



Health Care Weekly Preview

Week of October 23rd

With 24 bipartisan cosponsors in the Senate, the emerging Alexander-Murray stabilization package is a significant step forward in the health reform debate. However, after months of dominating the airwaves, health care is now taking the back seat in policy conversations heading into the end of the year. The short-term government-funding bill runs through December 15th, and there is no reason to think Democrats would cut a deal on stand-alone health care issues. Instead, it is more likely they will move to a large clearing the decks/omnibus package that includes continued funding of the government. As a result, issues such as DACA or border security could be driving year-end policy discussions. The health care question is how issues like Alexander-Murray, CSRs, or the minibus fit into those negotiations.

So what do the next seven weeks look like if we're looking at a big end of year deal? Democrats and some Republicans will turn their attention to the first open enrollment period under the Trump Administration. Additionally, others will look for opportunities to win over the President on policies within Alexander-Murray, or policies they hope can be included. While the President changed his message on Alexander-Murray multiple times last week, he will be a key player in end of year negotiations. Trump relished the opportunity to be seen making a deal in September, and he'll likely look to play a similar role in a December deal.

Will Congress be willing to team up with the President after months of wallowing on policy, or will they look to drive the policy conversations and bring the President when the timing is right? We should get signs of this in the next couple weeks.

THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE

On Tuesday (10/24) the House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations will hold a hearing titled, "Examining HHS's Public Health Preparedness for and Response to the 2017 Hurricane Season."

On Wednesday (10/25) the House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health will hold a hearing titled, "Federal Efforts to Combat the Opioid Crisis: A Status Update on CARA and Other Initiatives."

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

On Wednesday (10/25) the Senate Special Committee on Aging will hold a hearing titled, "Working and Aging with Disabilities: From School to Retirement."

MACPAC

Starting on Wednesday, the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC) will hold its October Public Meeting. For more details on the agenda please click [here](#).

WINNING

An interesting quote was included at the end of this [Washington Post](#) piece from the co-author of the Art of the Deal, Tony Schwartz. "Trump is motivated by the same concern in all situations, which is to dominate and to be perceived as having won...that supersedes everything, including ideology." You could make the argument that everybody wins with a short-term stabilization package, but as the deal grows larger, as noted above, the pressure to produce outright victory becomes even more challenging; especially with politically toxic issues entering the equation. One thing is certain: Trump wants to be the dealmaker and he wants a victory.

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