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HEALTH CARE REFORM UPDATE August 26th, 2013

Leading the News

CMS Announces Matching Agreements for Data Hubs

On August 21st, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) [announced](#) its most recent agreement with state entities for exchange data hubs. States are now required to report any suspected or confirmed loss of personally identifiable information within an hour of discovery to their designated Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight (CCIO) State Officer, who will then notify the relevant Federal agency. CMS has posted a [draft](#) of the reporting form and has asked for public comments to be submitted by September 20th.

Lawmakers Defend Critical Access Hospitals

On August 22nd, a bipartisan group of 20 Senators, led by Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), sent a [letter](#) to Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) and Ranking Member Orrin Hatch (R-UT) of the Senate Finance Committee defending critical access hospitals and challenging a report released last week by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Inspector General which criticized hospitals participating in the Medicare Critical Access Hospital program.

Implementation of the Affordable Care Act

On August 16th, the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Small Business Majority [announced](#) a new series of weekly webinars to help small business owners learn how the ACA will affect their businesses and their employees.

On August 19th, HHS [announced](#) that it will be partnering with the Young Invincibles for the *Healthy Young America* video contest.

On August 21st, seventy nine Republicans in the House of Representatives signed a [letter](#) to Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) and Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) urging them to de-fund the implementation and enforcement of the ACA in any relevant appropriations bill.

On August 21st, Republican members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee sent a [letter](#) to Treasury Secretary Jack Lew stating that they have not yet received a response to questions submitted for the record to Mark Iwry on August 2nd regarding the delay of the employer mandate.

On August 23rd, the IRS [released](#) proposed rules on the ACA's small business tax credit, which will be available to employers with no more than 25 full time employees purchasing health insurance through the Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP) exchange.

Other HHS and Federal Regulatory Initiatives

On August 19th, an Oklahoma judge [granted](#) a temporary injunction against a state law that placed additional restrictions on access to Plan B One-Step pending the outcome of a lawsuit challenging the law. The new restrictions contradict FDA approval for unrestricted, over the counter sale of Plan B One-Step.

On August 19th, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) announced Richard Kronick will replace Carolyn Clancy as the director of the agency. He is currently the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the Office of Health Policy.

On August 20th, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) [announced](#) an award of approximately \$75.8 million to all 50 states through the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Infectious Diseases Cooperative Agreement.

On August 22nd, the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation [released](#) an issue brief which found that the percentage of office-based physicians who are accepting new Medicare patients has not changed significantly between 2005 and 2012, and is slightly higher than the percentage accepting new privately insured patients.

On August 23rd, Iowa Governor Terry Branstad (D) [submitted](#) a Medicaid expansion waiver to CMS, which will formally replace the previous Medicaid waiver for the Iowa Care program with the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan.

Other Congressional and State Initiatives

On August 19th, Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY) and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) [announced](#) they will be introducing the Communities United with Religious Leaders for the Elimination of HIV/AIDS (CURE) Act of 2013.

Other Health Care News

On August 19th, the RAND Corporation released a [report](#) stating that the one year delay of the employer mandate will not substantially impact the ACA.

On August 20th, the Kaiser Family Foundation [released](#) its annual Employer Health Benefits survey, which found that premiums increased at modest levels, consistent with the last several years.

On August 21st, the Commonwealth Fund [released](#) their findings from their Health Insurance Tracking Survey, conducted from 2011 to 2013, which indicated that only 27% of 19 to 29 year olds are aware of the new health insurance marketplaces instituted by the ACA.

On August 22nd, Gallup [released](#) a poll which showed that while the number of Americans who approved or disapproved of the ACA remained steady, the number of people who had no opinion of the law increased from 4% in June to 11%.

Hearings and Mark-Ups Scheduled

The Senate and the House of Representatives are in recess until the week of September 9th.