid Abuse Crisis." The committee heard from two panels of witnesses, the first featuring Robert Patterson, Acting Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), with the second panel featuring Dr. Westlake and several other witnesses who addressed their work and experiences in dealing with the nation's opioid epidemic. In his testimony, Dr. Westlake shared a personal story about a family friend who ended up as his patient after an overdose and began on the path to recovery, but unfortunately fatally overdosed on fentanyl six months later. He also shared his experience as an emergency physician and his work in battling the opioid epidemic, including his efforts as part of the Wisconsin Medical Examining Board and Controlled Substance Board to improve the state's implementation and use of the prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP). He concluded by emphasizing the success of strategies that promote education and partnerships with the medical community, as opposed to top-down mandates.



Dr. Westlake with Rep. Sensenbrenner (R, WI-5)

### Check out the latest ACEP Capital Minute

There's a new edition of ACEP's Capital Minute for the week of May 11th. Check it out [here](#).



### CMS Updates QPP Website to Include 2018 MIPS Eligibility for Groups

On May 9, CMS announced that physician group practices may now log into the CMS [QPP website](#) to check their 2018 eligibility for Medicare's Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS). After groups log in, they will be able to click into a details screen to see the eligibility status of every clinician in the group (based on their National Provider Identifier or NPI) to find out whether they need to participate during the 2018 performance year for MIPS. CMS will not be sending out letters to advise physicians of their eligibility status this year so

checking on the QPP participation status look-up tool is the only way to determine or verify eligibility status.

**Don't miss ACEP's Gun Violence & Injury Prevention Tele-Town Hall on June 5: Register Today!**

ACEP will host a special tele-town hall on Gun Violence and Injury Prevention on June 5th from 6:00-6:30pm EST. Our special guest is Congressman Seth Moulton (D-MA) who will outline the state of Congress and progress with gun violence legislation in the 115th Congress, including H.R.3999 the Bipartisan Bump Stock Ban, and H.R. 5576 the No Fly, No Buy Bill. Congressman Moulton is eager to engage with ACEP members on solutions to gun violence that will keep our communities and families safer. Please [Register Here](#) to participate in the live phone call. By registering, you will automatically receive a call at the number you provide at approximately 6:00 pm eastern time on Tuesday, June 5th and will be automatically connected to the tele-town hall.



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