

January 7, 2011

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NEXT WEEK IN WASHINGTON...

* The Senate is in recess until January 25.

* On Wednesday, January 12, the House will debate and vote on the *Repealing the Job-Killing Health Care Law Act* (HR 2).

1. COMMENTS SENT TO CMS ON 2011 FINAL PHYSICIAN FEE SCHEDULE

In a December 22 [letter](#), AAFP responded to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on the [final 2011 Medicare physician fee schedule](#). CMS solicited comments on a few specific issues (interim final work, practice expense, and malpractice RVUs for the CPT codes listed in Addendum C). AAFP responded to these specific issues but also applauded CMS for its ongoing effort to address primary care's concerns. Specifically, AAFP thanked the agency for making significant adjustments to the Primary Care Incentive Program (PCIP) that will help ensure a greater percentage of family physicians qualify for the incentive.

2. FAMILY PHYSICIAN NAMED SECRETARY OF HEALTH IN KANSAS

Governor-Elect Sam Brownback (R) named former president of the **Kansas Academy of Family Physicians**, Robert Moser Jr., MD, as Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Dr. Moser most recently was director of rural health and outreach at the University of Kansas Medical Center in Wichita. Dr. Moser signed on as rural health director at the medical center in September 2010. Previously, he practiced in rural Tribune, Kansas slowly building what started as a two-physician practice in a county-owned clinic into a health care system--one of the first rural systems to be named a National Center of Excellence in Women's Health by the Health Resources and Services Administration. Now, Greeley County Health Services boasts three comprehensive care clinics in three counties along the western edge of Kansas, as well as two critical-access hospitals. Dr. Moser, who has served as Chair of AAFP's Commission on Governmental Advocacy, earned his medical degree from the KU School of Medicine and completed his residency at the Smoky Hill Family Medicine Residency Program in Salina, KS.

3. HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE PROVIDED TO CDC

AAFP recently provided guidance to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding their development of a Health Risk Assessment (HRA). Considered to be an important building block for preventive medicine and primary care, the HRA is required in the *Affordable Care Act* as part of the new annual wellness visit benefit for Medicare beneficiaries. In the December 16 [letter](#), AAFP answered specific [questions posed](#) by the CDC regarding the HRA's content and design, mode of administration, primary care office capacity, consumer/patient perspective, data, certification, and evaluation and quality assurance.

4. UPCOMING CHANGES TO HEALTH COMMITTEES

Committees with jurisdiction over health care issues will have GOP majorities and new chairmen in 2011. The House Ways and Means Committee will now be led by Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI), and its health subcommittee will be led by Rep. Wally Herger (R-CA.). Reps. Sander Levin (D-MI) and Fortney Pete Stark (D-CA), respectively, will serve as ranking members.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee will be led by Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI), while its health subcommittee will be led by Rep. Joseph R. Pitts (R-PA). Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-CA) will serve as ranking member on the full committee. Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ) will be ranking member on the health subcommittee.

Rep. Harold Rogers (R-KY) will become the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and Rep. Norman Dicks (D-WA) will serve as the Ranking Democrat. The leaders and membership of the House Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee have not yet been announced.

In the Senate, the chairmen of the committees with health care jurisdiction remain the same with Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT) leading the Senate Finance Committee, and Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) heading the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee. Since Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) has moved from Finance to the Judiciary Committee, Senator Orrin G. Hatch (R-UT) is the new ranking member on that committee. Sen. Michael Enzi (R-WY) remains the ranking member on the HELP committee.

The Senate Appropriations Committee leadership remains the same. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI) will be the Chairman and Sen. Thad Cochran (R-MS) will be the Vice Chairman. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) will continue as chair of the Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee, but the Senate Republicans have not named their subcommittee members.

5. DAVID CARLYLE, MD, ON EXCHANGE COMMISSION, NAMED PERSON TO WATCH

The Iowa Health Care Coverage Commission, which David Carlyle, MD, a member of the **Iowa Academy of Family Physicians**, chairs, voted 10-1 in favor of creating a health insurance exchange to help individuals and small businesses compare and purchase insurance policies. Iowa plans to launch this bare-bones model early this year, offering basic information about prices and coverage of health insurance policies, but the state will need extensive additions to meet federal requirements by 2014.

The [Des Moines Register](#) recently named Dr. Carlyle as a person to watch in 2011. In addition to the state's Health Care Coverage Commission, Dr. Carlyle served on various state panels, including as leader of the state tobacco control commission and the committee that set up the state's Hawk-I insurance plan for children. He serves on the Board of Directors for FamMedPAC and has been a member of the AAFP's Commission on Governmental Advocacy. In February, Dr. Carlyle will head to Washington, DC to work on forming health insurance cooperatives (or co-ops) to allow consumers to collectively create competition for private insurance companies. Ro Foege, director of the Iowa Department on Aging and former state legislator, noted Dr. Carlyle's leadership in encouraging Iowans to seek medical homes.

6. LETTER SENT TO FDA REGARDING TOBACCO GRAPHICAL WARNINGS

The AAFP sent the Food and Drug Administration a [letter](#) on December 22 regarding the agency's proposal to require [color graphics](#) and nine new textual warning statements depicting the negative health consequences of smoking on cigarette packaging and advertisements. AAFP expressed support for the FDA's proposal as a significant improvement in the effectiveness of tobacco warnings. AAFP urged the FDA to promptly publish a final rule and to include specific information about appropriate tobacco cessation programs.

7. PAC FEATURED IN AAFP NEWS NOW ARTICLE

AAFP News Now posted a guest opinion article ([AAFP News Now PAC article](#)) this week by FamMedPAC Board Chair Dr. Jim King. AAFP members may post comments to the article if they wish. Sign into the AAFP web site to post a comment.

8. NEW MINNESOTA GOVERNOR EXPANDS STATE'S MEDICAID PROGRAM

In his first official act as Governor, Mark Dayton (D) signed two executive orders implementing Minnesota's early Medicaid enrollment. Under [Executive Order 11-01](#), the state is expected to expand coverage for an estimated 95,000 Minnesotans and protect 20,000 health care jobs across the state, in addition to bringing in approximately \$1.2 billion in federal funds. Adults without children earning less than 75 percent of the federal poverty level are now eligible for Medicaid, although many previously had coverage under either MinnesotaCare or the state's General Assistance Medical Care Program.

Immediately following the executive order signing, the Governor signed a second, [Executive Order 11-02](#). This measure rescinds former Governor Tim Pawlenty's (R) [Executive Order 10-12](#), which banned the Minnesota Departments of Commerce and Health from applying for federal health grants. The **Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians** has actively opposed cuts to safety net coverage for the past several years, including the scaling back of the state's General Assistance Medical Care Program and supports the expanded coverage for those patients. However, the state chapter is concerned about the long-term future of the state's Medicaid program as the new governor will be working with two newly Republican-controlled legislative chambers facing a projected \$6 billion deficit.