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March 9, 2021

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 challenges 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
Executive Vice President of Federal Affairs
America's Physician Groups

Senate Passes COVID-19 Relief Bill, House Expected to Follow Suit This Week

After 24 hours of debate, the Senate passed the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package on Saturday by a vote of 50-49. The bill passed completely along partisan lines with all Democratic Senators voting in favor and all Republicans opposed. The bill includes another round of stimulus payments to Americans, this time totaling \$1,400, an increase to the child tax credit and an extension of supplemental unemployment benefits through September 6.

Following the marathon of debate, the Senate added the following:

- \$8.5 billion in funding for rural hospitals and health care providers under the Provider Relief Fund
- Increase in federal subsidies for COBRA coverage
- A Medicare wage index minimum for hospitals in all-urban states
- Authority for the Department of Health and Human Services Secretary to temporarily waive or modify the application of certain Medicare requirements concerning ambulance services furnished during public health emergencies
- Created additional resources for vaccines, treatment, personal protective equipment, testing, and contact tracing
- \$7.6 billion for public health workforce
- Investment in mental health and substance use disorder
- Support to safely open schools
- Increase in premium subsidy for the ACA marketplace

The House is expected to pass the final version of the bill this week in time to beat the March 14 expiration date of unemployment benefits, with the President signing the bill into law soon after.

APG Letter to CMMI on the Delay the DC Model

APG has been a strong advocate in advancing alternative payments models and was excited about the launch of the Global and Professional Direct Contracting Model (GPDC). This model, and many others, are an integral part towards moving away from volume to value.

We were pleased to see that the GPDC Model Team at CMS announced late last week that the PY2021 Participation Agreement (PA) and benchmarks are now available for the April 1st participants. APG also sent a letter to the new Deputy Administrator and Director of CMMI, Liz Fowler urging the agency not to delay opening the application portal for the January 1, 2022 GPDC participants.

Last week, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that the Geographic Direct Contracting Model application portal, which was due to open on March 1 through April 2 was delayed until further notice. CMMI also announced several delays/deadline extensions to the other models including the CHART (Community Transformation Track model), the Kidney Care Model, and the Primary Care First Seriously Ill Model.

Specifically, CMMI extended the deadline to submit applications for the Community

Transformation Track model to May 11 with the LOI's due April 13. The Kidney Care Choices Model's first Performance Year will now not start until January 1, 2022, and the Primary Care First Model for the seriously ill population component was supposed to begin on April 1 but has been delayed and is currently under review. We will keep you posted on any new developments.

[Launch of APG Direct Contracting Coalition](#)

On March 5, CMMI announced that **Global/Professional Direct Contracting** will start April 1st and the participation agreements and other associated documents were distributed to participants. APG has been working hard to help your organizations prepare for the launch of this model, but we know that with the recent delay by CMMI of the GEO model and the whirlwind of the past year has likely made many of you unsure on what to do next.

With less than a month away, do you break out in a sweat at the mere idea of moving your organization toward a **Direct Contracting Model**? Thinking of just throwing your hands up and not applying at all because it all seems far too complicated and too risky? Have no fear, we're here to help!

APG will be sponsoring and supporting the launch of a special coalition for current and potential Direct Contracting participants so that we can exchange information, share best practices, and collaborate on advocacy opportunities that will strengthen your experience under Direct Contracting. We want to help ensure success for all participants!

If you belong to a healthcare **organization interested in joining our coalition and qualify as a potential or current Direct Contracting participant**, please submit a name and contact information to Shelley Robinette (srobinette@apg.org).

We look forward to creating an opportunity for everyone to have the best possible experience in Direct Contracting!



This message was sent to srobinette@apg.org from:

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