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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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New Model Set To Integrate Behavioral And Physical Health In Medicaid

Health care providers serving Medicaid patients may soon have the chance to test novel approaches to integrating behavioral and physical health. Beginning in fall 2024, and spanning eight years, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation Center (CMMI) plans to grant awards to Medicaid agencies in up to eight states to pursue the center's latest model—[Innovation in Behavioral Health \(IBH\)](#).

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) designed the IBH model to enhance care quality and health outcomes for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries dealing with moderate to severe mental health conditions, substance use disorders (SUD), or both. Medicaid agencies in states selected to receive the CMMI grants will fund patient services, through which community-based behavioral health practices will screen and assess patients' behavioral and physical health and health-related social needs, such as housing, food, and transportation. They will then make "closed loop" referrals as needed to other primary care providers,

specialists, and community-based resources, as depicted in an agency-issued [journey map](#).

The model's goal is to equip providers with valuable experience integrating behavioral and physical health services, preparing them for advanced alternative payment models and future accountable care arrangements. CMS says it will release further details on how states can participate soon.



ACA Marketplace Surges: Key Insights From 2023-2024 Open Enrollment Period

Many of those disenrolled from Medicaid after COVID-era protections expired gained coverage through the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) health insurance marketplaces, the Biden Administration reported this week. According to newly released data on the 2023-2024 open enrollment period, approximately 2.4 million of those who signed up for coverage in the marketplaces had previously enrolled with Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP). They joined more than 5 million new and 16 million returning enrollees to drive record overall enrollment in the ACA's qualified health plans, which now totals more than 21 million.



Senate Finance Committee Investigates Medicare Advantage Marketing Practices

Following recent Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) [moves](#) to rein in brokers, the marketing practices surrounding Medicare Advantage (MA) Plans continue to draw scrutiny in Congress. This week, Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden (D-OR) asked five so-called third-party marketing organizations, or TPMOs, to answer questions about their tactics. TPMOs and so-called lead generators collect information about older adults and then sell it to others, including insurance agents and health insurers.

In [letters](#) to the TPMOs, Wyden wrote that “the largely unregulated sale of seniors’ information...has led to a race to the bottom as unscrupulous actors put their own financial interests ahead of seniors’ health needs.” He and other critics have pointed to Medicare beneficiaries becoming increasingly overwhelmed with calls, texts, and emails related to MA products and potentially misleading or high-pressure sales tactics.

APG will monitor the Senate panel’s ongoing investigation and any legislative proposals that may result.



Health Care Negotiations Continue As Federal Spending Deadlines Loom

With fiscal 2024 federal spending deadlines pushed to early March, discussions continued in Congress this week on health care provisions that could end up in a final spending package. Still on the table are modifications in the 2024 Medicare physician fee cut and extension of the Medicare bonuses for clinicians participating in advanced alternative payment models. APG continues its advocacy on both.



APG Announcements And Offerings

- APG will host an Emerging Trends in Health Care Webinar with guest Rebekah Gee, MD, MPH, FACOG, Founder and CEO of Nest Health Whole Family Health. Please save the date: February 20, 2024, at 2:30 pm ET.
- As APG discussed in a webinar on October 26, CMS has introduced a new Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) Model and has opened the [Request for Applications \(RFA\) portal](#). Applications are due by January 30, 2024.
- Registration is open for the APG Spring Conference 2024, May 29-31, in San Diego. APG members can save \$300 with the Super Early Bird rate (February 29 deadline). Register [here](#).
- Want to get more involved in APG's Federal advocacy efforts? [Join APG Advocates today](#).



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