

Healthcare Preview for the Week of: December 11, 2023

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IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CONGRESS (BUT JUST FOR A WEEK)

Welcome to what should be the final legislative week of the calendar year.

The work that Congress does this week may provide insight into what will get done by the January 19, 2024, continuing resolution deadline.

This evening (Monday, December 11, 2023), the House will consider 13 suspensions bills, two of which are directly related to healthcare: the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act, and the Support for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act.

Among many other things, the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act (HR 5378) would enact site-neutral payment policies for drug

administration; ban spread pricing for payment arrangements with pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) in Medicaid; require providers, PBMs, health insurers and others to adopt certain transparency rules around charges and costs; extend funding for Community Health Centers and Teaching Health Centers with graduate medical education programs; and prevent hospital disproportionate share payment cuts. If the act passes the House smoothly, it could be a signal that a majority of House Republicans might accept a healthcare package as part of the January continuing resolution.

The Support for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act (HR 4531) includes grants, additional support and requirements around substance use disorder prevention, treatment and recovery. This bill is the companion to the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities Reauthorization (SUPPORT Act, S 3393).

The House Energy & Commerce Committee will also hold a full committee hearing on Wednesday, December 13, on the effects of artificial intelligence on the economy across supply chains, energy, healthcare and emerging technologies.

In the Senate, the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee is scheduled to mark up several bills on Tuesday, December 12, including the SUPPORT Act (S 3393), another bill on access to opioid treatment (S 644), and bills on cancer screening (S 1840) and research in education (S 3392). On Thursday, December 14, the HELP Committee will also hold a hearing on diabetes.

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