

March 23, 2018

On the Horizon ...

* Upon passage of the final FY2018 spending bill, Congress began a two-week recess.

TAKE ACTION

FY 2018 Omnibus Spending Bill Speak Out

Advocates using the AAFP Speak Out tool sent 97 emails urging Congress to act to make health insurance more affordable for patients. Unfortunately, Congress failed to include legislative language to stabilize markets in the Omnibus.

U.S. CONGRESS

1. Congress Increases Spending on AAFP's Public Health Priorities

Six months into fiscal year 2018, the Congress completed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 ([HR 1625](#)) funding the government through September 30, 2018. The final bill was bipartisan, passing in the House 256-167 and in the Senate 65-32 to beat the Friday night government shutdown deadline. The White House [indicated](#) President Trump will sign it. The bill includes many important health provisions supported by the AAFP. The AAFP released a [statement](#) from Dr. Michael Munger, AAFP President. A summary of the bill can be found on the [AAFP website](#).

2. Legislators Support Title VII Health Professions Training Grants

On March 16, 78 members of the U.S. House of Representatives sent a "[Dear Colleague letter](#)" to the chairman and ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education. The letter, led by Reps. Jim Langevin (D-RI), Leonard Lance (R-NJ), Diana DeGette (D-CO), and Greg Harper (R-MS), called on Congress to provide \$336 million for Title VII in FY 2019 despite the President's budget proposal eliminating Title VII health professions education and training grants administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration.

3. House Committee Examines Public Health-Related Opioid Addiction Bills

The House Energy and Commerce Committee's Health Subcommittee held [hearings](#) on the opioid crisis during which Committee Chair Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR) highlighted a proposal to establish an interagency coordinating committee to improve prevention and treatment efforts. FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, MD, mentioned efforts to support primary care physicians. Committee leaders expect to draft and approve legislation before the end of May or early June.

4. Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Up for Review

On March 20, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a [hearing](#) to discuss reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. The law, set to expire in 2018, supports grants that promote prevention, law enforcement and victim services. Chair Chuck Grassley (R-IA) highlighted that a top priority would be to address the needs of rape victims by improving the Department of

Justice's DNA backlog program. He also highlighted elder abuse, which often impacts women, as a high priority.

5. Right-to-Try Legislation Clears House Hurdle

On March 21, the House of Representatives approved Right-to-Try legislation ([HR 5247](#)) by a 267-149 [vote](#). The bill will allow seriously ill patients to bypass the FDA's "compassionate use" process to access innovative therapies directly from manufacturers. The bill has raised concerns among health advocates. Last week, the bill was brought up under a process that required a two-thirds majority vote instead of a simple majority. A similar bill passed the U.S. Senate in 2017.

CENTERING ON THE STATES

1. Bills of Interest

- **Health Insurance Deductibles** – [HB 4096](#) in Minnesota would require health plans sold in the state that impose annual deductibles on policyholders to count payments made to both in-network or out-of-network providers as part of the annual deductible. It should be noted that this legislation does not compel insurance companies to pay for services not currently offered by the health plan.
- **Military Medical Veterans** – Several bills are pending in a number of states ([PA](#), [TN](#), [VA](#)) to establish programs or streamlined certifications to allow military medical personnel to practice and perform certain procedures under the supervision of a licensed physician.
- **Red Flag Laws** – Lawmakers in 16 states ([AK](#), [DE](#), [IL](#), [KS](#), [ME](#), [MD](#), [MA](#), [MI](#), [MN](#), [MO](#), [NJ](#), [NY](#), [NC](#), [RI](#), [VT](#), [VA](#)) are considering "red flag laws" -- legislation that would allow law enforcement and/or family members to petition a court for an Extreme Risk Protection Order, or Gun Violence Restraining Order. If the court determines that a person poses a significant risk to hurting themselves or others with a firearm, the individual would be temporarily prohibited from possessing or purchasing firearms for the duration of the Order. Florida just passed its own red flag law as part of its gun control legislation that was signed into law earlier this month, joining five other states (CA, CT, IN, OR, WA) with red flag laws.

2. Medicaid-to-Medicare Advocacy Resources Available

The AAFP Center for State Policy has released a [Medicaid-to-Medicare Parity Toolkit](#) to help chapter staff advocate for parity. The toolkit includes [model legislation](#), [sample letter of support](#), [leave behind for legislators](#), [primer](#), and [relevant research](#). (Note: this content is available for chapter staff only.) Additionally, the Center will host a Chapter Advocacy [Webinar](#) focused on Medicaid-to-Medicare Parity March 29 at 1:00 p.m. CT.

3. Oregon Governor Signs Drug Price Transparency Bill into Law

Oregon Governor Kate Brown recently signed into law bipartisan drug pricing transparency [legislation](#) that would require drug manufacturers to justify large price increases and publicly disclose other information, including profits, advertising and research dollars, and production costs. Unlike other states, including California, that have recently passed laws to require manufacturers to disclose upcoming price hikes, this bill would require drug manufacturers to report drug price increases at the end of each calendar year.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

1. The PTAC Recommends HHS Test the AAFP's APC-APM Model

In a [letter](#) sent March 19 to Secretary Azar, the Academy requested support for testing the AAFP's Advanced Primary Care Alternative Payment Model (APC-APM). The APC-APM is a comprehensive primary care delivery system and payment reform proposal that aims to strengthen primary care, improve quality and outcomes for Medicare beneficiaries and reduce costs for the program. On March 23, the Physician-Focused Payment Model Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) delivered its [recommendation](#) to HHS for testing the APC-APM.

2. Comments Sent on Protecting Statutory Conscience Rights in Health Care

On March 20, the AAFP sent a [letter](#) in response to a proposed rule that aims to ensure health care professionals have the right to decline to participate in medical procedures to which they are opposed on moral or religious grounds. After recognizing and respecting the rights of health care professionals to decline to participate in care that violates their personal code of ethics, the AAFP expressed concern that these actions could restrict access to care for vulnerable patients seeking the aid of their family physician or other health care professionals.

3. Two Family Physicians Nominated to CDC Advisory Committee

On March 19, the AAFP nominated Kenneth Lin, MD, MPH, FAAFP and Margot L. Savoy, MD, MPH to the CDC's Advisory Committee on Breast Cancer in Young Women, which helps develop evidence-based approaches to advance understanding and awareness of breast cancer among young women through prevention research, public and health professional education and awareness activities, and emerging prevention strategies.