

April 27, 2018

On the Horizon ...

* Congress is out of session the week of April 30-May 4, 2018.

TAKE ACTION

1. Tell the FDA You Support a Proposed Rule to Reduce Nicotine in Cigarettes

The FDA released a proposal on best ways to reduce nicotine to non-addictive levels in cigarettes. Urge the FDA to move forward with a good law by [registering your support](#).

2. Thank Your Representative for Supporting the Teaching Health Centers GME Program

The Teaching Health Center GME Extension Act's inclusion in the Bipartisan Budget Act fully funded the program for two years at \$126.5 million— a major increase from the 2015 reauthorization level of \$60 million. Send your representatives a [thank you note](#).

U.S. CONGRESS

Opioid and Related-Health Bills Advance in House and Senate Committees

On April 25, the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Health Subcommittee [voted](#) on 60 bills to address the opioid crisis. The full committee is expected to continue consideration of these proposals to bring a robust opioid crisis response package to the full House of Representatives before end of May. In the Senate the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee also approved its Opioids Crisis Response Act of 2018 (S. [2680](#)), a package of bills to support prevention and treatment access. In an April 23 [letter](#), the AAFP commented on the major bills under consideration including support for the following bills: legislation to standardize prior authorizations (HR [4841](#)); the *Eliminating Opioids-Related Infectious Diseases Act* (HR [5353](#)); the *Safe Disposal of Unused Medication Act* (HR [5041](#)); the *CHIP Mental Health Parity Act* (HR [3192](#)); and the *Access to Telehealth Services for Substance Use Disorders Act*.

CENTERING ON THE STATES

1. Medicaid & 1115 Waivers: The Conversation from the Primary Care Perspective

On May 9 from 2-3pm ET, the AAFP and the National Association of Community Health Centers will host a [webinar](#) on Medicaid Demonstration Waivers. The webinar will include the history of waivers by the administration, current waiver trends, and a perspective from the field.

2. Direct Primary Care Pilot Program Passes in Nebraska

Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts signed into [law](#) legislation that would establish a three-year Direct Primary Care (DPC) pilot program for state employees enrolled in the Nebraska State Insurance Program. The pilot program would pair the DPC arrangement with a high-deductible and low-deductible health plan for health care coverage outside of primary care, and would be available to enrollees on a first-come, first-serve basis.

3. Primary Care Spend Legislation Moves Forward in California and Colorado

Legislation to quantify the amount of health spending devoted to primary care advanced out of committee in the [California](#) and [Colorado](#) state legislatures on strong, bipartisan votes. Similar laws exist in Oregon and Rhode Island, which also require a certain percentage of all spending by private and state health insurers be spent on primary care. States interested in pursuing Primary Care Spend legislation can reference the [Primary Care Spend advocacy toolkit](#).

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

1. AAFP Writes CMS on E/M Documentation Guidelines

In a [letter](#) sent to CMS on April 23, the AAFP argued that CMS E/M documentation guidelines, established 20 years ago, do little to support patient care or improve quality and negatively impact the usability of EHR software programs. The letter again called for the documentation guidelines to be eliminated for codes 99211-99215 and 99201-99205 for primary care physicians for all three domains: history, physical exam, and medical decision making.

2. AAFP Urges EPA to Not Repeal the Clean Power Plan

In an April 25 [letter](#), the AAFP urged the EPA not to repeal the Carbon Pollution Emission Guidelines for Existing Stationary Sources: Electric Utility Generating Units, commonly referred to as the “Clean Power Plan.” The AAFP recommended strong action to limit and correct further health consequences resulting from the pollution of our land, atmosphere and water.