

Wynne Health Group Weekly



FRAMING THE WEEK

The House and Senate are both in session this week finishing out a busy March before heading into a two-week spring recess period. If Republicans manage to coalesce the votes, the House will bring up H.R. 1, the “Lower Energy Costs Act”, a package of reforms to increase domestic energy capacity and reduce associated regulatory and permitting barriers. The 175-page measure combines several individual bills reported out of the House Energy and Commerce, Natural Resources and Transportation and Infrastructure committees. Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer has declared the measure “dead on arrival” in the Senate. The Senate is expected to finally vote on legislation repealing the Iraq war authorizations on Wednesday, after a nearly two-week floor process that will have included around a dozen GOP amendment votes.

Hearings

This week, Health and Human Services (HHS) **Secretary Xavier Becerra** continues to sell the President’s FY 2024 budget proposal to Congress by appearing before the [House Ways and Means Committee](#) and the [House Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee](#) on Tuesday and the [House Energy and Commerce Committee](#) on Wednesday. The \$144 billion proposed budget for HHS includes an \$8 billion increase to enhance Medicare benefits by expanding diabetes prevention and increasing access to behavioral health, among other proposals. For Medicaid and CHIP, it includes \$138 billion in investments over 10 years to support equity and sustainability plus another \$150 billion for home and community-based services ([WHG summary](#)). Secretary Becerra testified before the Senate Ways and Means Committee ([details](#)) and the Senate Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee ([details](#)) last week.

The **House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health** is planning a [hearing](#) on Tuesday titled: **Lowering Unaffordable Costs: Examining Transparency and Competition in Health Care.**

On Wednesday, the **Senate Finance Committee** will convene a [hearing](#) titled **An Oral Health Crisis: Identifying and Addressing Health Disparities.**

Also on Wednesday, the **Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture** will have a [hearing](#) on the **Department of Agriculture’s FY 2024 budget request.** **Secretary Tom Vilsack** will be testifying on the President’s request for \$30.1 billion in discretionary funding for the USDA, a \$3.8 billion increase from the FY 2023 enacted level. Included in the proposal is \$7.1 billion for critical nutrition programs, including \$6.3 billion specifically for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). ([WHG summary](#)).

On Thursday, the **Senate Committee on Finance** will hold a [hearing](#) to examine pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and the prescription drug supply chain, focusing on the impact on patients and taxpayers.

THIS WEEK IN HEALTH POLICY

Mon. (3/27)

- **1:00pm – CMS Meeting: Medicare/IRA Implementation** – The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) holds a meeting with drug manufacturers to discuss implementation of the Medicare provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. [Details.](#)

Tue. (3/28)

- **10:00am – Hearing: FDA Oversight/Infant Formula Shortage** – The House Committee on Oversight and Accountability holds a hearing titled “FDA Oversight Part I: The Infant Formula Shortage.” [Details.](#)
- **10:00am – Hearing: COVID-19/School Closures** – The House Committee on Oversight and Accountability Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic holds a hearing titled “The Consequences of School Closures: Intended and Unintended.” [Details.](#)
- **1:00pm – Hearing: Health Care Costs** – The House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health holds a hearing to examine ideas to drive down the cost of health care through transparency and competition. [Details.](#)
- **2:00pm – Hearing: President’s HHS Budget** – The House Committee on Ways and Means holds a hearing to examine the President’s FY 2024 Health and Human Services (HHS) budget proposal. HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra will be testifying. [Details.](#)

Wed. (3/29)

- **10:00am – Hearing: President’s HHS Budget** – The House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health holds a hearing to examine the President’s FY 2024 HHS budget proposal. HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra will be testifying. [Details.](#)
- **10:00am – Hearing: President’s USDA Budget** – The Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies holds a hearing to examine the President’s FY 2024 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) budget proposal. USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack will be testifying. [Details.](#)
- **10:30am – HITAC Meeting: Interoperability Standards** – The Health Information Technology Advisory Committee (HITAC) holds a meeting of the Interoperability Standards Workgroup to discuss program updates. [Details.](#)
- **2:30pm – Hearing: Oral Health Disparities** – The Senate Committee on Finance holds a hearing to examine the oral health crisis, focusing on identifying and addressing health disparities. [Details.](#)

Thurs. (3/30)

- **8:00am – CDC Meeting: Scientific Counselors** – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) holds a meeting of the Board of Scientific Counselors to discuss health equity and data modernization updates. [Details.](#)
- **10:00am – Hearing: PBMs** – The Senate Committee on Finance holds a hearing to examine pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and the prescription drug supply chain, focusing on the impact on patients and taxpayers. [Details.](#)
- **1:00pm – BPC Discussion: Primary Care Payment Reform** – The Bipartisan Policy Center holds a discussion on federal policy opportunities for strengthening value-based primary care. [Details.](#)

Fri. (3/31)

- **2:30pm – CMS Meeting: Innovation Center** – The CMS Innovation Center holds a meeting to discuss updates on the Center’s patient and caregiver experience and engagement strategy and key focus areas for 2023. [Details.](#)

Additional Multi-Day Events

- **March 29-March 30 – HHS Meeting: HIV/AIDS** – HHS holds a meeting of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA) to discuss programs and policies intended to promote effective HIV diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and quality care services. [Details](#).

