



Top Stories

10/12/2017 – The White House released an executive order that directs several agencies to change how health insurance is offered. The [order](#) would allow Association Health Plans to be sold across state lines, increase the amount of time an individual could be enrolled on an short-term, limited duration insurance plan from three months to 12 months and expand employer flexibility within Health Reimbursement Arrangements. Later that day the administration also announced it would be discounting Cost Sharing Reduction (CSR) payments. Access to NCSL's overview of both announcements can be found [here](#).

10/17/2017 – Following the administration's announcement on the discounting CSR payments, Senators Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.) [resumed negotiations](#) on legislation to appropriate funding for the CSR payments for the next two years and increase flexibility in 1332 waivers. The status of the legislation is in flux as President Donald Trump has signaled both support and opposition to it, and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said he would support a vote if the president can confirm he would sign it upon passage.

10/23/2017 – Iowa joined Oklahoma in withdrawing their 1332 Waiver application. The 1332 waivers are specific to the Affordable Care Act, and Iowa was among several states that had a pending waiver from the Obama administration.

10/26/2017 – A new report from the Georgetown Health Policy Institute [details the state impact](#) of the delay in reauthorizing funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). On Oct. 30, House Republicans combined the CHIP funding renewal bill with a bill that reduces funding for community

health centers ([H.R. 3922](#)). Several states are set to run out of CHIP funds before the end of the year.

10/27/2017 – The Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC) met to discuss multistate collaboration for state Medicaid programs and federal barriers to joint prescription drug purchasing pools. Current voluntary cooperation between states includes training, data collection and analysis, and clinical studies. Federal Medical Assistance Percentages can be found [here](#).

10/27/2017 – Open enrollment for health plans on the ACA exchange began in November and the length of enrollment periods and process for enrollment varies greatly, [according to the Kaiser Family Foundation](#). Although premiums for average plans will rise in some states, other states will see decreases.

From Congress

10/04/2017 – The Senate approved [Eric D. Hargan, \(57-38\)](#) as Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). Hargan is also currently serving as Acting Secretary of HHS until the president puts forth a nominee.

10/05/2017 & 10/11/2017 – The Senate HELP Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee held hearings in response to growing issues with the opioid crisis. The Senate heard from [experts at NIH, SAMHSA, the CDC, and the FDA](#). The House had an [open format where all members were allowed](#) to provide testimony and submit policy ideas.

10/23/2017 – [Representative Jeff Duncan \(R-S.C.\) gained a seat on one of the more powerful Congressional Committees](#), the House Energy and Commerce. Duncan took the place of Representative Tim Murphy (R-Pa.) who resigned.

From the Administration

10/6/2017– Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz [held a listening session with](#) stakeholders addressing prescription drug abuse and treatment.

10/26/2017 – President Trump [declared a public health emergency](#) to address the opioid crisis, potentially increasing the number of providers receiving opioid-specific training. The declaration also may expand access to telemedicine for rural patients and limit the length of initial prescriptions, but it is still unclear what additional resources will be made available to state programs. Additional funding would still require action from Congress.

10/15/17 – Acting HHS Secretary Eric Hargan [declared a public emergency in California with wildfire activity](#).

Courts

10/13/2017 – A suit was filed in California by [18 states and the District of Columbia against the Trump Administration](#) per their announcement about no longer funding CSR payments. [On Oct. 24, a federal judge in California denied a petition to reinstate the payments, questioning](#) how much of a burden this actually places on consumers as many states already accounted for not receiving the payments and increased premiums on marketplace silver plans. Concern has also been raised that a ruling in favor of the suit would allow insurance companies to receive two payments, the first being a CSR payment and the second as a result of increased premiums being charged.

Agency Notices and Funding Announcements

10/12/2017 – CDC Cooperative Agreement for Emergency Response: Public Health Crisis Response. Apply [here](#).

10/20/2017 – HHS Administration for Children and Families released \$3.03 billion to Low Income Home Energy Assistance Programs (LIHEAP) grantees. Read the release [here](#) and view a table of specific state grants [here](#).

10/27/2017 – HHS Comment Period for 2018-2022 Strategic Plan closes. Read a draft of the plan [here](#).

A complete list of HHS notices, proposed rules, and final roles and links to the federal register can be found [here](#).

For more information on NCSL's Health and Human Services Standing Committee State-Federal Affairs activities, please visit [our website](#), or contact Haley Nicholson (haley.nicholson@ncsl.org) or Abbie Gruwell (abbie.gruwell@ncsl.org).