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HEALTH CARE REFORM UPDATE

September 26, 2011

Implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)

On September 19th Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee (I) issued an executive order for the state to establish its own health insurance exchange after earlier legislative efforts failed to produce a compromise due to disagreements over abortion language. The Governor's executive order can be found [here](#).

On September 19th HHS and the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight (CCIIO) began a two-day "State Exchange Grantee Meeting" where they outlined how states can work with the federal government to establish insurance exchanges. In particular, the CCIIO outlined three different options where states could operate all or parts of their exchanges. The CCIIO's presentation can be found [here](#).

On September 20th HHS announced \$109 million in money from the ACA to 28 states and the District of Columbia to help states establish more comprehensive methods of review proposed insurance rate changes. The HHS announcement can be found [here](#).

On September 20th Idaho Governor Butch Otter (R) announced that his state will apply for federal money to begin the process of establishing a health insurance exchange. The Governor's press release can be found [here](#).

On September 21st HHS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released new data from the National Health Interview Survey showing that approximately one million more adults between the ages of 19 and 25 have health insurance compared to a year ago, a statistic HHS attributes to the ACA. HHS' press release can be found [here](#).

On September 22nd, HHS announced \$224 million in new ACA funding to assist underserved and at-risk families to receive home visits from nurses and social workers. The program is intended to improve maternal and childhood health as well as assist in healthy childhood development. HHS' press release can be found [here](#).

September 23rd HHS released a new report summarizing the ACA's key achievement to mark the one-year anniversary of the implementation of the ACA's Patient's Bill of Rights. The HHS release can be found [here](#).

Other HHS and Federal Regulatory Initiatives

On September 23rd HHS published a notice in the *Federal Register* seeking comments on a proposal to create a database through a public-private partnership designed to gather health care claims data for comparative-effectiveness research. The comment period will last for 60 days. The notice can be found [here](#).

Other Congressional and State Initiatives

On September 19th MedPAC released a draft offset list for legislators to consider when trying to find money to pay for changes to the Medicare SGR reimbursement formula. Its suggestions can be found [here](#).

On September 20th the Senate Appropriations Labor-HHS Subcommittee voted to approve its FY 2012 spending package providing \$158 billion in discretionary funding. More information on the bill can be found [here](#).

On September 20th the House of Representatives voted by voice vote to approve legislation reauthorizing the children's graduate medical education program. President Obama had sought to eliminate the funding in his FY 2012 budget proposal.

On September 21st the House Ways & Means Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on expiring Medicare provider payment policies. More information on the hearing can be found [here](#). That same day, the Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on improving care and lowering costs for dually-eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. More information on that hearing can be found [here](#).

On September 22nd Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) joined Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI) in writing a letter to Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) requested information on what the organization is doing to control prices of the 340B drug discount program. Sen. Grassley's press release can be found [here](#).

On September 23rd the Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on the increase in drug shortages in the United States. More information on that hearing can be found [here](#).

Other Health Care News

On September 20th a new health care non-profit called the "Health Care Cost Institute" launched in Washington, DC to analyze the private insurance data of four major private health care insurers: Aetna, Humana, Kaiser Permanente, and UnitedHealthcare. The group's website can be found [here](#).

Hearings & Mark-ups Scheduled

House of Representatives

On September 26th the Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health is holding a field hearing in La Jolla, CA on the impact of medical device and drug regulation. More information can be found [here](#).

Senate

There are no scheduled hearings at this time.