



FAMILY VOICES[®]

Washington DC Update
October 31, 2019

GREETINGS FROM WASHINGTON!

Not all cooperation between the political parties has ceased in DC. During recent days, the House passed five health bills applauded by both Democrats and Republicans. These bills address the pediatric health care workforce, the nursing workforce, and palliative care. On a more partisan basis, three House committees moved forward on the Democrats' bill on prescription drug prices (see the "Congress" section). **Open enrollment begins this Friday**, and this Update includes links to numerous resources for assisters and for consumers (see the ACA section).

NOTE:

- **The 2020 Open Enrollment Period is November 1, 2019 to December 15, 2019.** See the [list of 2019 CMS Navigator grantees](#).
- [Get Ready: TRICARE Open Season, Federal Benefits Open Season Begins Nov. 11](#)
- **Medicare's Medical and Drug Open Enrollment Period is October 15 - December 7**
To find 2020 health and drug plans, compare coverage options, or estimate Medicare costs, go to www.Medicare.gov. Click [here](#) for Medicare Open Enrollment Period Outreach and Media Materials.

UPCOMING WEBINARS AND CALLS

[Please note that are listed in chronological order, but webinars in a series are listed by the date of the first webinar in the series, so subsequent webinars not in that series may take place before the later webinars in the series.]

SERIES: [Health Reform: Beyond the Basics](#)

Beyond the Basics past webinars and other resources can be found [here](#).

- [Best Practices When Assisting People with Disabilities Enroll in Health Coverage](#)
Thursday, October 31, 2:00 pm ET
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

The series archive can be found [here](#).

[Social Determinants of Health, Social Risk Factors, and Social Needs: Defining Interventions and Partnership Opportunities](#)

Wednesday, October 30, 3:00-4:00 pm ET

Health Care Transformation Task Force

TRICARE SITREP

Thursday, October 31, 3:15–4:15 pm ET [intro video and question posting at **3:00**]

TRICARE

The TRICARE SITREP is a live Q&A session hosted on the TRICARE Facebook page. Here's how it works:

- Go to [facebook/TRICARE](https://www.facebook.com/TRICARE) on Oct. 31.
- We'll post an introductory video at 3 p.m. announcing that we're about to begin.
- Ask your question as a comment to that introductory post.
- We'll answer your questions live during the event.
- Questions are answered in the order they're posted.

Remember to stay on topic so everyone's questions can be addressed. We'll answer questions specific to your scenario, but please don't share your health information since it's a public forum. This is your opportunity to ask questions about the TRICARE and FEDVIP open seasons.

If you have friends and family who may have questions about open season, please help spread the word about the TRICARE Webinar (Oct. 24) and TRICARE SITREP (Oct. 31).

Implementing Wraparound Mental Health Services in Rural Communities

Friday, Nov. 1, 2:00-3:30 pm ET

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) TA Network

What Matters Most in Driving Cross-Sector Partnerships for Complex Populations

Tuesday, November 5, 3:00-4:00 pm ET

The Better Care Playbook and the National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs

State Respite Legislation: Advancing Respite for Family Caregivers

Tuesday, November 12, 3:00-4:00 pm ET

ARCH Sustainability Learning Collaborative

NEW Health in Rural America: Innovative Solutions to Address Disparities

Wednesday, November 13, 2:00-3:30 pm ET

The National Institute for Health Care Management (NIHCM) Foundation

Foundations: How to Build & Sustain the Communication Pipeline with Young Adults

Wed., November 13, 4:00-5:00 pm ET

The Dibble Institute

Expanding Access to School Behavioral Services via Telehealth

Thursday, November 14, 2:00-3:00 pm ET

Healthy Students, Promising Futures Learning Collaborative

NEW Operationalizing Family Voice and Leadership in Systems of Care

Wednesday, November 20, 2:30-4:00 pm ET

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) TA Network

SERIES Person-Centered Planning and Practice

National Quality Forum/Administration for Community Living; Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

- **Friday, December 13, 2019, 1:00-3:30 pm ET**
- **Monday, January 6, 2020, 1:00-3:30 pm ET**
- **Monday, February 3, 2020, 12:30-3:00 pm ET**
- **Monday, June 1, 2020, 1:00-3:30 pm ET**
- **[past] Friday, September 6, 2019**

CONGRESS

House Passes Bipartisan Health Bills

As explained in press releases lauding House action by House Energy & Commerce Committee [Democrats](#) and [Republicans](#), the House passed five bipartisan health bills on October 28, including the following:

