

ML Strategies Health Care Preview

WEEK OF APRIL 8, 2019

This week, Congress is keeping its eye on drug pricing with a reported [hearing](#) in the House Ways & Means Committee. This comes on the heels of the full E&C Committee advancing [six pieces](#) of bipartisan legislation for full floor consideration. The legislation centers mostly on requiring various disclosures, such as requiring drug manufacturers justify drug price increases or legislation to require PBMs disclose aggregate rebates. This issue will stay relevant among policymakers and the Administration for the foreseeable future. In fact, several of the bills have already been introduced in the Senate.

Last week, Senator Lamar Alexander, Chairman of the Senate HELP Committee, signaled [he intends](#) to draft a broad package with the Finance Committee to lower drug costs. Among the proposals being considered include expanding the Administration's point-of-sale rebate proposal to the commercial market. This proposal currently would only apply to Medicare and Medicaid. It's important for stakeholders to closely monitor legislative markers put forth by both Democrats and Republicans on the committees of jurisdiction as this effort ramps up.

Meanwhile, the Administration is still committed to pursuing a new health care plan, and the hope is to get key senators on board who are so far hesitant to restart the failed 2017 effort with the 2020 election just on the horizon. Even if an Administration health care proposal is put forth, expect significant headwinds as House Democrats would undoubtedly juxtapose the plan with a plan of their own, some of which was on display in the E&C hearing last week.

On the opioid front, Senators Chuck Schumer (NY) and Tom Cotton (AK) [introduced legislation](#) that would impose sanctions on foreign traffickers of opioids. It would also provide tools for law enforcement to crack down on traffickers of synthetic opioids.

SURPRISE BILL PACKAGE NEARS

Following an information gathering hearing in the House Education & Labor Committee, introduction of a highly anticipated surprise billing legislative package seems imminent. Key House policymakers, as well as members of the Senate HELP Committee, will continue to play a part in the development of the bill, which is expected to be unveiled in the next few weeks.

Hospital and insurance stakeholders will continue to frame the issue as the proposal remains in the development stage. Rep. Frederica Wilson (D-FL), Chair of the Ed & Labor Health subcommittee, noted that cracking down on out-of-network specialists at hospitals is one way to look at this issue. It remains to be seen whether a package such as this could pass as a standalone bill – or would need to be attached to a broader legislative vehicle.

THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE

W&M – Anticipated drug pricing hearing (Tuesday)

Ed & Labor – Mark-up of STLDI legislation ([Tues @ 10:15](#))

E&C – “Priced out of a Lifesaving Drug: Getting Answers on the Rising Cost of Insulin.”

W&M – “Comprehensive Legislative Proposals to Enhance Social Security.” (Wed @ 9am)

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

Finance – “Drug Pricing in America: A Prescription for Change, Part III.” ([Tues @ 10:15](#))

HELP – “Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act: Strengthening Accountability to Protect Students and Taxpayers.” ([Wed @ 10am](#))

SIGN UP

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