



September 3, 2026

Welcome to *Washington Update*, the weekly newsletter on the latest health care happenings in the nation's capital that affect APG's members. It is being published a day earlier than usual this week due to the Labor Day holiday.

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Dubious Move By CDC On Pennsylvania Measles Cases Leaves Agency Even Further On Outs With Medical Experts

The controversy over two measles-associated deaths in Pennsylvania – which led to a bitter verbal brawl between the state's governor and Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. ([Washington Update](#), August 28, 2026) – continued this week as the recently confirmed director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Erica Schwartz, MD, directed staff to remove a tally of the two cases from the agency's measles [dashboard](#). The move, which [news reports](#) said came under Kennedy's direction and which flew in the face of longstanding CDC practice to include such data reported by states, raised new questions about Schwartz's independence that had [dogged](#) her Senate confirmation hearing last July.

Although a statement posted temporarily on the CDC's website said the agency was reviewing "additional information regarding the circumstances and causes of death," there increasingly seems little doubt that the death of a newborn baby whose mother was infected with measles was, in fact, "measles associated." A reporter for the *Atlantic* interviewed an Amish couple whose deceased baby fit the description and who died following his unvaccinated mother's serious infection during her pregnancy. The state has not yet released more information about the other death, citing privacy considerations, even as it has [reported](#) 119 new measles cases in the past week. Only about a quarter of the Amish population in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where the affected family lives and where the child died, is [estimated](#) to have received the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine.

In other vaccine news:

- Approved and updated COVID [vaccines](#) for the coming respiratory virus season are expected to be available soon despite the lack of an up-to-date recommendation from the CDC or its Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). The Food and Drug Administration approved the updated vaccines from [Pfizer](#), [Moderna](#), and [Sanofi](#) in late August and their manufacturers said this week that they had begun shipping them. Most health insurers have [pledged](#) to cover costs of all vaccines recommended by the CDC as of early 2025 through at least 2027, with no cost-sharing by consumers.
- Major medical organizations once again issued [guidelines](#) recommending COVID and other respiratory virus vaccines for adults and children in the absence of many clear recommendations from the CDC. The CDC has posted interim clinical [guidance](#) for influenza vaccines, including for children, even as the Trump administration's move to shift the recommendation for flu vaccines for children from routine to "shared decision making" between patients and doctors remains [on hold](#) amid litigation over the administration's anti-vaccine moves. APG continues to recommend, as it did [last year](#), that its members follow the vaccine recommendations endorsed by leading medical societies such as the American Academy of Pediatrics as part of their commitment to "following the science, caring for patients ethically, and living up to our wholehearted commitment to providing fully accountable health care."
- APG will join other organizations in submitting a response to a recently issued HHS [request for information](#) focused on the category of "shared clinical decision-making" in vaccine recommendations. APG has previously argued that such shared discussions over vaccines are already routine in the patient-centered care that its members practice, and fears

that the administration's efforts to put the label explicitly on many more vaccine recommendations constitutes a further effort to undermine confidence in approved and recommended vaccines.



House Adopts New Extension Of Fiscal 2026 Spending, Foreclosing Government Shutdown Ahead Of Elections

The Senate-approved [continuing resolution](#) that was also approved by the House of Representatives this week and signed into law by President Trump will keep the federal government running at fiscal 2026 spending levels through Dec. 11. As previously reported ([Washington Update](#), August 7, 2026), it omits controversial health care measures, but it also delays implementation of a [hotly contested](#) proposed federal [rule](#) that would allow administration political appointees to approve or cancel federal grant awards.

House lawmakers quickly left Washington again on a nearly two-week “district work period” and further [shaved their schedule](#) for later in September. Senators are expected to follow suit after a brief return on Sept. 14. Campaigning ahead of the elections on Nov. 3 remains a clear priority, reinforcing the likelihood that action on any significant health care or other legislation will be deferred to a lame-duck session post-election.



In Case You Missed It

- As expected, many **hospitals and health systems have [objected](#) to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Service's proposed [rule](#)** that would remove 637 additional procedures from Medicare's [“inpatient only” list](#), and add about 618 procedures to the [list](#) of those that can be reimbursed at lower Medicare rates when performed in ambulatory surgery centers. APG has favored these changes as many of its member organizations seek to reduce costs and obtain efficiencies through use of ASCs.
- The **updated [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) released earlier this year should be withdrawn**, argues the [Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine](#) in a [lawsuit](#), on the ground that the Trump administration created a “secret panel” of food industry insiders that

sidestepped federal requirements to develop it.

- **The Trump administration [announced](#) that it had reached agreements with nine more pharmaceutical companies** to provide drugs to Medicaid programs at “most favored nation” prices. As with similar previously announced agreements, many of the details, including actual prices, remain secret.
- **A coalition of Democratic-led states and governors [suing](#) the Trump administration over the [interim final rule](#) on Medicaid work requirements narrowed the scope of its case** to focus on the medically frail “ability to work” provision as it [asked](#) a federal district court in Massachusetts for a summary judgment. APG filed [comments](#) to CMS last July objecting to multiple provisions of the rule.
- **Legal challenges against HHS and the administration will be argued before a California federal district court judge this week** in cases focused on state efforts to block CMS from sharing Medicaid [data](#) with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency and [changes](#) to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.
- **Twenty-one Democratic state attorneys general and the governor of Pennsylvania [sued in](#) a Massachusetts federal district court to block a CMS [final rule](#) that would ban Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program payments for gender-transition medication and surgery for transgender adolescents.** The rule is set to go into effect Oct. 13.
- **Under a [settlement](#) reached with the Justice Department, the Villages Health system – now a part of APG member CenterWell Senior Primary Care – will pay \$545 million to resolve allegations** that it submitted invalid diagnoses to hike its Medicare Advantage risk adjustment payments. CenterWell acquired The Villages’ assets after the organization [filed](#) for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2025.
- **Capping all payers’ rates to the nation’s hospitals at Medicare rates plus 100 percent** would yield savings of nearly \$115 billion per year and more than \$1 trillion over a decade, according to an [analysis](#) by Urban Institute researchers. Only the state of Maryland today sets uniform hospital payment rates, and at levels that are [as much as 66 percent](#) above Medicare rates in other states.



APG Announcements And Offerings

- [Registration is now open](#) for the **APG Fall Conference 2026 - From Policy To Practice: What's Next For Accountable Care?** to be held November 18-20 at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland near Washington, DC. Please register now for Super Early Bird savings ending Friday, September 4.
- [Sponsorship registration](#) is also now open for the Fall Conference. Please visit our Fall Conference 2026 sponsor website for more information about sponsorships and exhibitor opportunities.
- Join the APG hosted webinar titled **“Intercepting Chronic Disease: Utilizing Preventive Diagnostics to Improve Patient Population Health,”** on **Tuesday, September 22, 3:00pm ET** presented by Quest Diagnostics. The webinar is open to the public. Register [here](#).
- Learn more about **APG's Group Purchasing Program**, where a variety of companies are offering special pricing to APG members during a webinar on **Thursday, September 24, 2:00 pm ET**. Register [here](#).
- The APG hosted webinar titled **“Implementing evidence-based guidelines for Cardio-Renal-Metabolic patient populations,”** presented by Boehringer Ingelheim, will take place **Tuesday, November 10, 2:00 pm ET**. The webinar is open to the public. Register [here](#).
- **Want to get more involved in APG's Federal advocacy efforts?** [Join APG Advocates today.](#)

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