

Viewpoints

ML Strategies Health Care Preview

FEBRUARY 25, 2019

This week, seven top executives from drug manufacturers will testify in a highly anticipated hearing before the Senate Finance Committee. These companies will be questioned regarding rising drug prices, transparency, patent issues, and corporate profits. As drug costs remains a [top issue](#) for voters, there is bipartisan momentum for the [CREATES Act](#), which would combat anticompetitive practices to block lower-cost generic drugs from reaching the market.

Keep in mind that the CREATES Act is being seen as a “pay-for” since it is expected to save the government a net \$3.9 billion over 10 years if passed. With several critical health care extenders up for reauthorization at the end of the fiscal year, including for Community Health Centers, it’s possible CREATES could be attached to offset some of those costs.

While getting CREATES over the finish line will be a challenge, the support is there and bipartisan momentum is only just beginning to ramp up with investigations and hearings occurring in both chambers of Congress.

The Finance Committee hearing also comes on the heels of a [bipartisan probe](#) into insulin price increases, which Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Wyden launched last week. The Committee sent letters to three manufacturers asking why insulin prices have risen so significantly in recent years, and requesting documents and data to justify the increases with hearings almost certain to follow.

MEDICARE FOR ALL

Over the weekend, the NY Times [reported](#) on opposition to the Medicare for All initiative, which has garnered considerable public attention despite not being formally introduced in Congress. This is partly due to a variety of Medicare expansion proposals having support from prominent members of the Democratic Party, some of whom are eyeing the 2020 presidential nomination. Sen. Sanders’ proposal would, for example, establish a national health insurance program to cover everyone in the U.S. Sens. Stabenow, Brown, and Baldwin introduced the [Medicare at 50 Act](#), which would allow people aged 50 to 64 to buy in to get Medicare coverage.

While Sanders’ proposal, if fully implemented, would do away with the ACA, the Medicare at 50 proposal would not. The question going forward is how policymakers respond to efforts to advance Medicare for All, and what impact it would have on the ACA going forward.

HEARINGS

HOUSE

[Ed & Labor](#) – “Caring for our Caregivers: Protecting Health Care and Social Service Workers from Workplace Violence.” (Wed. @ 2pm)

[Ed & Labor](#) – Classrooms in Crisis: Examining the Inappropriate Use of Seclusion and Restrain Practices.” (Wed @ 10am)

SENATE

[Finance](#) – Drug Pricing in America: A Prescription for Change, Part II (Tues @ 10:15am)

SIGN UP

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TEAM

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