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April 28, 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***

APG Sends Letter to CMMI Outlining Concerns on MSSP Quality Issues

This week, APG sent a [letter](#) to Liz Richter, Acting Administrator for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on the agency's recent changes the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) and Quality Payment Program (QPP). These changes in policies will likely have a significant impact particularly for physician practice ACOs. In our letter, APG outlines the following recommendations:

- Extend the option for CMS Web Interface reporting until issues have been addressed
- Remove the all-payer requirement for measures reporting
- Set shared savings eligibility standards using a target that is established and published in advance
- Seek additional stakeholder input on the recent changes to quality measures

APG's Direct Contracting Coalition

APG's Direct Contracting Coalition has been hard at work as we continue our advocacy efforts on Direct Contracting. The Coalition sent a [letter](#) to CMMI requesting that the agency reopen the application portal for global and professional geographic direct contracting model. We are drafting a second letter this week to provide detailed recommendations for changes to the April 1st performance period and flexibilities needed for the January 1st deferred applicants.

If you want to be a part of this Coalition and you belong to a provider organization, please submit a name and contact information to Shelley Robinette (srobinette@apg.org). The Coalition is for current and potential Direct Contracting participants and is a perfect opportunity to exchange information, share best practices, and collaborate on advocacy efforts that will strengthen your experience under Direct Contracting.

House W&M Health Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Telehealth

Today at 2:00pm ET, the House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee will hold a hearing on "Charting the Path Forward for Telehealth." Witnesses at the hearing include:

- **Sinsi Hernández-Cancio, JD**, Vice President for Health Justice, National Partnership for Women and Families
- **Ellen Kelsay**, President & CEO, Business Group on Health
- **Thomas Kim, MD, MPH**, AGMP Telehealth
- **Ateev Mehrotra, MD, MPH**, Associate Professor of Health Care Policy, Department of Health Care Policy, Harvard Medical School
- **Joel White**, Executive Director, Health Innovation Alliance

They are expected to testify about how the telehealth flexibilities that have been implemented during the COVID-19 public health emergency have impacted care delivery, utilization, and health care spending. The hearing will also explore the impact of telehealth on reducing barriers to health care access for individuals in rural and underserved communities, ongoing challenges to ensure telehealth services are delivered equitably and

in the correct clinical settings, and the implications of various proposals to permanently expand telehealth payments in the Medicare program. The hearing will be held remotely via Cisco Webex video conferencing on the [Ways and Means Committee's website](#).

APG has been diligently advocating on the issue of allowing the use of audio-only telehealth services under Medicare Advantage (MA) risk adjustment, communicating with both the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and being supportive of corresponding legislation in both the House ([H.R. 2166](#)) and the Senate ([S.150](#)).

Update on the Nomination Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, CMS

Last week, the Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on the nomination of Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Although she is still expected to be confirmed, the Senate was split by a vote of 14 to 14. Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) stated that he held up the confirmation due to the objection to the Biden administration's decision to repeal the 10-year, \$100B extension of the Texas 1115 Medicaid waiver which current Acting CMS Administrator Liz Richter said the Trump administration approved without following the agency's rulemaking process. Despite this hold, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) can still hold a confirmation vote before the full Senate Chamber where it is expected that Ms. Brooks-LaSure will be able to receive the simple majority needed for confirmation of her nomination.

Biden Set to Unveil Sweeping American Families Plan Tonight

President Joe Biden is expected to announce his extensive American Families Plan tonight during his address before Congress. The plan, which will address numerous nationwide social infrastructure issues, is estimated to total nearly \$1.5 trillion with its centerpieces being increases to child care funding, investment in education such as free community college and universal pre-K for all 3 and 4-year old children, as well as paid family and medical leave. Other provisions expected to be included are:

- An extension of the expanded child tax credit to 2025
- An extension of the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit
- An extension of expanded Affordable Care Act subsidies

President Biden's plan is expected to pay for the increases in social services through increases in tax rates listed below and enforcement from the Internal Revenue Service:

- Increase in the top marginal tax rate to 39.6 percent from 37 percent
- Increase in the capital gains tax rate for \$1+ million earners

Republicans have expressed opposition to the tax increases with some Democrats, such as Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) expressing worry over the increases and any corresponding legislative strategy to overcome opposition in Congress. Democratic Congressional committee chairs are currently working on pieces of the proposal with White House officials acknowledging the possibility that it could in separate pieces rather than as one large bill.

APG to Host Virtual Hill Briefing on the Transition to Value-Based Care

As the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed existing gaps in our healthcare system that must be evaluated and improved upon, APG has organized a virtual briefing to discuss the transition away from expensive fee-for-service care and toward a system that rewards providers for providing low-cost, quality care. Register for:

From Quantity to Quality: The Transition Toward Value-Based Care

Tuesday, May 18 from 2:00pm to 3:00pm EDT

[Register Here](#)

As the nation emerges from the ongoing public health emergency, healthcare providers and legislators must do more to create strong incentives for the delivery system to continue moving toward value-based care and a stronger healthcare system. You won't want to miss this panel of experts which includes:

- Donald Crane, President and CEO, America's Physician Groups, Los Angeles, CA
- Kelly Robison, Chief Executive Officer, Brown & Toland Physicians, Oakland, CA
- Philip Oravetz, MD, Chief Population Health Officer, Ochsner Health, Jefferson, LA
- Steven Sell, Chief Executive Officer, Agilon Health, San Francisco, CA

The panel will cover:

- The operational infrastructure required for value-based care
- The importance of care coordination
- The effects of value-based care on utilization, e.g. hospital admissions

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SAVE THE DATE

EMERGING FROM THE PANDEMIC: THE PATH FORWARD



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