

ML Strategies Health Care Preview

Week of April 16th

This week, the Senate Finance Committee will discuss the opioid response with testimony from two senior HHS officials. Congress could consider a major opioids package by Memorial Day, although the timing and scope of the legislation could push this into summer. Responding to the opioid crisis is a priority for both Republicans and Democrats and should be seen as one of the few, if not the only, health care vehicles left this year.

However, Congress will continue its work on other priorities. The Ways & Means Committee will [reportedly](#) take a look at telemedicine and how it can reduce expensive and unnecessary hospital visits; this is one example of how Committees could use their time this summer. Additionally, telemedicine has bipartisan support and interest in testing it further to see if it can help lower costs. This signaling could lead to potential action from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI), which has been noticeably quiet this year.

Last week, the Congressional Budget Office provided its [economic outlook](#) for the next decade. This outlook shows that the US budget deficit is large and growing, the US continues to spend significant amounts of money on health care, and health spending is expected to rise faster than the rest of the economy. Also, CBO acknowledges that premiums under the individual insurance market will rise. This report highlights that the growing costs of health care will continue to be an issue in upcoming years and will continue to put pressures on Congress to address it.

OPIOIDS (CONT.)

The opioid crisis is a high priority in Congress that most congressional committees are looking at ways to combat the epidemic. States are also highly engaged, with at least 32 governors including proposals in state budgets to address the crisis, along with other behavioral health initiatives. Governors have played a large role in federal health care policy due to the impacts it would have on states, and it's possible we see more join the debate as this heats up on Capitol Hill, in an effort to draw from successful state models.

The Kaiser Family Foundation is tracking [those efforts](#) here and we will continue to closely follow developments in this space.



THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE

On Tuesday (4/17), the House Agriculture, Rural Development, and FDA Subcommittee on Appropriations will hold a hearing on the FY 2019 FDA Budget. Scott Gottlieb will be testifying. Click [here](#) for more information.

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

On Thursday (4/19), the Senate Finance Committee will hold a hearing titled, “Tackling Opioid and Substance Use Disorders in Medicare, Medicaid, and Human Services Programs.” Click [here](#) for more information.

THIS WEEK AT MACPAC

Beginning on Thursday (4/19), MACPAC will be holding its April Public Meeting. Click [here](#) for more information.

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