

DC Update June 29, 2009

This week Congress will recess for the July Fourth holiday. Members will return July 6th and continue to address health reform legislation as well as multiple appropriations bills.

Health Reform

The Senate Finance Committee has delayed releasing its health reform bill after the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) reported the bill would cost \$1.6 trillion over 10 years. Chairman, Max Baucus (D-MT) announced they would work with Senate Finance colleagues, in a bi-partisan manner, to bring the cost under \$1 trillion. It is unclear when the draft will be prepared for release. The public plan option continues to get much scrutiny as debate in both the House and Senate moves forward. Some Senators are seeking consensus on a consumer owned cooperative plan. Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND) is the leading Democrat on this option. It is not clear whether this will be included in the Finance Committee's draft.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee will continue marking up the *Affordable Health Choices Act*. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated the bill would cover approximately 16 million people and cost about \$1 trillion over 10 years. Over 219 amendments were offered during the week. Mark up is expected to resume July 6th.

In the House, three committees of jurisdiction Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means and Education and Labor released a tri-committee discussion draft. Energy and Commerce Chair, Henry Waxman (D-CA) held three days of hearings last week on the draft. Check the Energy and Commerce website for the discussion draft text, fact sheets, overview of the hearings, written testimony and videos of the hearings: <http://energycommerce.house.gov/>

On Friday, Secretary Sebelius, HHS, released state by state health status reports. Further supporting and advocating for the Administration's work to reform the health care system. To view the reports and other information from the Administration check www.HealthReform.gov.

FY 2010 Appropriations

On June 19, the U.S. House of Representatives cleared, in a vote of 259 to 157, FY 2010 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriations bill (H.R. 2847) that includes funding for the Department of Justice (DOJ) programs. Residential substance abuse treatment, drug courts, reentry programs, mentally ill offender programs including mental health courts are were given increased funding over FY 2009.

On Thursday, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved the Commerce, Justice and Science and Related Agencies appropriations bill. As details emerge and NACBHDD has a chance to compare the bills, staff will provide an update on this and other appropriation bills of interest. Appropriation bills for labor, health and human services and education and housing and transportation have not been completed in either chamber.

10th Anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Olmstead v. L.C. Decision

On the 10th Anniversary (June 22nd) of Olmstead v. L.C. decision, President Obama announced the launch of "The Year of Community Living," a new effort to assist Americans with disabilities. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan will identify ways to improve access to housing, community supports, and independent living arrangements. Secretary, Donovan, HUD, announced "it will offer rental assistance to 4,000 non-elderly families with disabilities, including 1,000 vouchers specifically targeted to those transitioning out of nursing homes and other care facilities." Check the following link to view the press release from HHS:

<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/06/20090622b.html>