

Wynne Health Group Weekly



FRAMING THE WEEK

The debate regarding a new **COVID-19 relief** package will intensify this week. President Joe Biden will [meet](#) this afternoon with a group of 10 Republicans, of which eight are members of the bipartisan group led by Sens. Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Susan Collins (R-AK), to discuss their \$600 billion [counteroffer](#) to Biden's \$1.9 trillion [American Rescue Plan](#). Meanwhile, congressional Democrats are moving forward with a budget resolution to lay the procedural groundwork to pass Biden's package through budget reconciliation. The House could unveil the resolution as soon as today.

While the \$600 billion GOP proposal scraps Biden's more partisan economic measures, such as the \$15 minimum wage requirement, it mirrors Biden's call for **\$160 billion to support COVID-19 vaccine development and distribution**, testing and contact tracing, personal protective equipment production, and other public health measures. The proposal also matches Biden's request for **\$4 billion to expand access to behavioral health services**. The senators are slated to unveil additional details of their \$600 billion proposal later today.

How Biden proceeds with his first major legislative initiative will likely set the tone for his legislative agenda over the next two years – incremental progress through bipartisanship or more sweeping changes through party-line votes. The highly anticipated Supreme Court ruling on the **Affordable Care Act lawsuit** (*California v. Texas*), which could arrive as soon as this Wednesday, will also shape Biden's health care legacy.

This week, the House Energy and Commerce Committee will convene two **hearings on the COVID-19 response**. Tomorrow, the [Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee](#) will hear from state officials about issues concerning COVID-19 vaccine distribution and administration, including the status of the nation's COVID-19 vaccine supply, equitable allocation and prioritization, and other logistical obstacles. On Wednesday, the [Health Subcommittee](#) will examine the COVID-19 vaccine, testing, and medical supply chain, looking back at the Trump Administration's response and discussing the Biden Administration's actions thus far.

Additional **confirmation hearings for Biden's Cabinet nominees** are slated for this week, but Xavier Becerra, Biden's nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), is still awaiting a hearing. Tomorrow, the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee will consider the nomination of [Thomas Vilsack](#) to be Secretary of Agriculture. The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee will consider the nomination of [Miguel Cardona](#) for Secretary of Education on Wednesday and the nomination of [Marty Walsh](#) for Secretary of Labor on Thursday.

THIS WEEK IN HEALTH POLICY

Tue. (2/2)

- **10:30am – Hearing: Confirmation** – The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee convenes a hearing to consider the nomination of Thomas. J. Vilsack, of Iowa, to be Secretary of Agriculture. [Details.](#)
- **11:00am – Hearing: COVID-19 Vaccines** – The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations convenes a hearing titled, “No Time to Lose: Solutions to Increase COVID-19 Vaccinations in the States.” [Details.](#)

Wed. (2/3)

- **10:00am – Hearing: Secretary of Education** – The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee convenes a hearing to consider the nomination of Miguel Cardona to serve as Secretary of Education. [Details.](#)
- **11:00am – Hearing: COVID-19 Vaccine Supplies** – The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health convenes a hearing titled, “Road to Recovery: Ramping Up COVID-19 Vaccines, Testing, and Medical Supply Chain.” [Details.](#)
- **2:00pm-3:15pm – Brookings Webinar: Medicaid** – The Brookings Institute hosts a webinar titled, “How can the Biden administration improve the Medicaid program?” [Details.](#)

Thurs. (2/4)

- **10:00am – Hearing: Secretary of Labor** – The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee convenes a hearing to consider the nomination of Marty Walsh to serve as Secretary of Labor. [Details.](#)

Additional Multi-Day Events

- **February 4-February 5 – HHS Meeting: COVID-19 Vaccines** – HHS convenes a meeting of the National Vaccine Advisory Committee to discuss safety, compliance, and confidence, among other issues. [Details.](#)

FEATURED WHG ANALYSIS

- **WHG Catalogue of COVID-19 Government Response** – December-January Edition – In the Policy Hub Insight Bank [here.](#)
- **WHG: Materials Related to COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence** – In the Policy Hub Insight Bank [here.](#)
- **California v. Texas: Analysis of Supreme Court Oral Arguments** – In the Policy Hub Insight Bank [here.](#)

