



Welcome to *Washington Update*, the weekly e-newsletter on the latest health care happenings in the nation's capital that affect APG's members.

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Six-Month Government Funding Plan Proposed By House GOP Leadership Collapses Amid Party Infighting

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) has – at least for now – pulled from consideration a plan to extend fiscal 2024 funding until next March over intra-party disputes. His action leaves the GOP leadership looking for solutions that will buy enough support from the fractured Republican caucus to pass – or making a deal with Democrats to pass a shorter-term continuing resolution, as eventually ended a partial government shutdown last year.

With just days left to meet the September 30 fiscal year funding deadline, multiple health care provisions, such as extension of Medicare's telehealth flexibilities, still hang in the balance. But the broad pressure to avoid a shutdown on the eve of the November elections suggests that an eventual deal with Democrats on a short-term funding extension is likely. Such an outcome could pose further problems for Johnson, who is likely to face a vote to oust him

as Speaker if he once again finds common cause with the opposing party.

Party fissures: House Republicans have splintered along varying lines, with some opposing [continuing resolutions](#) (CRs) under any circumstances. Campaigning for re-election, former President Trump has pressured Johnson to shut down the government if the CR does not include the [SAVE Act](#), a measure that would require people to provide documentary proof of citizenship when registering to vote in federal elections. Senate Republicans, on the other hand, generally want to avoid a shutdown, making it more likely that they, too, will support a bipartisan deal on a shorter-term funding extension, presumably into December.



APG Supports New Primary Care Billing Codes, Expanded Telehealth Flexibilities For Accountable Care In Comment Letter On Proposed Physician Fee Schedule Rule

Commenting on the 2025 Physician Fee Schedule and Medicare Shared Savings Program [proposed rule](#), APG [urged](#) the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services this week to adopt new billing codes for primary care management, finalize various proposals to pay for telehealth, and look for other ways to expand telehealth flexibilities for organizations participating in accountable care models. APG also signaled that it will continue to work with Congress to offset the proposed 2025 Medicare physician fee cut that is required by statute, but which will have “deleterious impact on physicians and the patients [whom] they serve.”

In multiple other comments on the more than 1,000-page proposed rule, APG also said the following:

- CMS should limit the number of new quality measures introduced for the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) and test them before requiring them.
- CMS should proceed to develop an “advanced primary care hybrid” payment model within the fee schedule and explore options for integrating specialists into existing models such as MSSP and ACO REACH, using the Merit-based Incentive Payment System Value Pathways, or MVP's, to measure their performance.
- CMS should finalize its proposal to “prepay” shared savings to eligible ACOs with some modifications, but should proceed cautiously in developing a new ENHANCED ACO track with

greater risk to better understand which participants in the ACO REACH model are truly achieving “global” savings inclusive of hospital care.



In Case You Missed It

- The Biden Administration [finalized rules](#) requiring mental health parity with other types of health care for commercial insurers that offer these mental health benefits. However, because [Medicare was excluded](#) from the original Mental Health Parity Act of 1996, the new rules also exclude Medicare Advantage plans. The Administration seeks comments on future rulemaking for Medicaid managed care plans, since some parity rules were [applied](#) to Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) in 2016.
- The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee will [vote](#) next week to hold Steward Health System CEO Ralph de la Torre accountable for civil and criminal contempt for failing to comply with a subpoena to testify before the panel this week. The announcement came after an emotional [hearing](#) in which nurses at Steward hospitals testified that the company's extreme financial mismanagement led to severe understaffing, equipment shortages, and other problems that contributed to patients' deaths.
- A group of House Republicans continue to press CMS over its [Medicare Part D Premium Stabilization Demonstration](#) program and its projected costs to taxpayers, hasty creation, and other matters. Their latest critique appeared in a September 9 [letter](#) to CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks LaSure.



APG Announcements And Offerings

- **[REGISTRATION IS OPEN!](#) - APG's Fall Conference 2024 - Health Care Strong: Embracing Change and Thriving in Uncertain Times - will be held November 11 – 13 in Washington, DC.** Don't miss our superb lineup of speakers and unparalleled networking opportunities. Early Bird savings end on 9/30, so register today!
- The next APG Hosted Webinar, "**Intersecting Clinical Documentation Improvement (CDI) and Technology to**

Positively Impact Risk Adjustment and Patient Outcomes" will take place on Thursday, October 3, 2:00-3:00 pm ET. The webinar will be presented by Episource. For more information, including the learning objectives and speakers, [click here](#). Please register [here](#).

- Want to get more involved in APG's Federal advocacy efforts? [Join APG Advocates today](#).

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