

ML Strategies Health Care Preview: Week of February 11, 2019

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With Valentine's Day approaching, love may be in the air - but not so much on Capitol Hill. Talks to reach a border security deal ahead of Friday's deadline [broke down](#) over the weekend. At the precipice of another government shutdown, the President is off to El Paso today to argue that walls work, as thousands of troops descend on the border once again. Congressional negotiators had hoped to reach a deal today to provide time to members to review the deal under regular order. A short-term extension at the last moment seems the most likely way a shutdown is averted.

During the recent shutdown, we noted how difficult it is for either side to appear to be compromising. When you and your supporters believe you are completely right on an issue, it's challenging to make any compromises that might be conceding ground to the opposition. If we are once again looking at a possible shutdown, it is because the challenge to compromise remains true.

We're nearly halfway through February and Congress has sent very limited signals on legislative direction. Both chambers are circling on drug pricing, and the House E&C Health Subcommittee will [propose legislation](#) to counteract actions taken by the Administration against the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The legislation would reportedly revoke the rule on short-term limited duration plans and the revised state innovation waiver guidance, as well as restore ACA outreach funding which is currently \$10 million.

DRUG PRICING

Democrats are introducing drug pricing [legislation left and right](#). While some are bipartisan, many are yet to become bipartisan and may not this Congress. That said, two separate House committees are conducting investigations into rising drug costs and the Senate Finance Committee has scheduled a highly anticipated hearing that will feature seven pharmaceutical executives. This is on the heels of the reintroduction of the bipartisan CREATES Act, which would block tactics by manufacturers to delay generic drug development, among other measures.

What's important to keep in mind is the possibility of bipartisan agreement on a drug pricing bill and what it might mean for a broader health care package this year.

THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE

[E&C Health](#) – “Strengthening Our Health Care System: Legislation to Reverse ACA Sabotage and Ensure Pre-Existing Conditions Protections.” Wednesday at 10:30 am.

[Ways & Means](#) – “The Cost of Rising Prescription Drugs.” Tuesday at 10 am.

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

[HELP](#) – “Managing Pain During the Opioid Crisis.” Tuesday at 10 am.

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