- **H.R. 2781, the *EMPOWER for Health Act of 2019***, to reauthorize funding at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for health profession workforce, education, and training programs. The bill would expand efforts to increase diversity, improve geriatrics education and training, *grow the pediatric health care workforce*, and create a new authorization of \$5 million to increase workforce diversity in the professions of physical therapy, occupational therapy, audiology, and speech-language pathology. *The bill passed on the House Floor by voice vote.*
- **H.R. 728, the *Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act of 2019***, to reauthorize funding for *federal nursing workforce* development grant programs administered by HRSA for five years. These programs include traineeships, loan repayment, and scholarships for nurses to attain advance practice status and to become nursing faculty. *The bill passed on the House Floor by voice vote.*
- **H.R. 647, the *Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act***, to improve education, health care professional training, and research into palliative care and hospice care through grant programs that create Palliative Care and Hospice Education Centers, support projects to fund training of physicians who plan to teach palliative medicine, and which promote the career development of academic hospice and palliative care physicians in addition to nonphysician health professionals entering the field of palliative care. *The bill passed on the House Floor by voice vote.*

Prescription Drug Prices (See the [October 24 Update](#) for background information.)

The House Committees on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and Education and Labor have approved the *Lower Drug Costs Now Act of 2019* ([H.R. 3](#)), the House Democrats' bill to reduce drug costs. The bill would require the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to negotiate Medicare prices on insulin and at least 25 drugs each year, and would create an out-of-pocket limit of \$2,000 for Medicare Part D plans. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has estimated that the bill would save \$345 billion for Medicare over seven years. The bill's negotiation method of addressing high drug costs is strongly [opposed by the pharmaceutical industry](#), and [Republican Energy &](#)

[Commerce Committee leadership](#), on the basis that the resulting loss of income to drug companies would lead to the development of fewer new drugs (as predicted by CBO). See [Democrats' new logic on drug pricing: Developing slightly fewer medicines is OK if it means lower prices](#) (STAT, 10/28/19).

Of note: In response to advocacy by disability groups, H.R. 3 was amended during committee consideration to ensure that the value of drugs is not measured based on “quality-adjusted life years” (QALYs), which are based on the premise that the value of one year of the life of a person with a disability is less than the value of one year of the life of a person without a disability.

On the Senate side, a bipartisan bill takes a different approach – indexing drug prices to inflation, which is also controversial. See [Vulnerable Republicans Balk At Trump-Backed Drug Pricing Bill](#) (The Hill, 10/26/19). (See the [October 24 Update](#) for background information.)

House Oversight Hearing on the Affordable Care Act and More

On October 23, the House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a [hearing](#) with only one witness – Seema Verma, the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Among topics about which she was questioned were the [decline in Medicaid enrollment among children](#), and [what the administration will do](#) if the Affordable Care Act is overturned by the federal appeals court in *Texas v. U.S.* See [Ms. Verma's written testimony](#), and the [Memorandum from Chairman Pallone](#) to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Representative Greg Walden (R-OR) to Retire

Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR), currently the senior Republican on the House Energy & Commerce (E&C) Committee—which has jurisdiction over Medicaid, the Family-to-Family Health Information Center (F2F) program, and many other health programs—has decided to retire at the end of next year. Rep. Walden has been supportive of the F2F program, both as chairman of the E&C Committee when the program was reauthorized and expanded in 2018, and as Ranking Member when the program was reauthorized this year. See [Oregon GOP Rep. Greg Walden Won't Seek Reelection](#) (The Hill, 10/28/19).

MEDICAID NEWS, INFORMATION, AND RESOURCES

Medicaid Waivers

- [States Try A Gentler Approach To Getting Medicaid Enrollees To Work](#) (Kaiser Health News, 10/28/19)
- [TennCare's Revised Medicaid Block Grant Plan: The Feds Get It First, Then the Public](#) (Nashville Tennessean, 10/28/19)
- [Arizona Quietly Suspends Medicaid Work Requirement](#) (Associated Press, 10/22/19)

ACA NEWS, INFORMATION, AND RESOURCES

NOTE: The 2020 Open Enrollment Period is November 1, 2019 to December 15, 2019.

RESOURCES (some new and some repeated from previous Updates):

- [What's New for 2020 Marketplace Enrollment?](#) (Georgetown University Center on Health Insurance Reforms, 10/17/19) – provides an overview of several developments that affect this coming open enrollment.
- **CMS FACT SHEET: FEDERAL HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE 2020 OPEN ENROLLMENT** (describes new features of website)
- [List of 2019 CMS Navigator grantees](#)
- **The Georgetown Center on Health Insurance Reforms [Navigator Guide for Plan Year 2020](#).** The Guide helps answer questions about eligibility for insurance coverage or subsidies, health plan choices on- and off-marketplace, issues for small employers, coverage post-enrollment, and more.
- **Enrollment Assistance Materials from the Kaiser Family Foundation:**

FAQs. To help consumers, navigators, brokers and other assisters, the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) has updated and expanded its database of more than 300 [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about open enrollment, the health insurance marketplaces, and the ACA. More than 180 of the FAQs are [available in Spanish](#). This year, there are new sections about immigration status, enrollment options for those affected by Hurricane Dorian, and the [sale of Marketplace plans on private websites](#), also known as “direct enrollment” sites or “certified enrollment partner” sites.

