



Wednesday, November 16, 2016

The US Oncology Network Meets with Cancer Moonshot Leaders

The US Oncology Network and McKesson Specialty Health representatives met with Cancer Moonshot leaders on November 2 to discuss the value of community based cancer care and US Oncology Research programs. [Read below.](#)

Congress Kicks Off Lame Duck Session

Congress returned to Washington this week to begin the Lame Duck session, which will conclude in mid-December. While the legislative outlook is uncertain, congressional leaders have indicated that the 21st Century Cures bill is a top priority. [Read below.](#)

President-Elect Trump Taps Former Officials for HHS Transition

Several individuals enlisted to manage the transition at the Department of Health & Human Services served the agency during the Administration of former President George W. Bush. [Read below.](#)

MedPAC Holds Meeting on Provider Consolidation

On November 3, the Medicare Payment Advisory Committee hosted a meeting on provider consolidation and its effect on the Medicare system. [Read below.](#)

The US Oncology Network Meets with Cancer Moonshot Leaders



The US Oncology Network and McKesson Specialty Health representatives met with Lyric Jorgenson, Deputy Director of the National Cancer Institute's [Cancer Moonshot](#), and Annabella Aspiras, Director of Patient Engagement for the Moonshot initiative, on November 2. The meeting participants discussed The Network's leadership in the nation's cancer care community as well as research programs driven by US Oncology Research.

L-R: Smith, Spira, Paulson and Robert

The meeting focused on the [value of community based care](#), clinical research in the community and the value of evidence-based medicine. The group also discussed the importance of offering patients access to clinical trials in the community setting while educating the Moonshot leaders about US Oncology-led research initiatives underway across the country.

Participants in the meeting included Sandy Smith, Senior Director, Site Services, US Oncology Research; Dr. Alex Spira, Director of the Virginia Cancer Specialists Research Institute and the Phase I Trial Program; Dr. Steve Paulson, President of Texas Oncology; and Dr. Nick Robert, Medical Director for Health Outcomes for McKesson Specialty Health.

To view the McKesson/US Oncology Research presentation on clinical trials, [CLICK HERE](#).

Congress Kicks Off Lame Duck Session



Congress returned to Washington this week to begin the Lame Duck session, which will conclude in mid-December. The Senate calendar has 20 legislative days scheduled before adjournment, while the House has only 16. Despite the short session, both Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) have indicated they want to move certain pieces of legislation during the Lame Duck, including the [21st Century Cures bill](#).

This week, the House and Senate return briefly before Thanksgiving, primarily to hold leadership elections and determine the issues that Congress might consider before the end of the legislative session. Leadership in key

committees of jurisdiction will change, including the House Ways & Means and Energy & Commerce Committees.

There are certain “must do” items during Lame Duck, including further defense appropriations approval. Congress will likely also pass a continuing resolution (CR) to extend funding at current levels so that the government will continue to function into early 2017.

President-Elect Trump Taps Former Officials for HHS Transition



President-elect Donald Trump has selected Andrew Bremberg to run his Department of Health & Human services (HHS) transition team. Bremberg served at HHS for nearly eight years under former President George W. Bush and also currently advises Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Paula Stannard, who served as HHS acting general counsel during George W. Bush's two terms, is handling health care reform on the transition team.

News reports have suggested that several individuals are being floated for the role of HHS Secretary, including Rep. Tom Price (R-GA), former Louisiana Republican Gov. Bobby Jindal, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Gov. Rick Scott (R-FL), and former Rep. Renee Ellmers (R-NC).

Transition team representatives for the incoming Trump Administration have identified health care as one of the priorities for the first 100 days along with immigration and job creation.

To read President-Elect Trump's healthcare priorities, [CLICK HERE](#).

MedPAC Holds Meeting on Provider Consolidation



On November 3, the Medicare Payment Advisory Committee (MedPAC) hosted a meeting on provider consolidation and its effect on the Medicare system.

The discussion primarily focused on the trends towards horizontal and vertical integration among providers – essentially hospitals buying physician practices and then billing the services through their hospital outpatient departments. This leads to higher payment rates from both Medicare and commercial insurers for the exact same care

services. According to the MedPAC presentation, most markets are already highly consolidated, which leads to higher payment rates with no clear evidence of quality improvement.

To fix this, MedPAC has recommended equalizing payment rates across all sites of service. Under this proposal, which is an expansion of existing rules that require site neutral payments for all new HOPDs, providers are reimbursed at the same rate whether the service is rendered in a physician's practice or HOPD.

To view slides from the MedPAC meeting, [CLICK HERE](#).

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