From Congress

Two Child Care Bills Pass the House With Bipartisan Support (July 29, 2020)

The Child Care Is Essential Act (HR 7027) and the Child Care for Economic Recovery Act (HR 7327) passed the House July 29 and await action in the Senate. The Child Care is Essential Act creates a $50 billion Child Care Stabilization Fund within the Child Care Development Block Grant program, providing grant funding to child care providers. The Child Care for Economic Recovery Act includes provisions that would enhance the child and dependent care tax credit, create a refundable payroll tax credit for child care providers, increase funding for the Child Care Entitlement to States program and provide $10 billion to invest in infrastructure to improve child care safety.

Bipartisan House Members Introduce Tribal Health Legislation (Aug. 7, 2020)

Members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee introduced, HR 7948, the “Tribal Health Data Improvement Act of 2020.” The bill would reaffirm that tribal public health authorities are entitled to access public health data. Because Native Americans are being disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, access to public health data is critical for tribes to access information and coordinate public health programs.

House Energy and Commerce Committee Sends Letter to HHS Secretary (Aug. 11, 2020)

Bipartisan leaders from the committee sent a letter to the secretary of Health and Human Services looking at the concerns that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the ongoing substance use disorder (SUD) crisis. They also requested a briefing on the latest trends in substance use and overdoses, how these trends are affected by the pandemic, and what the federal government needs to do to address the crisis.
From the Administration

FDA Label Change for Opioids (July 23, 2020)

The agency issued a Drug Safety Communication requiring drug manufacturers to update labels for opioid pain medications and medications used to treat opioid use disorder. New labeling will include a recommendation that health care professionals discuss the availability of naloxone with patients when starting medication or renewing a treatment. It will also recommend providers prescribe naloxone to patients at an increased risk for overdose.

President Signs Executive Order on Telehealth and Future Rural Health Initiatives (Aug. 3, 2020)

President Donald Trump signed an executive order two weeks ago to help expand several telehealth services while laying groundwork for changes to rural health care systems. The order expands access to medical services during COVID-19 and extends the availability of telehealth services after the public health emergency ends. It also creates a new payment model for rural hospitals, and directs the federal government to improve the health care communication infrastructure and expand rural health care services. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar also released an op-ed on the initiatives in the order.

CMS Proposal to Expand Telehealth (Aug. 3, 2020)

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid is proposing changes to expand telehealth permanently, in addition to the recently issued executive order on “Improving Rural and Telehealth Access”. They agency is seeking additional information and public input on the proposal.

National Health Center Week | Aug. 10, 2020. The Health Resources and Services Administration recognized community health centers across the U.S. during National Health Center Week August 9-15, 2020. The week recognizes the important role of community health centers across the U.S. These centers provide primary health care for underserved patients and are part of initiatives like combating the opioid epidemic. During the pandemic, they have also provided more than 2 million COVID-19 tests and related care to patients.

HHS Releases Secretary’s Report on Surprise Billing | July 24, 2020. The report was part of the implementation of President Donald Trump’s executive order “Improving Price and Quality Transparency in American Healthcare to Put Patients First.” The report provides recommendations for congressional action to implement the president’s principles on surprise billing.
From the Courts

HHS Releases Secretary’s Report on Surprise Billing (July 24, 2020)

The report was part of the implementation of President Donald Trump’s executive order “Improving Price and Quality Transparency in American Healthcare to Put Patients First.” The report provides recommendations for congressional action to implement the president’s principles on surprise billing.

Spotlight On:

NCSL, Big 7 State and Local Partners Host Congressional Briefing on FMAP

The virtual briefing, hosted for members of Congress, highlighted the need for an additional 6.2 percentage point increase in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) in the next congressional COVID-19 response bill. The briefing was a follow-up to a letter the Big 7, joined by over 160 other groups, sent to congressional leadership earlier this summer advocating for an FMAP increase and requesting the Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Rule be rescinded.

Watch Now

© National Conference of State Legislatures
Denver: 303-364-7700
Washington: 202-624-5400