

Health Care Policy Update

Health Care Policy Weekly Update and Outlook

Government Regulations

CMS Issues RFI for Medicare Advantage Data

On January 25, CMS released a new Medicare Advantage Request for Information. Further highlighting the Administration's interest providing more transparency and possible reforms in the MA program. CMS is seeking input on all aspects of data related to the MA program. CMS is seeking information from beneficiary advocates, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders on challenges and experiences in the MA program where there is currently limited data. Comments on the RFI are due by May 29. CMS would like to understand ways to enhance MA data capabilities and increase public transparency. CMS notes that "transparency is especially important now that MA has grown to over 50% of Medicare enrollment, and the government is expected to pay MA health insurance companies over \$7 trillion over the next decade." Provider groups have called for increased scrutiny and oversight on MA plans for limiting access to services, while also calling for improved data collection and reporting. The RFI also asks for data and information on reporting cost and utilization of supplemental benefits in MA plans.

Senate Aging Committee Holds Hearing on Assisted Living

On January 25, the Senate Aging Committee held a hearing on "Assisted Living Facilities: Understanding Long-Term Care Options for Older Adults." The hearing focused on poor quality of care in many assisted living facilities, as well as high costs and staffing issues. Democrats on the Committee also noted private equity ownership of assisted living facilities related to reduced staffing and lower quality of care. Senators suggested the need for national standards on assisted living quality and increased transparency.

Marketplace Enrollment Increases to 21.3 million in 2024

On January 24, CMS announced that ACA healthcare exchange enrollment increased to 21.3 million during the 2024 Open Enrollment Period. This represents an increase of five million over the same period in 2023 (30% increase in enrollment). Total health plan selections included five million new enrollees, and 16 million individuals who renewed their coverage for 2024. CMS also notes that open enrollment continues in four states and Washington, D.C., through January 31. The ongoing Medicaid redetermination process has contributed to higher enrollment on exchanges, as well as enhanced premium subsidies for many on exchanges. CMS notes that 80% of all enrollees were able to find health plans with premiums of \$10 or less per month for plan year 2024 after subsidies. In addition, the Biden administration has increased marketing and increased Navigator assistance programs for signing up enrollees.

Surprise Billing Fees Increase as of January 22

Effective January 22, CMS increased administrative fees for independent dispute resolution for claims. The fees increased from \$50 to \$115 per party per dispute initiated after January 22. In December, CMS also announced that it would extend the date to initiate new batched claims, or a new air ambulance claims to March 14, 2024, along with other extensions for certain claims and information requirements.

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High Yield Credit
United States
Washington Healthcare

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Abbreviations

CMS: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

HHS: Health and Human Services Department

ACA: Affordable Care Act

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Health Care Policy Events for the Week

Monday (January 29)

- HHS meeting of the National Institute of Mental Health, director Joshua Gordon's report and discussion of programs

Tuesday (January 30)

- Food and Drug Law Institute webinar on "Fundamentals of Digital Health Regulation: Successfully Navigating Your Product Through FDA."
- Society for Women's Health Research briefing on "Elevating Endometriosis to a Public Health Crisis."

Wednesday (January 31)

- House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee hearing on "Health Care Spending in the United States: Unsustainable for Patients, Employers, and Taxpayers."
- Senate HELP Committee markup for the Authorization for Investigation into the "High Costs of Prescription Drugs for Patients in the United States Compared to Other Countries" and potential authorization for subpoenas.
- Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing on "Vet Centers: Supporting the Mental Health Needs of Servicemembers, Veterans and their Families."
- Select Coronavirus Pandemic Subcommittee hearing on "Overseeing the HHS Compliance with Congress."
- IQVIA briefing on "The Global Use of Medicines 2024."
- Commonwealth Fund webinar on "New Era in Telemedicine: Opportunities, Challenges, and What Comes Next."
- Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) briefing on "Addressing Information Asymmetry: Improving Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Collaboration."
- Politico briefing on "How Fast Can We Solve Alzheimer's?"
- Food and Drug Law Institute Conference on "Current Developments in Digital Health Technology and Regulation Conference" (January 31-February 1)
- Duke Margolis Center for Health Policy briefing on "Building Quality into the Design and Conduct of Clinical Studies: Integrating Quality by Design and Risk-Based Monitoring (RBM) Approaches."

Thursday (February 1)

- CMS Advisory Panel meeting on Outreach and Education on programs, initiatives, and priorities and discussion of panel recommendations.
- Friends of Cancer Research briefing on "The Future of Diagnostic Tests: New Data & Modern Policy."
- Alliance for Health Policy (AHP) briefing on "Perspectives for Media on Value-Based Care in 2024."
- RAND Corporation briefing on "survey of state initiatives related to maternal care and health outcomes."
- Georgetown University School of Public Policy lecture on "Pandemic Preparedness and Response: Lessons from COVID-19."

Friday (February 2)

- National Academy of Medicine meeting on "Precision Medicine: An Innovative Approach to Treating Cancer."



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