



The Lowdown

From Up On The Hill

Exchanges

CSR payments made for September

On September 26, the Trump administration announced it will make the September cost-sharing reduction (CSR) payments. No future payment decisions have been made past September.

[Read More...](#)

Short-term market stabilization efforts may continue

On September 26, Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) announced that he may continue bi-partisan short-term market stabilization discussions with Patty Murray (D-WA). After the ACA repeal-and-replace bill from Senators Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) was removed from Senate consideration, many indicated support for bi-partisan actions because they included multiple hearings and opportunities for feedback.

[Read More...](#)

Florida announces 2018 insurance exchange rates

On September 27, the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation announced that the 2018 insurance exchange rate increases will average 44.7 percent. The majority of this increase – 31 percentage points – is directly attributable to silver plans offered on the exchange. Most consumers with the silver plans will not see an out-of-pocket change, as the federal premium subsidy will also increase to absorb this extra cost.

[Read More...](#)

Georgia announces 2018 insurance exchange rates

On September 27, the Georgia Insurance Commissioner Ralph Hudgens announced that the 2018 insurance exchange rate increases will be as high as 57.5 percent.

[Read More...](#)

Medicare/Medicaid

Massachusetts tests paying for social determinants

This article focuses on efforts from Massachusetts Medicaid to utilize analytics and incentives to address social determinants. UMass created the Social Determinants of Health Model that allows MassHealth to allocate appropriate funding to providers based upon the adjusted risk scores of their socio-economically vulnerable patients. In an ACO contracting with MassHealth for the program, the organization could receive \$2,500 for an individual with a mental illness or \$2,300 for a patient battling substance abuse if they used the right ICD-10 codes associated with these conditions.

[Read More...](#)

CMMI seeks comment on new models

On September 20, CMMI announced a Request for Information (RFI) on a new direction to promote patient-centered care and test market-driven reforms that empower beneficiaries as consumers, provide price transparency, increase choices and competition to drive quality, reduce costs, and improve outcomes. CMMI welcomes stakeholder input on Advanced Alternative Payment Models (APMs); Consumer-Directed Care & Market-Based Innovation Models; Physician Specialty Models; Prescription Drug Models; MA Innovation Models; State-Based and Local Innovation, including Medicaid-focused Models; Mental and Behavioral Health Models; and Program Integrity.

[Read More...](#)

Former HHS officials tout social determinants

On September 23, former HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt and ONC Karen DiSalvo wrote an op-ed stating that addressing social determinants of health will continue to transform the delivery of healthcare and improve health. They also state that communities need a unifying alliance to clarify the imperative to address the social determinants; identify opportunities for shared learning and action at all levels; develop a strategic agenda of priorities for action; and, where appropriate, inform and establish a more supportive policy environment.

[Read More...](#)



Senate passes legislation for Medicare chronically ill

On September 26, the Senate unanimously passed legislation to improve the care of chronically ill Medicare beneficiaries. Among other provisions, the bill, which was the result of a multi-year, bi-partisan process, would allow more flexibility in the MA Value-Based Insurance Design Model, re-authorize the MA Special Needs Program (SNP), and allow MA plans more flexibility to target supplemental benefits to chronically ill beneficiaries. The legislation now moves to the House, where it has been considering similar legislation. Change Healthcare has sent letters of support to both the House and Senate on these bills.

[Read More...](#)

Health IT/Quality

EHR Association responds to interoperability claims

On September 13, the EHR Association (EHRA) Executive Committee published a response to an earlier post on Health Affairs Blog that accused EHR and health IT companies of monetizing the custody of PHI. The blog states that EHR developers provide tools to help customers care for patients and increase these patients' access to their health information. It also states that all certified EHRs make available clinical summaries in a readable format based upon standards adopted by the ONC via the View, Download, and Transport capability, typically through patient portals.

[Read More...](#)

NCQA releases 2017 Health Insurance Plan Ratings

On September 21, NCQA released its 2017 Health Insurance Plan Ratings. The ratings are a system similar to CMS Star Ratings of MA plans, and give unprecedented importance to health outcomes and consumer satisfaction. NCQA studied 1,429 health plans and rated 1,062: 498 private (commercial), 386 Medicare and 178 Medicaid

[Read More...](#)

FDA announces participants in digital health software pre-certification pilot program

On September 26, the FDA announced the names of its digital health software pre-certification pilot program. FDA hopes to determine the key metrics and performance indicators for pre-certification through the program and identify ways that pre-certified companies could potentially submit less information to the FDA than is currently required before marketing a new digital health tool as part of a formal program. The FDA is also considering, as part of the pilot program, whether and how pre-certified companies may not have to submit a product for premarket review in some cases.

[Read More...](#)

NQF issues quality roadmap for reducing healthcare disparities

On September 28, the National Quality Forum (NQF) released a roadmap for healthcare providers, health plans, and others to take action to eliminate healthcare disparities using quality performance measures and related policy levers. The roadmap lays out four actions: prioritizing measures that can help to identify and monitor disparities; implementing evidence-based interventions to reduce disparities; investing in the development and use of measures to assess interventions that reduce disparities; and providing incentives to reduce disparities. NQF developed the roadmap with funding from HHS and with input from a committee of nearly two dozen public- and private-sector stakeholders, including plans, providers, consumers, and patients.

[Read More...](#)