



Senate Sends Opioid Bill to President Trump for His Signature

The Senate voted to approve a package of compromise bills aimed at addressing the opioid crisis by a vote of 98-1 last week. Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) was the only member to vote against the legislation. The wide-ranging bill would approve new grants for substance use disorder (SUD) treatment, expand reimbursement for inpatient drug rehabilitation services, and crack down on the importation of illicit opioids from other countries through the postal system. The bill has been sent to the President for his signature. While H.R. 6 received strong bipartisan support in both chambers, many lawmakers believe that more work remains to be done and that additional funding is necessary to sustain a response to the crisis. Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee Greg Walden (R-Ore.) has also said that his panel plans to continue its investigation into the role of opioid manufacturers in the crisis.

The House of Representatives has recessed until after the November midterm elections, but the Senate plans to spend this week resuming work to confirm more of the President’s nominees for circuit and district court judges. The chamber may also try to clear water-infrastructure legislation (S. 3021) amended and passed by the House last month.

Kavanaugh Sworn In As Supreme Court Justice

Brett Kavanaugh was sworn in as an associate justice of the Supreme Court on Saturday. The Senate confirmed Kavanaugh by a vote of 50-48 over the weekend, following weeks of debate over the allegations against Kavanaugh of sexual assault and misconduct. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) was the only Republican on the record in opposition to the nominee. She voted ‘present’ to allow Sen. Steven Daines (R-Mont.) to miss the vote to attend his daughter’s wedding and keep the vote margin the same as if Daines were there to vote. Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.V.) was the only Democrat to vote in support of Kavanaugh. Kavanaugh’s confirmation creates a strong 5-4 conservative majority on the Supreme Court. He will begin work immediately and start hearing cases this week.

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Senators Request Details on New Insurance Scoring Model

Twelve Republican senators are **requesting** that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) provide details about its development and testing of a forthcoming health insurance simulation model (HISIM). The model will be used to produce more accurate estimates of health insurance coverage and premiums for generating future baselines and cost estimates. The lawmakers encourage the agency to release additional information about the model to the public prior to when CBO plans to begin utilizing it in the spring of 2019. They request that CBO publish a description of the new model's specifications, including the data it relies on, its estimation methods, and an explanation of its key assumptions, as well as any computer code. The senators also suggest that the new model be applied to re-estimate federal spending and coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Hassan to Introduce Surprise Billing Legislation

Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) plans to introduce legislation to eliminate surprise medical bills for individuals with employer-sponsored health plans. The *No More Surprise Medical Bills Act of 2018* would prohibit hospitals and providers from charging patients with medical emergencies more than the in-network amount. It would also require hospitals and providers to notify patients in non-emergency situations if services will be considered out-of-network. Without notification and consent, the provider could only charge the in-network amount. The bill would establish an independent entity to resolve any disputes that arise between providers and health insurance plans.

KFF Releases New Data on Individual, Employer Markets

A new **study** from the Kaiser Family Foundation shows that insurers in the individual market performed better financially in the first six months of this year than in any other year since passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). According to the brief, the individual market remains stable and insurers are generally profitable, despite uncertainty about policy changes from Congress and the administration.

Kaiser Family Foundation also released its latest annual employer health benefits **survey** last week. In 2018, premiums for both individuals and families enrolled in employer health plans increased moderately, while more workers are paying higher deductibles. The survey found that premiums increased by five percent for family plans and three percent for single coverage plans. Eighty-five percent of people enrolled in an employer health plan had a deductible, up from 81 percent last year. The average deductible has also increased to \$1,573 compared to \$1,505 last year.

Recently Introduced Health Legislation

H.Res.1103 — Expressing support for designation of July as National Sarcoma Awareness Month; Sponsor: Rep. Duffy, Sean P. [R-WI-7]; Committees: House - Oversight and Government Reform

H.Res.1106 — Supporting the designation of October 6, 2018, as National Ostomy Awareness Day; Sponsor: Rep. Payne, Donald M., Jr. [D-NJ-10]; Committees: House - Oversight and Government Reform

H.R.6980 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide coverage for custom fabricated breast prostheses following a mastectomy; Sponsor: Rep. Blum, Rod [R-IA-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means

H.R.6984 — To add suicide prevention resources to school identification cards; Sponsor: Rep. Correa, J. Luis [D-CA-46]; Committees: House - Education and the Workforce

H.R.6986 — To amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act with respect to nursing facility requirements, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Rep. Duffy, Sean P. [R-WI-7]; Committees: House - Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce

H.R.6993 — To amend title 38, United States Code, to furnish hospital care and medical services to veterans and dependents who were stationed at military installations at which the veterans and dependents were exposed to perfluorooctanoic acid or other per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, to provide for a presumption of service connection for certain veterans who were stationed at military installations at which the veterans were exposed to such substances, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Rep. Kildee, Daniel T. [D-MI-5]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs

H.R.6994 — To amend title 38, United States Code, to furnish hospital care and medical services to veterans, members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, and dependents who were stationed at Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda, Michigan, and were exposed to volatile organic compounds, to provide for a presumption of service connection for those veterans and members of the reserve components, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Rep. Kildee, Daniel T. [D-MI-5]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs

H.R.7001 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a combined Medicare part B and D drug out-of-pocket costs limitation; Sponsor: Rep. O'Halleran, Tom [D-AZ-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means

H.R.7003 — To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a health insurance Federal Invisible Risk Sharing Program; Sponsor: Rep. Schweikert, David [R-AZ-6]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

S.Res.661 — A resolution expressing support for the designation of September 2018 as "Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month" in order to educate communities across the United States about sickle cell disease and the need for research, early detection methods, effective treatments, and preventative care programs with respect to sickle cell disease, complications from sickle cell disease, and conditions related to sickle cell disease; Sponsor: Sen. Scott, Tim [R-SC]; Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.

S.3528 — A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to furnish hospital care and medical services to veterans, members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, and dependents who were stationed at Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda, Michigan, and were exposed to volatile organic compounds, to provide for a presumption of service connection for those veterans and members of the reserve components, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Sen. Stabenow, Debbie [D-MI]; Committees: Senate - Veterans' Affairs

S.3529 — A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to furnish hospital care and medical services to veterans, members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, and dependents who were stationed at military installations at which they were exposed to perfluorooctanoic acid or other per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, to provide for a presumption of service connection for those veterans and members of the reserve components, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Sen. Stabenow, Debbie [D-MI]; Committees: Senate - Veterans' Affairs

S.3531 — A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to provide coverage under Medicare and Medicaid of services furnished by freestanding emergency centers; Sponsor: Sen. Cassidy, Bill [R-LA]; Committees: Senate - Finance

H.Res.1114 - Expressing support for designation of the week of October 7, 2018, through October 13, 2018, as "Latex Allergy Awareness Week"; Sponsor: Rep. Shea-Porter, Carol [D-NH-1]; Committees: House - Oversight and Government Reform

H.R.7017 — To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a demonstration program to expand the availability of telemedicine services for veterans living in rural areas with certain mental health disorders, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Rep. Kuster, Ann M. [D-NH-2]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs

S.3541 — A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish limitations on cost-sharing for out-of-network services, to prohibit balance billing for such services, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Sen. Shaheen, Jeanne [D-NH]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.3545 — A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve home health payment reforms under the Medicare program; Sponsor: Sen. Collins, Susan M. [R-ME]; Committees: Senate – Finance

S.Res.669 — A resolution supporting the designation of September 2018 as “National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month”; Sponsor: Sen. King, Angus S., Jr. [I-ME]; Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.