Fact Sheets. KFF also offers short, printable fact sheets on four common scenarios:

- [If You Shop on Private Websites Instead of HealthCare.gov](#)
- [If You Buy Health Coverage in the Individual Market](#)
- [For Consumers Considering Short-Term Policies](#)
- [If You Are Low-Income](#)

Calculator. KFF’s Health Insurance Marketplace Calculator will soon be updated with 2020 premium data. Check [here](#) for KFF’s most current resource.

- **Young Invincibles:**
 - [OE7 Resources and Suggested Messaging](#) (Scroll down for customizable materials, email message, FB posts, and Tweets.)
 - [YI OE7 Materials Folder](#)
 - [Connector tool](#) - find local help
- **Community Catalyst:** [Outreach Hub](#) Google Drive
- **Center for Budget and Policy Priorities:**
[5 Good Reasons to Visit HealthCare.gov During Open Enrollment](#) (full article) In sum:
 1. Financial help is available to reduce the cost of coverage and care.
 2. Plans are more affordable than people think.

3. Consumers can save money by comparison shopping on HealthCare.gov.
4. Plans purchased on HealthCare.gov are comprehensive and guaranteed to cover the essentials.
5. Beware of insurance plans sold outside of HealthCare.gov.

Assister Readiness Resources

Modules for the first week of the 2020 Assister Readiness Webinar Series are now posted and ready to view. These modules cover topics relating to Helping Consumers Apply for Marketplace coverage. You can find the recordings and transcripts for the *Helping Consumers Apply* Assister Readiness Webinar Series modules here:

- **Preparing to Apply**
 - [Recording \(mp4\)](#) | [Transcript](#)
- **Creating and Submitting Applications**
 - [Recording \(mp4\)](#) | [Transcript](#)
- **Application Assistance Simulation**
 - [Recording \(mp4\)](#) | [Transcript](#)

TRICARE

Both the TRICARE and FEDVIP open seasons will run from Nov. 11 to Dec. 9. Enrollment choices made during this period will take effect on Jan. 1, 2020.

See:

- [Information about TRICARE'S OPEN SEASON](#) (10/2/19)
- [Compare 2020 FEDVIP Plans and Costs, Prepare for Open Season](#) (10/3/19)

From TRICARE Benefits Updates:

- [TRICARE Pharmacy Copayments to Increase Starting Jan. 1, 2020](#) (10/22/19)
- [Open Season for FEDVIP Dental and Vision Coverage Starts Soon](#) (10/29/19)

[Sign up for TRICARE email updates.](#)

Connect with TRICARE on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

OTHER NEWS, INFORMATION, AND RESOURCES

[How States Use the National Standards for CYSHCN in their Health Care Systems](#) (map and state-specific information; National Academy for State Health Policy, 10/29/19)

YOUR INPUT SOUGHT

Due October 31. HHS/NIH, *All of Us* Research Program: [Request for Information \(RFI\) to Inform Tribal Collaborations.](#)

The *All of Us* research program seeks input on Tribal Nation issues and concerns, including the importance of proper handling of AI/AN biospecimens in accordance with Tribal beliefs and traditions,

challenges with handling data from self-identified AI/AN individuals, and educating the research community on avoidance of stigmatizing research.

NEW: Call for Nominations: 2020 CMS Health Equity Award – Due November 15, 2019

Health equity is defined by Healthy People 2020 as the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. A measure of health equity is the reduction or elimination of disparities in health that adversely affect vulnerable populations. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recognizes the importance of health equity and is working to ensure that disparities in health care quality and access are eliminated.

The 2020 CMS Health Equity Award will shine a light on an organization leading the way on the path to equity, showing others how to reduce disparities in quality, access, and outcomes. The award will go to an organization who can demonstrate they have reduced disparities in health care quality, access, or outcomes between two or more groups. Populations of focus include racial and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities, and rural populations. All CMS partner/stakeholder organizations and networks, at the organizational level, are eligible for the award. *All nomination forms and questions about the award should be submitted to the CMS Office of Minority Health (ATTN: 2020 CMS Health Equity Award) at HealthEquityTA@cms.hhs.gov.*

FDA Patient Representatives

Are you a patient or caregiver who wants to get involved at FDA? Contact [the Patient Affairs Staff \(PAS\)](#) or follow them on Twitter [@FDAPatientInfo](#).

We at Family Voices would love to hear any suggestions you might have about how to make the Update more useful to you. Does it provide the right amount of information? What parts are helpful and not so helpful? Please let us know! Comments and questions can be directed to jguerney@familyvoices.org.

Yours truly,
Janis Guerney
Director of Public Policy
Family Voices

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