



Welcome to *Washington Update*, the weekly e-newsletter on the latest health care happenings in the nation's capital that affect APG's members.

Table of Contents

- **As Senate GOP Leaders Rework Reconciliation Bill, Medicaid Provisions May Go From Worse To Bad**
- **Newly Appointed CDC Advisory Panel Launches Controversial Overhaul Of Federal Vaccine Guidance**
- **One Win For Health Care Access And One Loss From End-Of-Term Decisions By The Supreme Court**
- **In Case You Missed It**
- **APG Announcements And Offerings**



As Senate GOP Leaders Rework Reconciliation Bill, Medicaid Provisions May Go From Worse To Bad

Congressional Republicans' forced march to enact [reconciliation legislation](#) hit a major snag this week as the Senate's version faced a broad overhaul due to rulings by the [Senate parliamentarian](#). It now appears likely that the Senate will be forced to scale back its massive Medicaid cuts and make other changes that will bring the bill closer to the version that passed the House in May ([Washington Update - May 23, 2025](#)), and thus able to make it to President Trump's desk for signage by a self-imposed Fourth of July deadline.

At issue are provisions of the Senate bill that, in the parliamentarian's view, did not meet technical requirements to be included in

reconciliation legislation under the so-called [Byrd rule](#). Foremost among these are sharp new limits on Medicaid [provider taxes](#) and [provisions](#) that would effectively cut federal Medicaid funding to states that used their own funds to provide coverage to undocumented persons. Several key GOP senators have been pushing for a large [fund](#) to “stabilize” rural hospitals likely to be decimated by these provisions. But with the problematic provisions stripped from the bill, as now appears likely, tens of billions of dollars of claimed savings would disappear – on the one hand, threatening the votes of fiscal hawks who sought the deeper Medicaid cuts in the Senate bill, but on the other hand, buying more support from House and Senate GOP moderates who sought the opposite.

Racing the clock: Republican Senate leaders are now expected to take much of the weekend to rework their bill and respond to pressure from House GOP leaders to bring the Medicaid and [key tax provisions](#) more in line with the House-passed version, with the hope of clearing a final measure through both chambers early next week. As previously reported, the House version of the bill, or something similar, would still produce large losses in Medicaid and Affordable Care Act coverage that could leave 12 million or more uninsured over ten years. APG continues to advocate against these measures and the harm that they would inflict on many individuals, medical groups, and their affiliated hospitals.



Newly Appointed CDC Advisory Panel Launches Controversial Overhaul Of Federal Vaccine Guidance

The battle over federal vaccine policy escalated this week as a new advisory panel appointed by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. took controversial steps to overhaul U.S. vaccine guidance. In its first meeting, the newly reconstituted [advisory committee](#) to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ([Washington Update - June 13, 2025](#)) took these actions:

- [Voted to recommend against](#) the use of influenza vaccines containing the ethyl mercury-based preservative thimerosal, used in multi-dose vaccine vials to prevent contamination by germs, bacteria or viruses. Although multiple studies have found no evidence that thimerosal causes developmental delays in children, the compound has long been a target of Kennedy and other anti-vaccine activists who believe that it is linked to autism. A lone dissenter on the panel who voted against the move voiced concerns that discouraging the use of multidose vials in favor of single-dose vaccines could increase costs and limit access for some groups, reported [CIDRAP News](#).

- Established new working groups to reexamine cumulative effects of the entire [childhood and adolescent vaccine schedule](#) and of vaccines in use for more than seven years, such as the measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (MMRV) vaccine for children – another longstanding target of the anti-vaccine community.

Shoring up commitments: Coming after abrupt revisions in COVID vaccine recommendations that Kennedy announced last month ([Washington Update - May 30, 2025](#)), the new advisory panel's actions have only fueled fears that ongoing vaccination uncertainties could jeopardize the public's health. With the fall respiratory virus season approaching, 87 medical societies issued an [open letter](#) to the public reaffirming their "commitment" to vaccines against influenza, RSV, and COVID. Meanwhile, the health insurance association [AHIP](#) said that "maintaining robust immunization coverage continues to be a top priority" and that it remained "committed to ongoing coverage of vaccines to ensure access and affordability for this respiratory virus season."



One Win For Health Care Access And One Loss From End-Of-Term Decisions By The Supreme Court

In two High Court decisions this week with implications for health care and coverage, the justices upheld a key preventive care provision of the Affordable Care Act but also dealt a blow to Planned Parenthood clinics' participation in state Medicaid programs for provision of non-abortion services. Both 6-3 decisions split the court's most conservative justices from a majority that teamed the three liberal justices with Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Amy Coney Barrett.