FEATURED WHG ANALYSIS

- **WHG Tracker of COVID-19 PHE Flexibilities** – In the Policy Hub Insight Bank [here](#)
- **WHG Health Policy Guide to the 118th Congress** – In the Policy Hub Insight Bank [here](#).
- **WHG Roundup of Surprise Billing and Transparency Updates**– In the Policy Hub Insight Bank [here](#).
- **WHG Maternal Health Policy Update: November – December 2022** – In the Policy Hub Insight Bank [here](#).

CONGRESSIONAL LOOKBACK

Thurs. (3/23)

- **The SFC [held](#)** a hearing with HHS Secretary Becerra on the President's FY 2024 budget request for HHS. [Details](#).
- **The Senate Appropriations Committee [held](#)** a hearing with HHS Secretary Becerra on the President's FY 2024 budget request for HHS. [Details](#).
- **Chair of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee [released](#)** a report on continued shortages of critical medications. [Details](#).

Weds. (3/22)

- **Sens. Bennet and Wyden [introduced](#)** the Better Mental Health Care for Americans Act. [Details](#).

REGULATORY LOOKBACK

Fri. (3/24)

- The Biden Administration [launched](#) the new White House Challenge to End Hunger and Build Healthy Communities to strengthen public-private partnerships that improve nutrition and diet-related diseases. [Details](#).
- The FDA [issued](#) draft guidance on clinical trial considerations to support accelerated approval of oncology therapeutics. [Details](#).

Thurs. (3/23)

- **The FDA [announced](#)** the release of the “Framework for the Use of Digital Health Technologies (DHTs) in Drug and Biological Product Development.” [Details](#).
- **The FNS [announced](#)** \$60 million in grant funding to support school food programs. [Details](#).
- **HRSA [announced](#)** the OPTN Modernization Initiative to better serve the needs of patients and families. [Details](#).

Weds. (3/22)

- **The FCC** released both a [proposed rule](#) and a [final rule](#) for the Rural Health Care Program. Comments are due April 24. [Details](#).
- **HHS [announced](#)** efforts to review in a whole-of-government approach its march-in authority. [Details](#)
- **The FNS [released](#)** a proposed rule to lower the community eligibility provision (CEP) threshold to 25 percent for schools to provide free school meals in lower income areas. [Details](#).
- **The AHRQ [issued](#)** an RFI to inform the development of a potential CAHPS survey about patients' prenatal and childbirth care experiences in ambulatory and inpatient settings. [Details](#).

Mon. (3/20)

- **HHS [announced](#)** the creation of a new Office of Family Violence Prevention and Services (OFVPS). [Details](#).
- **The GAO [released](#)** a report on actions to improve COVID-19 infection prevention and control in nursing homes. [Details](#).
- **CMS [announced](#)** that certified independent dispute resolution (IDR) entities can resume processing payment determinations on March 17, 2023 for payment disputes involving items or services furnished on or after October 25, 2022. [Details](#).
- **HRSA [announced](#)** that it is soliciting nominations for membership on the Council on Graduate Medical Education. [Details](#).

COMMENT & APPLICATION DEADLINES

- **March 29:** The Senate HELP Committee [issued](#) an RFI seeking feedback for the upcoming PAHPA reauthorization. Responses are due March 29. [Details](#).
- **March 31:** The FDA [issued](#) draft guidance on recommendations for evaluating donor eligibility using individual risk-based questions to reduce the risk of HIV by blood and blood products. [Details](#).
- **April 3:** HHS [proposed new rules](#) to expand access to contraceptive services under the ACA. [Details](#).
- **April 12:** The OMB [requests](#) comments on initial proposals to improve the quality and usefulness of race and ethnicity data collected and reported across federal agencies. [Details](#).
- **April 14:** CMS [issued](#) a proposed rule to require the disclosure of certain ownership, managerial, and other information regarding Medicare SNFs and Medicaid nursing facilities. [Details](#).
- **April 14:** The CDC [is seeking](#) nominations for membership on the Board of Scientific Counselors, Deputy Director for Infectious Diseases. [Details](#).
- **April 24:** The FCC released both a [proposed rule](#) and a [final rule](#) for the Rural Health Care Program. [Details](#).
- **April 25:** CMS [issued](#) a proposed rule to implement requirements under section 203 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (CAA), which relate to Medicaid shortfall and third-party payments. [Details](#).
- **April 27:** HRSA [announced](#) a funding opportunity through its Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention (NEPQR)-Pathway to Registered Nurse Program (PRNP). [Details](#).
- **April 28:** CMS [issued](#) a proposed rule that seeks to further clarify the treatment of inpatient days associated with Medicaid Section 1115 demonstrations in the calculation of Medicare disproportionate share hospital (DSH) payments. [Details](#).
- **May 1:** The NIH [announced](#) a number of grants to address health disparities and advance health equity. Applications are due May 1. [Details](#).
- **May 1:** The NTIA [issued](#) a request for comments on the Digital Equity Act of 2021 Program. [Details](#).
- **May 8:** SAMHSA [released](#) grant opportunity for cooperative agreements to implement the Zero Suicide intervention and prevention model in health systems. [Details](#).
- **May 24:** The FNS [released](#) a proposed rule to support online ordering in WIC. [Details](#).
- **September 6:** The FDA [issued](#) a proposed rule to establish tobacco product manufacturing practice (TPMP) requirements. [Details](#).

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