



Health Care Weekly Preview

Week of February 12th

We closed last week with a budget deal that addressed nearly every health care stakeholder issue. With 2017 finally over, we begin 2018 with the next budget. This week the Administration will release its FY 2019 budget and will spend the next couple weeks defending and promoting it. We wait to see how the budget will be received by the Republican-controlled Congress.

Typically, the Administration's annual budget exercise is a way to offer priorities and elevate issues that may not be palatable legislatively. However, it's being reported that the President's budget will aim to reduce the deficit by \$3 trillion the next 10 years, rather than eliminate the deficit, a typical conservative guiding principle. After the massive spending increase in the budget agreement and a formal budget proposal that doesn't come into balance, expect conservatives to be overt in their criticism.

On the regulatory side, a proposed rule around short-term limited duration insurance (STLDI) plans cleared the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) last week. STLDI's are exempt from several ACA requirements, and are opposed by a number of health care stakeholders who argue these plans are not comprehensive and would undermine the individual market. With market stabilization still looming as a potential 2018 issue, will release of the STLDI regulation drive Congress to reach an agreement or drive Congress further from consensus?

THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE

On Wednesday (02/14), the House E&C Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations will hold a hearing titled, "Examining the Impact of Health Care Consolidation." Click [here](#) for more information.

On Wednesday (02/14), the Ways & Means Committee will hold a hearing on the President's FY 2019 Budget with Secretary of HHS Alex Azar. Click [here](#) for more information.

On Thursday (02/15), the House E&C Subcommittee on Health will hold a hearing titled, "Oversight of the Department of Health and Human Services." Click [here](#) for more information.

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

On Tuesday, (02/13), the Senate HELP Committee will hold a hearing titled, "Improving Animal Health: Reauthorization of FDA Animal Drug User Fees." Click [here](#) for more information.

On Thursday (02/15), the Senate Finance Committee will hold a hearing on the President's FY 2019 Budget with Secretary of HHS Alex Azar. Click [here](#) for more information.

340B AND DRUG PRICING

In January, the House Energy & Commerce Committee released [a report](#) on the 340B program. It is widely rumored that legislation stemming from the report is forthcoming. The President's budget is reported to include changes to the 340B program, but will also include other drug pricing policies as well. Can Energy & Commerce move forward with contentious changes to the 340B program while keeping even more controversial drug pricing issues off the table? In an election year, at some point, the journey is not worth all the hurdles in the way.