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May 18, 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 Direct Contracting Coalition Sends Response to House Representatives' Letter to HHS

On Monday, the APG Direct Contracting Coalition sent a [letter](#) to Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra in response to a [letter](#) sent by Representatives Bill Pascrell, Jr., Mark Pocan, Katie Porter, and Lloyd Doggett expressing their concerns about the Direct Contracting Entities (DCE) pilot programs' accountability

and effect on Medicare beneficiaries' choice and consumer protections, calling for a freeze on the programs.

The Coalition letter outlines many of the misunderstandings and inaccuracies in the letter from Congress and outlines the benefits of direct contracting from its positive effect on primary care access, beneficiary choice through its voluntarily alignment structure, and the consumer protections offered by the model of care's new benefits. APG's Direct Contracting Coalition has been diligently advocating in Washington on Direct Contracting. 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.

APG Board Member Dr. Narayana Murali to Testify Before U.S. Senate Finance Committee

On May 19, member of APG's Board of Directors and Executive Director of the Marshfield Clinic in Marshfield, WI, Narayana Murali, MD will testify before the United States Senate's Committee on Finance on behalf of APG. The hearing, entitled [COVID-19 Health Care Flexibilities: Perspectives, Experiences, and Lessons Learned](#), will focus on the various flexibilities that have been implemented in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, how these flexibilities have affected healthcare providers in capitated risk models, and how these flexibilities can be utilized and improved once our country's public health emergency has ended.

Dr. Murali will be speaking to the panel of Senators about APG's perspective on the vital role that physicians participating in risk-based, capitated contracts play in the future of telehealth services. He will also discuss Marshfield Clinic's experiences with telehealth during the pandemic.

APG has been diligently advocating for strengthened telehealth services in healthcare and for the value-based movement on Capitol Hill and with the various federal agencies that regulate healthcare. Those efforts have now borne fruit as Senate Finance Committee staff sought out our association's expertise as they navigate the future of these COVID-19 flexibilities.

We hope that you will be able to listen in on **Wednesday morning, May 19th at 10:00am EDT** at the link above to witness Dr. Murali's testimony and watch the hearing live. Other

witnesses at the hearing will include:

- Jessica Farb, Director, Health Care, United States Government Accountability Office, Washington, DC
- Kisha Davis, M.D., MPH, Member, Commission On Federal And State Policy, American Academy of Family Physicians, Leawood, KS
- Linda V. DeCherrie, M.D., Clinical Director, Mount Sinai At Home And Professor, Geriatrics And Palliative Medicine, Icahn School Of Medicine At Mount Sinai Mount Sinai Health System, New York, NY
- Robert A. Berenson, M.D., Institute Fellow, Urban Institute, Washington, DC

HHS Secretary Testifies Before Congress on FY2022 Budget, Various Healthcare Issues

Last week, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra testified before the House Committee on Appropriations, outlining his department's discretionary budget for fiscal year (FY) 2022. Secretary Becerra fielded questions on a variety of topics including surprise billing implementation, and Medicare policy and non-ACA-compliant plans. Becerra told the committee that HHS is reviewing Trump administration regulations that allowed short-term plans to run for up to a year and renewed for up to three years, but that a new rule from the department will not include a blanket ban. When asked by Republican lawmakers whether he believes the money accumulated from allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices should be reinvested in the program, with Becerra responding that HHS will implement whatever Congress passes in legislation. On surprise billing, Becerra stated the department's commitment to transparency with Congress on developments and with moving on the issue as quickly as possible. The Secretary did not commit to a proposed rule on surprise billing.

Andrea Palm Confirmed as New Deputy Secretary of HHS

Last week, HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra formally swore in Andrea Palm as the agency's new Deputy Secretary. Palm said, "I want to thank President Biden, Secretary Becerra, and the Senate for their faith in me to serve as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services," said Deputy Secretary Andrea Palm. "Our country is facing big challenges right now – and it's our responsibility to be tireless stewards of this agency that touches nearly every aspect of American life. My focus will be on improving the lives and livelihoods of the American people: tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, efficiently and equitably distributing vaccines, expanding access to affordable health care, addressing the epidemic of substance use disorders, and improving mental health care. Public service has

been my life's calling, and I'm eager to work arm-in-arm with Secretary Becerra and the Biden Administration to build back better than before."

Update on the Nomination Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, CMS

In late April, the Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on the nomination of Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to be Administrator of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The Senate has held up the confirmation in the past few weeks due to ongoing partisan disputes. However, last week they agreed to advance her nomination in a 51-48 procedural vote.

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

There is still time to register for today's 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. Space is limited to register today.

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, Long Beach, 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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