



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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Uncertainty Over Health Care Priorities Remains As New Regime Gets Underway In Washington

The 119th Congress and its leadership is in place, and the inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump is just over a week away – affording an opportunity for horizon-scanning as to what lies ahead for health care. Here's a sample:

Senate Confirmation hearings for key posts: Although some cabinet officials – such as Secretary of State designee Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) – are likely to be confirmed on Jan. 20, [no dates](#) have yet been set for hearings for Health and Human Services secretary nominee Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., or Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services administrator nominee Mehmet Oz. As Kennedy met with key senators this week, many appeared to be noncommittal about his potential confirmation.

Single reconciliation bill or two? Discussion continues between the incoming administration and Congress as to whether it will require one or two big [reconciliation bills](#) to tackle a host of key legislative priorities, including border security measures and [extension](#) of expiring tax cuts and other federal tax law

changes. Given the huge looming debate over the estimated costs of tax cut extensions in particular (\$4 trillion over 10 years) – and whether they will be fully offset by other tax or spending changes – these two areas alone are expected to consume much of Congress’s available legislative time and energy for months.

As any of this legislation moves forward, some major health care measures are likely to be included, according to news reports. Options that key House Republicans are eyeing include [transparency provisions](#) for pharmaceutical benefit management companies, [site neutral payment policies](#) in Medicare and imposing [per capita caps on Medicaid spending](#). Previewing the fights to come, a coalition of roughly 300 health care organizations sent a [letter](#) opposing the prospect of Medicaid cuts to congressional leadership this week.

Other airtime for health care? Key House and Senate Republicans said this week that they remain committed to dealing with key health care measures that were tabled amid the December crunch to pass [legislation](#) to keep the government operating. Chief among them: rolling back much of the 2.8 percent Medicare Physician Fee Schedule cut for 2025 that took effect Jan. 1. Also on their list are new, more longer-lasting extensions of Medicare telehealth payment flexibilities and the Acute Hospital Care at Home waiver; these provisions won short-term [extensions](#) in December that will carry them through March, when the current continuing resolution expires.

The best advice from experts to health policy watchers at this point seems to be this: Buckle up; it will be a rocky ride.



Medicare Advantage Changes Anticipated As Proposed Rule Leaves The White House

The 2026 Medicare Advantage Advance Notice has cleared review by the White House Office of Management and Budget. It may be released as early as later today or, more likely, next week. APG will schedule an educational webinar and member focus-group meeting following publication. Watch APG Announcements and Offerings for the schedule.



In Case You Missed It

- A long-awaited [proposed rule](#) from the Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Health and Human would **impose strict new cybersecurity provisions on health care providers, health plans, and other business entities** covered under federal HIPAA law. Among the [provisions](#) would be mandatory use of multi-factor authentication – the absence of which on one key server led to last year’s Change Healthcare cyberattack. Comments on the proposed rule are due March 7.
- The **Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy at HHS has released its [strategic plan for health-related AI](#)**, although it is unclear whether the plan may be revisited under the incoming Trump administration.
- A bipartisan group of Senate Finance Committee members has released **[draft legislation to boost Graduate Medical Education spending to fund 5,000 new residency training programs](#)** focused on critical shortage areas such as primary care and psychiatry. Positions would be allocated to teaching hospitals in both rural and urban areas based on perceived need. The measure also proposes enhanced federal data collection “to better allocate GME funding and address workforce gaps,” according to a [news release](#).
- Under [proposed legislation](#) introduced by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), **prior authorization (PA) in Medicare Advantage would include a requirement that CMS standardize the PA protocols** now used for many of the costliest services and products. In a [news release](#), APG President and CEO Susan Dentzer was quoted as endorsing the measure, and specifically a provision extending gold card programs for providers proficient in Medicare Shared Savings Plans.



APG Announcements And Offerings

- APG will host a members-only Focus Group meeting on **Tuesday, January 14, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm ET**, to solicit feedback about the Medicare Advantage & Part D Proposed Rule for APG's comment letter to CMS. MA Coalition members should have received an email with the registration link.
- APG will host an **Emerging Trends in Health Care Webinar** on **Wednesday, February 12, 2:00 pm – 2:45 pm ET**, with guest [Seema Verma](#), Executive Vice President and General Manager of Oracle Health and Life Sciences, and former

administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Register for the webinar [here](#).

- Registration is now open for the [APG Spring Conference 2025](#) — **Kickstarting Accountable Care: Innovations for an Urgent Future, May 14-16, in San Diego, CA**. APG Members who register by February 14 save \$300 with the Super Early Bird rate. APG Partners and non-members save up to \$200 with regular Early Bird registration that ends March 14. Groups of 5 or more that register together receive an additional \$50 savings per registrant. **NEW THIS YEAR: Bundle your Savings!** All APG Spring Conference 2025 registrants will have an opportunity to register for the APG Fall Conference 2025 at the lowest price of the year, with discounts up to \$400. Simply follow the link on your Spring Conference confirmation e-mail to register for Fall now!
- Sponsorship is open for the **APG Spring Conference 2025**, May 14-16, in San Diego. Visit our [Spring Conference 2025 sponsor website](#) and reserve your space today!
- Want to get more involved in APG's Federal advocacy efforts? [Join APG Advocates today](#).

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