The ACA-related [decision](#) came in a [case](#) that effectively challenged the ACA provision requiring most health insurers to provide services highly recommended by the [U.S. Preventive Services Task Force](#) at no cost to insured individuals. Although the case turned on a narrow question – whether the task force's structure violated the Constitution's appointments clause – it was originally brought by several plaintiffs, including a self-insured Christian-owned health and wellness center, that objected to being compelled under the law to effectively provide workers with medications to prevent the spread of HIV.

The majority of justices agreed with the Trump administration, which defended the law, that task force members are "inferior officers" whose appointment by the Secretary of Health and Human Services is lawful,

and does not require appointment by the President and approval by the Senate. Although the decision upholds the status quo for now – most insurers must still cover preventive services highly recommended by the task force – it still leaves the door open for the secretary to appoint new members of the task force who may reach different conclusions about recommended preventive services.

Blow to Access: In the other health care-related case, the court [ruled](#) that a patient and Planned Parenthood lacked the legal standing to challenge South Carolina's exclusion of the organization's clinics from the state's Medicaid program because Planned Parenthood provides abortions in addition to non-abortion health care. The ruling could make it easier for more states to exclude Planned Parenthood clinics and services from participation in Medicaid coverage, raising concerns about potential clinic closures and the effects on lower-income individuals seeking access to care. The Trump Administration has already [cut off federal funding](#) for family planning services to Planned Parenthood and 15 other organizations.



In Case You Missed It

- National health spending grew by a rapid 8.2 percent in 2024 and is projected to rise by 7.1 percent in 2025, reflecting “continued strong growth in the use of health care services and goods,” according to the [latest projections](#) by actuaries at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Spending increases could moderate in 2026 and beyond, the actuaries wrote, although policy changes and other factors will influence the outcome.
- CMS said in a [release](#) that its recently finalized Affordable Care Act marketplace integrity [rule](#) would save taxpayers \$12 billion in 2026 by curbing “the surge of improper enrollments” in ACA plans – primarily through the rule’s repeal of special enrollment periods for low-income people and requirements for more income and eligibility verifications.
- Patients, physician groups, and other key health care stakeholders all stand to benefit from improvements in prior authorization (PA), APG said in a [news release](#) this week saluting a [commitment](#) by health insurers to revamp their PA practices.
- Agencies must publicly report within 60 days details of how they are implementing the tenets of the [Gold Standard of Science](#) executive order, according to new [guidance](#) issued by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

- The U.S. government will cease its financial support of Gavi, the global vaccine alliance credited with vaccinating more than [1 billion](#) children worldwide since 2000, HHS Secretary Kennedy [announced](#) this week – claiming falsely that the organization has neglected vaccine safety.
- A wide-ranging [interview](#) with Ken Cohen, MD, APG Board Member and executive director of translational research at Optum Health, features discussion of published research that he led on behalf of APG and perspectives on redesigning specialty care.



APG Announcements And Offerings

- Participants in APG's **Group Purchasing Program** will describe their innovative products in two forthcoming webinars.
 - The first features **Altura, GoGo, and Ventegra** on **Tuesday, July 22, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm ET**. Register for the webinar [here](#).
 - The second features **Accorded, Medicare on Demand, and Plannery** on **Tuesday, July 29, 4:00 pm – 5:00pm ET**. Register for the webinar [here](#).
- APG has partnered with **Health Industry Collaboration Effort, Inc. (HICE)** for an informative webinar on the **Provider Appointment Availability Survey (PAAS): What You Should Know** on **Wednesday, July 23, 2:00 pm - 3:00pm PT**. Register for the webinar [here](#).
- **Up to 10 APG members focused on dementia care with at least 30 percent of Medicare patients enrolled in Medicare Advantage**, are eligible for technical assistance support through the National Dementia Care Collaborative (NDCC) thanks to support from The John A. Hartford Foundation. To connect with the NDCC team and apply for this opportunity, visit the NDCC website [here](#).
- Want to get more involved in APG's Federal advocacy efforts? [Join APG Advocates today](#).

Know people who may enjoy receiving *Washington Update*? Forward this email and have them contact communications@apg.org to be added to the subscription list. Visit APG's [website](#) for more news and resources, or contact communications@apg.org.