



Health Care Weekly Preview

Week of July 17th

Welcome back everybody. The absence of Senator John McCain (AZ) – who is recovering at home from a [craniotomy](#) – has caused Senate Republicans to delay consideration of the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA) previously scheduled for a vote this week. This will give the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) more time, pushing back the originally scheduled Monday release of the updated CBO score. It also gives the Administration time to make their case on the BCRA to wary Republicans. Senator Susan Collins estimates that at least eight to ten Senators have concerns about the bill. It also buys time for independent analysis to be released and for those opposed to the bill to continue voicing concerns.

While Senator McCain's vote matters to BCRA, it is not necessarily critical to other bills. The House-passed User Fee Act (UFAs) awaits Senate consideration and the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is on tap as well. We should know very quickly if Senator McConnell will turn to one of those matters while they wait for Senator McCain's return. Senator McCain is Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, so pushing ahead on NDAA may prove difficult without him.

If the Senate turns to the UFAs, there will be significant drama, as the Administration maintains its position of wanting the industry to boost funding on user fees, and the Democrats desire to use this consideration as an opportunity to highlight the drug pricing issue, in addition to highlighting concerns surrounding the BCRA.

THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE

On Tuesday (7/18) the House Energy & Commerce Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee will hold a hearing titled, "Examining HRSA's Oversight of the 340B Drug Pricing Program." Click [here](#) for more information.

On Thursday (7/20) the House Energy & Commerce Health Subcommittee will hold a hearing titled, "Examining Bipartisan Legislation to Improve the Medicare Program." Click [here](#) for more information.

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

No hearings in the Senate this week.

WINTER IS COMING ...

Did you see last night's episode? I sure did. But what I'm really talking about is the next [health care Minibus](#). CHIP, MIECHV, DSH, and the Community Health Center Fund expire September 30th and the therapy caps exceptions process expires at the end of the year. If the BCRA flounders, the extenders package will become the vehicle for moving health care legislation into law. Given the temperature in Congress right now, the process of passing an extenders package will be delicate and likely drag on until somewhere between turkey and mistletoe.

The minibus could carry provisions from the Senate's [Chronic Care Act](#) and Medicare legislation currently being considered in the House. Depending on the political environment, the prospect of a bipartisan market stabilization package could also be on the table. That could pose a win for both sides while clearing the deck on must-pass, politically consequential legislation.

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