CONGRESSIONAL LOOKBACK

Fri. (1/29)

- **MACPAC** convened virtually for Day Two of its January 2021 public meeting and held sessions on the role of Medicaid for people with ID/DD; Medicaid NEMT; integration of care for dual eligibles; coverage of high-cost specialty drugs; and mental health parity in Medicaid. All WHG session summaries are available on Policy Hub [here.](#)

Thurs. (1/28)

- **MACPAC** convened virtually for Day One of its January 2021 public meeting and held sessions on Medicaid postpartum coverage recommendations; estate recovery recommendations; automatic countercyclical financing adjustments; designing a unified program for dual eligibles; Medicaid housing supports for individuals with SUD; Medicaid state budget outlooks; and value-

based payment models for maternity care. All WHG session summaries are available on Policy Hub [here](#).

REGULATORY LOOKBACK

Fri. (1/29)

- **HHS** announced the delay of the organ procurement organizations (OPO) final rule and the Part D Secure Electronic Prior Authorization final rule. These actions delay the effective dates of the rules from February 1, 2021 to March 30, 2021. [Details](#).

Thurs. (1/28)

- **President Biden** signed a set of administrative actions aimed at improving access to health care coverage in Medicaid and the ACA exchanges and strengthening protections around women's reproductive health. [Details](#).
- **HHS** issued an amendment to its March 2020 [Declaration](#) under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act to expand the workforce of health care providers who can administer COVID-19 vaccines. [Details](#).

COMMENT & APPLICATION DEADLINES

- **Feb. 5:** CMS issued a [call for public comment](#) on which episode-based cost measures to develop for the next wave of Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) measures. The measures developed during this wave could impact performance-based Medicare payment adjustments for MIPS-eligible clinicians for CY 2022 or CY 2023. [Details](#).
- **Feb. 7:** FDA [announced](#) a request for nominations for consumer representatives to serve on several advisory committees and panels. [Details](#).
- **Feb. 7:** FDA [announced](#) a request for nominations for the National Mammography Quality Assurance Advisory Committee in the Center for Devices and Radiological Health. The FDA is also soliciting industry organizations that are interested in participating in the selection of nonvoting members for the Committee. [Details](#).
- **Feb. 12:** OHRP is seeking nominations of qualified candidates for appointment to the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Human Research Protections. [Details](#).
- **Feb. 12:** FEMA seeks comments on a [proposed rule](#) to revise the "Estimated cost of the assistance," which is one of the factors FEMA's Public Assistance Program considers when evaluating requests from states for major disaster declarations and making recommendations to the President. [Details](#).
- **Feb. 15:** Nominations are due Feb. 15 for a CMS Technical Expert Panel (TEP) related to the development of practitioner-level measures to assess access to kidney transplantation for dialysis patients. [Details](#).
- **Feb. 16:** CMS seeks comment on plans for a new Review Choice Demonstration for inpatient rehabilitation facility (IRF) services. [Details](#).
- **Feb. 19:** FDA [announced](#) a request for nominations for members to serve on the National Mammography Quality Assurance Advisory Committee in the Center for Devices and Radiological Health. [Details](#).
- **Feb. 22:** HRSA announced a maternal health-focused Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) – Primary Care Training and Enhancement-Community Prevention and Maternal Health. [Details](#).
- **Feb. 27:** The FDA issued a [request for nominations](#) for voting members to serve on the Technical Electronic Product Radiation Safety Standards Committee.
- **March 4:** The HHS Office of Minority Health is seeking nominations of qualified candidates for appointment to the Advisory Committee on Minority Health. [Details](#).

- **March 12:** CDC released a [request for nominations](#) for membership to the Advisory Committee on Breast Cancer in Young Women.
- **March 15:** HRSA announced a maternal and child health-focused Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) – Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems: Health Integration Prenatal-to-Three Program. [Details](#).
- **March 15:** USPSTF [announced](#) a request for nominations to serve on the task force. Selected members will serve a four-year term. [Details](#).

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