

June 14, 2013

IN THIS REPORT...

1. House Committee Looks at Medicaid Reform
2. AAFP Supports the Start Healthy Act
3. House Committee Sets FDA, Nutrition Funding for FY 2014
4. FamMedPAC Tracking Chapter Donations; Supports House Leaders
5. Dr. Regina Benjamin to Step Down as U.S. Surgeon General
6. Arizona Votes to Expand Medicaid
7. Summer Grassroots Campaign

NEXT WEEK IN WASHINGTON...

- * On Tuesday, June 18, the Senate Finance Committee will hold a hearing on transparency in health care spending. Witnesses include Steven Brill, contributing editor of *Time* and author of the article, "Bitter Pill," about how medical prices are determined.
- * On Thursday, June 20, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health will hold a hearing on the 2013 Annual Report of the Boards of Trustees of the Federal Hospital Insurance and Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Funds.

1. HOUSE COMMITTEE LOOKS AT MEDICAID REFORM

The Subcommittee on Health of the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on June 12 entitled, "The Need for Medicaid Reform: A State Perspective". There was one panel of witnesses which included: Tony Keck, Director of the Department of Health and Human Services State of South Carolina, Seema Verma, Strategic Health Policy Solutions and Joe Thompson, M.D., Surgeon General, State of Arkansas. The subcommittee scheduled this hearing to examine how the Medicaid program can continue to serve as the safety net for those who depend on it while the size of the program and costs put it in jeopardy.

Dr. Thompson, a pediatrician, talked about the need for innovation, that there is no uniform approach when attempting to meet the health care needs of a large and growing population of Medicaid recipients. Dr. Thompson said that every state should have a long-term strategy and he claimed that the current payment system requires the state and federal government to spend more money with less positive results. Rep. Mike Burgess, MD (R-TX) said that as we expand the Medicaid program we are also expanding the volume of people who are receiving primary care in the emergency department because access to primary care physicians is limited. In Arkansas, payment to providers is tied to outcomes and Dr. Thompson shared that they see that some provider behaviors have changed, for the good of the state, as a result.

Tony Keck spoke about concerns over the health system's ability to absorb the expansion and the need to modify programs as a result. He described the Patient Centered Medical Home model and the federally qualified health centers that are part of the offerings in his state.

2. AAFP SUPPORTS START HEALTHY ACT

AAFP President Dr. Glen Stream sent a letter expressing AAFP's support for the *Start Healthy Act*, legislation that will be introduced next week by Representative Diana DeGette (D-CO). The bill provides Medicaid coverage, for one year following birth, to newborns who are otherwise ineligible for other programs or coverage. States will receive a 100-percent federal match for these newborns for one year. A copy of the letter will be available on the AAFP web site.

3. HOUSE COMMITTEE SETS FDA, NUTRITION FUNDING LEVELS

The House Appropriations Committee approved the fiscal year 2014 Agriculture Appropriations bill, on June 13. The draft appropriations bill seeks to fund agricultural and food programs and services, including food safety, animal and plant health programs, nutrition and related programs. The bill totals \$19.5 billion in discretionary funding, which is roughly equal to the current spending after the automatic sequestration cuts.

The bill would provide an appropriation of nearly \$2.5 billion to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The bill includes the full authorized user fee amount (\$534 million) for tobacco product regulation and no restrictions on FDA's authorities under the *Tobacco Control Act*.

For the Child Nutrition Programs, the draft provides \$20.5 billion to support school meals. It also includes \$6.7 billion for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children or WIC program. Although this is below last year's level, the committee expects that it will be adequate based on projected birth rates. The committee also provides for continuation of the breastfeeding peer counselor program. The measure includes \$76.3 billion for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in which is \$1 billion less than the current appropriation.

4. FamMedPAC TRACKING CHAPTER DONATIONS; SUPPORTS HOUSE LEADERS

FamMedPAC is tracking the donation totals and percent of members donating from each of the AAFP chapters. So far in this election cycle, California leads all chapters in total amount donated, with \$13,590; while Connecticut leads in percentage, with 5.13% of its members making a donation this year. The PAC will track chapter donations for the two-year election cycle and present the PAC Chapter Awards at the 2015 ALF/NCSC meeting. The PAC supported the following Members of Congress this week:

- **Rep. Peter Roskam (R-IL)**, a member of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Chief Deputy Whip for the Republicans in the House.
- **Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)**, also a member of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Chair of the Democratic Caucus.

5. DR. REGINA BENJAMIN TO STEP DOWN AS U.S. SURGEON GENERAL

Family physician Regina M. Benjamin, MD, MBA announced on Thursday, June 13 that she will be leaving her post as the 18th Surgeon General of the United States next month.

6. ARIZONA VOTES TO EXPAND MEDICAID

The Arizona state legislature, under considerable pressure from the Governor, Jan Brewer (R), on Thursday, June 13 voted to expand Medicaid to 300,000 low-income residents across the state. Arizona becomes the 24th state moving forward with Medicaid expansion.

7. SUMMER GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN

The AAFP's summer grassroots campaign began earlier this week. A broad message that includes a link to this [2-pager](#) is being promoted on the new [aafp.org](#) website. A more targeted message, echoing the sentiments of the [June 10th Energy and Commerce SGR Discussion letter](#) was sent to 3500 AAFP members living in the districts of legislators on the committee.