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Tom Koutsoumpas, TKoutsoumpas@mlstrategies.com
Jeremy Rabinovitz, JRabinovitz@mlstrategies.com
Alexander Hecht, AHecht@mlstrategies.com
Kevin M. Kappel, KMKappel@mlstrategies.com

ML Strategies, LLC
701 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004 USA
202 434 7300
202 434 7400 fax
www.mlstrategies.com

HEALTH CARE REFORM UPDATE October 17, 2011

Implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)

On October 10th an aide for Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead (R) presented a letter to lawmakers on the Labor, Health and Social Services Committee from the Governor outlining his support for a recommendation to pursue some elements of a health insurance exchange. A local news story on the letter can be found [here](#).

On October 11th Melanie Bella, Director of the CMS Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office, announced that 37 states and the District of Columbia had submitted letters of intent to participate in new demonstration opportunities to coordinate care for dually eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. Ms. Bella's announcement can be found [here](#).

On October 13th HHS announced that the number of participants in the National Health Service Corps had tripled to over 10,000 people. The ACA and previous bills included funds to expand the program. The HHS release can be found [here](#).

On October 13th the House voted 251-172 to pass the "Protect Life Act" to prevent federal funding for abortion and abortion coverage in the ACA. The bill was sponsored by Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health Chairman Joe Pitts (R-PA) and contained language similar to an amendment sponsored by former Rep. Bart Stupak (D-MI) during the health care reform debate. 15 Democrats supported the measure, while two Republicans opposed it. The White House issued a veto threat if the provision survives the Senate. The Energy & Commerce press release can be found [here](#).

On October 13th House Appropriations Labor-HHS Subcommittee Chairman Denny Rehberg (R-MT) sent a letter to HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius requesting more information on CMS' plans to collect consumer data for risk adjustment and reinsurance efforts. The letter comes as more GOP Members of Congress have been criticizing the administration's effort to collect the data and accusing them of violating personal health information privacy. Chairman Rehberg's letter can be found [here](#). CMS' blog post in response to the criticism can be found [here](#).

On October 14th Secretary Sebelius sent letters to Congressional leaders announcing that the administration was halting implementation of the CLASS long-term care program. Since passage of the ACA, CLASS has remained a top target of Congressional Republicans who criticized the program for not being financially viable. The move comes after HHS exhausted various options to move forward to implementation. A memo from Kathy

Greenlee, CLASS Administrator, to Secretary Sebelius and a report outlining the options HHS considered for implementation can be found [here](#).

Other HHS and Federal Regulatory Initiatives

On October 13th the U.S. Census Bureau released its Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE) for counties and states outlining the number of uninsured in 2008 and 2009. The data can be found [here](#).

On October 13th the NIH announced 4 awards totaling almost \$150 million to four companies to develop broad-spectrum therapeutics as part of the NIH's strategic plan for biodefense. The NIH press release can be found [here](#).

On October 14th the GOP Members of the House Energy & Commerce Committee released a package of ten proposals aimed at strengthening our nation's medical device approval and review process at the FDA. More information on the package of legislation can be found [here](#).

Other Congressional and State Initiatives

On October 14th several Congressional Committees submitted their recommendations for deficit reduction to the Super Committee throughout the day as the statutory deadline imposed for those submissions drew to a close. While some Committees submitted bipartisan recommendations, most of the Committees split their recommendations along party lines. A copy of the Senate Finance Committee Republicans' recommendations to the Super Committee, among the most detailed in the field of health care, can be found [here](#).

On October 14th MedPAC also submitted recommendations to the Super Committee on how to repeal and replace the SGR Medicare physician reimbursement formula complete with offsets covering the \$219 billion price tag. The MedPAC memo can be found [here](#).

Other Health Care News

On October 12th America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), the industry group representing health insurers, unveiled a new proposal to help integrate care for beneficiaries dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. The AHIP release can be found [here](#).

Hearings & Mark-ups Scheduled

House of Representatives

On October 26th the Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations will be holding a hearing titled "CLASS Cancelled: An Unsustainable Program and Its Consequences for the Nation's Deficit." More information can be found [here](#).

Senate

On October 18th the HELP Committee will be holding a hearing titled "The Recession and Older Americans: Where Do We Go from Here." More information can be found [here](#).