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July 27, 2020

Welcome to America's Physician Groups' "Healthcare on the Hill," where you can get the latest on healthcare happenings in our nation's capital--and with a special focus on the value-based care movement.

As our nation--and the world--continues to face the many challenge presented by COVID-19, we are working to ensure you have the very latest information on the virus and our rapidly changing healthcare landscape.

Think someone else may enjoy "Healthcare on the Hill?" [Forward this email and have them click here to be added to our subscription list.](#) And remember, you can always visit our [website](#) for more news and resources.

***Valinda Rutledge
Senior Vice President of Federal Affairs
America's Physician Groups***

APG Joins Coalition Supporting the Value in Health Care Act

APG and thirteen national health stakeholder groups filed a [letter](#) in support of a new bipartisan House bill "[The Value in Health Care Act](#)" that will accelerate Medicare's move to value-based payment by boosting accountable care organizations (ACOs) and other alternative payment models (APMs). The bill will strengthen the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) by increasing shared savings rates, updating risk adjustment rules, eliminating the artificial distinction between "high" and "low" revenue ACOs, addressing ACOs' "rural glitch," and restarts the ACO Investment Model. The bill also reinforces the

shift to value-based care by extending the 5 percent Advanced APM bonus for an additional six years, modifying the threshold to achieve that 5 percent bonus, and authorizing a study of the overlap of various Medicare APMs.

APG Joins Healthcare Groups Urging Congress to Prioritize Federal Funding for COVID-19 Testing

APG joined nearly 50 leading healthcare organizations and other groups calling on Congress to dedicate strong federal funding for COVID-19 testing that is critically needed to reopen the country.

Some highlights from the [letter](#):

- “Swift action is needed to ensure that every American, especially essential workers, frontline healthcare physicians and other clinicians and those at disproportionate risk for COVID-19 have access to vital COVID-19 testing, whether for diagnostic, occupational, return-to-school, public health or virus monitoring purposes.”
- “Given what we know about this virus and the risk of spread by individuals without symptoms, our response to COVID-19 comes down to two essential elements – we must be able to quickly diagnose the virus, and we need to proactively screen to prevent and mitigate its spread.”
- “Dedicated federal funding and clear coverage guidelines are critical for the scale and degree of testing that is needed to reopen, to reduce the risk of transmission, and to understand the progression of the disease and aid in development of better treatments and vaccines.”

APG’s advocacy efforts surrounding testing for physician practices and continued guidance and clarity will continue as we monitor ongoing developments in Washington.

Trump Administration Officially Extends the Public Health Emergency

Last week, the Trump administration [announced](#) another extension of the public health emergency surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The extension comes in advance of the end of the current public health emergency declaration which was set to expire on Saturday. The new extension will cover an additional 90 days and is set to expire in late October, unless extended once again.

The extension will allow for the continuation of a number of resources being used to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, including healthcare relief such as flexibilities for telehealth services and the mitigation of losses for the Medicare Shared Savings Program, both of which APG has diligently advocated for over the past four months. APG will continue to monitor the ongoing public health emergency and pandemic and keep you informed on developments as they occur.

CMMI Announces Changes to 2021 NGACO, MSSP, and Direct Contracting Participation Deadlines

Last week, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) announced new guidelines for participation in its advanced payment model programs, including Next Generation ACOs (NGACO), the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP), and Direct Contracting.

CMMI has established that:

- For ACOs participating in the **NGACO** program that are deciding between staying in their NGACO or joining the Direct Contracting model for 2021 participation, the deadline for a decision is **October 23, 2020**
- For ACOs participating in **MSSP** that are deciding between staying in their MSSP or joining the Direct Contracting model for 2021 participation the deadline for a decision is **September 22, 2020**
- Entities are not able to participate in NGACO or MSSP in the first quarter of 2021 before switching to Direct Contracting April 1, 2021
 - Entities that choose to participate in Direct Contracting in 2021 will therefore not be participating in the performance period of any initiative from January-March 2021.
 - Qualifying APM participants will qualify on the June 30, 2021 and/or August 31, 2021 snapshot dates.

APG will continue to monitor all developments for these models and will be actively advocating for continued changes that make these models, and our members participation in them, as strong and viable as possible.

President Trump Issues Executive Orders on Prescription Drug Pricing

Late on Friday, President Trump signed four executive orders seeking to make substantive changes to subscription drug pricing.

The executive orders would:

- Allow states to develop plans to import cheaper drugs from Canada
- Eliminate rebate drug discounts to simplify the system
- Make EpiPens and insulin more affordable for patients of community health centers
- Lower the prices paid by Medicare for drugs to sync with prices paid in other countries, or the "most favored nation status" policy

The most favored nation executive order will be delayed until Aug. 25 to give pharmaceutical companies a chance to meet with the President to discuss alternative

proposals. It is also unclear when the other orders will be finalized and take effect.

APG will continue to monitor developments and provide updates as they arise.

Just Announced: APG's 2020 Colloquium Virtual Event on November 17-19

As you know, we had hoped to hold the APG Colloquium 2020 in person in Washington, DC, but the health and safety of our members is of paramount importance. So, in the spirit of adaptability and resilience in a COVID-19 world, we are pleased to announce that the **APG Colloquium 2020 will now be a virtual event, November 17-19.**

Registration for the Colloquium will open in early August. Please download our [calendar reminder here](#) to reserve these dates on your schedule now. Please stay tuned. As we confirm details, we will keep you all posted on Colloquium 2020 registration and news as frequently as necessary.
