

EDITION: April 30, 2021

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PUBLIC POLICY

Your weekly dose of health care policy

COVID-19 Resources

[HLB COVID-19 Resource Center](#)

Congressional

Senate Finance Votes on Two Health Nominees

On April 22, the Senate Finance Committee [voted](#) on two Biden health care nominees. The committee voted 14-14 on the nomination of Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to be the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) administrator and 20-8 on the nomination of Andrea Palm for Health and Human Services (HHS) deputy secretary. Palm's nomination can now move to the Senate floor for a final vote. Brooks-LaSure's nomination can only move to the floor via a discharge position that will be filed by Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), because her vote was a tie in the committee.

Biden Addresses Congress and Unveils Priorities

This past Wednesday, President Biden [unveiled](#) his American Families Plan priorities and addressed Congress on that plan and his first 100 days in office. The largest health care component of his plan will provide \$200 billion towards making the temporary Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium subsidies that were passed earlier this year permanent. Although President Biden reiterated his support during his speech of allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices, creating a public option, and lowering the Medicare eligibility age, those policies were not included in the American Families Plan.

Administration

UPCOMING HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES ON THE HILL

House Energy & Commerce Committee

5/4 at 11:30am: Health Subcommittee [hearing](#) on "Negotiating a Better Deal: Legislation to Lower the Cost of Prescription Drugs"

5/6 at 11:30am: Communications and Technology Subcommittee [hearing](#) on "Broadband Equity: Addressing Disparities in Access and Affordability"

House Oversight and Reform Committee

5/4 at 11:00am: Economic and Consumer Policy Subcommittee [hearing](#) on "The Urgent Need to Reform the Organ Transplantation System to Secure More Organs for Waiting, Ailing, and Dying Patients"

5/6 at 11:00am: Full committee [hearing](#) on "Birthing While Black: Examining America's Black Maternal Health Crisis"

House Education & Labor Committee

5/5 at 12:00pm: Health,

COVID-19 PHE Extended

The Public Health Emergency (PHE) was officially [renewed](#) with an effective date of April 21 by HHS Secretary Becerra. As a reminder, the Secretary may extend the PHE declaration for subsequent 90-day periods for as long as the PHE continues to exist, and may terminate the declaration whenever he determines that the PHE has ceased to exist.

IPPS Proposed Rule Announced

On April 27, CMS released the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Medicare Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS) and Long Term Care Hospital (LTCH) Rates [proposed rule](#). The [agency says](#) hospitals should see a pay bump of about 2.8%, provided they are meaningful electronic health record users and don't face cuts from the readmission program, hospital-acquired conditions program, value-based purchasing program or quality programs. At the same time, CMS projects Medicare Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments and uncompensated care payments will decrease by about \$0.9 billion. Comments are due by 5pm ET on June 28.

CMS Extends Hip-And-Knee Demo

Yesterday, CMS announced its Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement (CJR) Model Three-Year Extension and Changes to Episode Definition and Pricing [final rule](#). The rule extends the CJR model for three performance years - through Dec 31, 2024 for those in the mandatory regions of the demonstration. The rule revises certain parts of the model including the episode of care definition, the target price calculation, the reconciliation process, the beneficiary notice requirements and the appeals process.

2022 Exchange Final Rule Released

Today, CMS released its Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; HHS Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2022 and Pharmacy Benefit Manager Standards [final rule](#). The [agency states](#) that the changes in the rule further the Administration's efforts on health equity by lowering maximum consumer out-of-pocket costs by \$400, improving competition and stability, elevating the consumer experience, expanding transparency, ensuring state flexibility, and promoting program integrity. CMS anticipates additional rulemaking for the 2022 payment notice later this year.

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