

6. SENATE PANEL QUESTIONS PROPOSAL TO CURB DRUG COSTS

On Tuesday, June 28, the Senate Finance Committee held a hearing to examine CMS' proposed Medicare Part B Drug demonstration. Legislators expressed concerns about a CMS [proposal](#) to modify the payment system for Part B (physician-administered) drugs. Committee Chairman Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) noted that although the proposal is styled as a demonstration, it is mandatory and nationwide in scope. The senior Democratic member, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR), concerned about the potential of the demonstration to disrupt patient access to care, also noted that Medicare spending on these drugs has grown from \$9.4 billion in 2005 to \$22 billion in 2015. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) worried that the proposal could exacerbate the national crisis of overprescribing opioids to manage chronic pain.

7. AAFP SUPPORTS BILL TO CLARIFY SUNSHINE ACT RESTRICTIONS

The AAFP signed a June 29 [letter](#) to Senator John Barrasso (R-WY) expressing strong support for the *Protect Continuing Physician Education and Patient Care Act* (S. 2978). This bill would protect the dissemination of independent peer-reviewed journals, medical textbooks, and independent continuing medical education from CMS Open Payment (aka Sunshine Act) reporting requirements.

8. FamMedPAC SUPPORTS MEMBERS, CHALLENGER CANDIDATE

FamMedPAC supported several legislators this week, as well as one former Senator seeking to regain his seat in 2016.

- **Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA)** is a member of both the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate HELP Committee.
- **Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA)**, a member of the Health Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, chairs the Republican House Conference.
- **Rep. Andy Harris, MD (R-MD)** is a physician who serves on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education.
- **Russ Feingold (D-WI)** is running against the Senator who defeated him in 2010.

9. KENTUCKY GOVERNOR UNVEILS CONSERVATIVE MEDICAID EXPANSION WAIVER

Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin (R) promised to dismantle the state's Medicaid expansion program and he has now released his plan, [Kentucky HEALTH \(Helping to Engage and Achieve Long Term Health\)](#). The Section 1115 waiver modifies the state's Medicaid expansion program by adding a high-deductible account (funded by the state) to existing capitated managed care coverage, imposing premiums on a sliding scale based on family income, ranging from \$1-\$15, and requiring Medicaid premium assistance to purchase cost-effective employer sponsored insurance. The waiver would also require up to 20 hours per month of employment activities as a condition of eligibility for most adults. Additionally, it would prohibit beneficiaries who do not renew Medicaid eligibility on time from re-enrolling in coverage for six months. The Kentucky HEALTH proposal estimates \$2.2 billion in savings over five years. The proposal is open to public comment through July 22, after which it will be submitted to CMS for approval.

10. TENNCARE EXPANSION DETAILS RELEASED

Tennessee's 3-Star Healthy Task Force, appointed to propose a method for catching Tennesseans in a health care coverage gap, has issued their [proposal](#) which would expand TennCare. The proposal would expand Medicaid to individuals with incomes up to 138 percent of federal poverty level in two stages: first to military veterans and individuals with mental illness or substance abuse disorders; then to all individuals. The program features an employment, training and education component. Medicaid beneficiaries would receive additional credits in their health savings accounts for participating in training and education programs or working.