

# McDermottPlus Health Care Preview

WEEK OF JUNE 17, 2019



Two weeks down. Two weeks to go.

- + **ALL EYES WATCHING THE SENATE HELP COMMITTEE.** This week, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee will have a hearing on the Lower Health Care Costs Act. The Lower Health Care Costs Act (also referred to as the Cost Containment package) is a large package that addresses a range of issues including surprise medical bills, prescription drug prices, transparency in the health care space, and public health. Since the discussion draft was introduced on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, the HELP Committee has been receiving stakeholder feedback and considering changes to the bill. On Tuesday, we will see primetime if there are any disagreements or grievances within the Committee regarding the bill.
- + **BUT WHAT'S GOING ON WITH PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICING?** The Senate Committee on Aging is holding its third hearing of the year on prescription drug pricing this Wednesday. This will be an interesting hearing to watch, as it is the first prescription drug hearing during which we will hear directly from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General.
- + **THERE'S A LOT OF TALK. BUT WHERE IS THE ACTION?** Specifically, where is the action on major prescription drug pricing reforms? We have seen movement on transparency bills, but actual movement on a major prescription drug pricing reform package has yet to occur. All year we have been saying that the maximum reforms you could see on prescription drug costs would be a package that was developed by the White House and the Speaker of House. However, momentum towards a grand bargain between the White House and the Speaker seems unlikely at this point. If the White House and the Speaker are unsuccessful, then the next likely significant package on prescription drug costs would come from Senators Grassley (R-IA) and Wyden (D-OR) in the Senate Finance Committee. At this moment, it appears that they will not be making their rumored June 19<sup>th</sup> deadline to release a bill, though we never rule out the release of discussion draft prior to July 4<sup>th</sup>. With their deadline slipping, it is showing the health policy community that compromise is hard. The people who want more on drug pricing reforms and the people who want less both have to give up ground to compromise on an agreement. And in 2019, compromise grows harder by the day.

## **THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE**

### Senate HELP Committee

Lower Health Care Costs Act  
Tuesday, June 18 at 9:30 am

### Senate Committee on Aging

The Complex Web of Prescription Drug Prices, Part III: Examining Agency Efforts to Further Competition and Increase Affordability  
Wednesday, June 19 at 9:15 am

## **THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE**

### Energy & Commerce Committee

Strengthening Health Care in the U.S. Territories for Today and Into the Future  
Thursday, June 20 at 10:30 am

## **CONTACT INFO**

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