



HEADLINE DC

SEPTEMBER 15, 2011

HILL & LEGAL HAPPENINGS: POLICY AND POLITICS

- **HHS Appropriations:** Due to House rules prohibiting simultaneous mark-up of 2 spending bills, the House of Representatives has “postponed” its mark-up of the FY 2012 Labor/HHS/Education appropriations measure, originally scheduled for September 8. The House measure proposes allocating just over \$139 billion for all 3 agencies. The Senate measure allocation ceiling across the 3 agencies proposes over \$157 billion – still \$300 million below FY 2011 actual funding.
- **Virginia ACA Suit Tossed:** On September 8, a 3-judge panel of the Federal 4th Circuit Court of Appeals held that neither Virginia Attorney General Cuccinelli nor Liberty University has the legal right to sue over the ACA’s requirement that people purchase insurance. Analysts suggest the Supreme Court will likely hear the case in early 2012 and rule sometime next summer
- **Super-committee at Work:** The joint budget deficit committee has begun its work to try to reduce the deficit by \$1.2 trillion over the next 10 years. Their deadline: November 23.

AROUND THE AGENCIES: NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Drug Rates Up:** SAMHSA’s latest National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) found that 22.6 million Americans age 12 and up (8.9% of the population) were illicit drug users, up from 8% in 2008. As in the past, the report shows a vast disparity in the number of people needing specialized treatment for SA and the number who actually get it (respectively, 23.1 million and 2.6 million Americans ages 12 and up). For more: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k10NSDUH/2k10Results.htm>.
- **Our Shaky Economics:** According to the latest release from the US Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2010*, between 2009 and 2010, our income has gone down (a 2.3% drop in median income), poverty has risen (to the largest number in the 52 years poverty estimates have been published), and health insurance coverage is flat (the absolute number is down; the percentage is static). Go to: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p60-239.pdf>
- **Don’t Forget to Comment:** September 28 is the deadline to comment on the HHS rules on the establishment of exchanges and qualified health plans under the ACA (see earlier newsletters for details).

ORGANIZATIONALLY SPEAKING

- **Urban Institute:** *Will the Patient-Centered Medical Home Transform the Delivery of Health Care* describes the medical home model, its components, rationale, effect on primary care, implementation issues such as costs and payment methods, evidence of effectiveness and health reform provisions promoting it. Go to: <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/20110805quickstrikepaper.pdf>
- **Commonwealth Fund:** *When Unemployed Means Uninsured: The Toll of Job Loss on Health Coverage and how the ACA Will Help* describes how the ACA will broaden affordable health coverage options for the unemployed who can’t afford COBRA and calls for re-establishing COBRA premium subsidies to bridge coverage gaps until 2014. Go to: http://www.commonwealthfund.org/~media/Files/Publications/IssueBrief/2011/Aug/1540_Doty_when_unemployed_means_uninsured_COBRA_reform_brief.pdf

ETCETERA

- **NACBDD Fall Meeting:** Remember to register. Meeting is October 24-25, Desmond Hotel, Albany, NY
- **APHA Annual Meeting:** *Healthy Communities Promote Healthy Minds and Bodies*, October 29-November 2, Washington DC. Go to: <http://www.apha.org/meetings/registration>
- **85th Annual American School Health Conference:** *Limitless Possibilities*, October 12-15, Louisville KY. For more go to: <http://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=972973>.