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WASHINGTON UPDATE

ENA Government Relations

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gov@ena.org

Congress Leaves Washington Empty-Handed on Health Care Reform

The effort by Senate Republicans to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was defeated in a dramatic vote on the Senate floor on July 28. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) had offered an amendment, referred to as the “skinny” repeal, that would have done away with the individual and employer health insurance mandates, but would have left many other parts of the ACA intact. McConnell was hoping to pass a bill out of the Senate and then begin negotiations with the House of Representatives on a consensus bill. This McConnell amendment lost on a 49-51 vote. Sens. McCain (R-AZ), Murkowski (R-AK), and Collins (R-ME) voted against the amendment, as did all 48 Democrats (including 2 Independent Senators who usually align with Democrats).

Leadership on both the Senate Finance Committee and Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee announced that they would hold hearings on health care reform in September. The focus of the hearings will likely be limited to stabilizing the insurance market.

Data Analysis Suggest Opioid Epidemic Much Worse Than Thought

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), fatalities related to the opioid epidemic reached an all-time high in 2015, killing more than 33,000 in the United States. That’s more than the number of people killed by either guns or car accidents. New analysis reveals, however, that these statistics might be severely underreporting the extent of this public health crisis.

Dr. Christopher Ruhm of the University of Virginia noticed that specific drugs causing an overdose are often not listed on death certificates, which would lead to undercounting and underreporting of accurate cause of death data. After reviewing CDC data from 2014 alone, it was discovered that a drug was not identified on death certificates in fatal overdoses in nearly 20 percent of cases. Despite evidence of national underreporting, the study found that some states were better than others when it. For example, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Hampshire have rigorous reporting requirements and listed a drug on death certificates 99 percent of the time. In other states, however, the reporting rates are as low as 50 percent. Overall, Dr. Ruhm suggests that national mortality rates (deaths per 100,000 individuals) for opioids were actually 24 percent higher than reported, and rates for heroin 22 percent higher.

House Committee Advances ENA-Supported Human Trafficking Legislation

On July 27, the House Energy and Commerce Committee advanced the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond (SOAR) to Health and Wellness Act ([H.R. 767](#)) in a bipartisan voice vote, to address the scourge of human trafficking in the United States. The SOAR Act would enhance and codify a program at HHS to train health care providers to identify and appropriately respond to victims of human trafficking. The bill was introduced in the House on January 31 by Reps. Steve Cohen (D-TN), Adam Kinzinger (R-IL), Tony Cardenas (D-CA) and Ann Wagner (R-MO). After being approved by the Energy and Commerce Committee, this bill now awaits action on the House floor. A senate companion bill, [S. 256](#) was introduced on February 1 by Sens. Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and Susan Collins (R-ME).

ENA has submitted letters of support for both bills. In addition, a recent [column](#) that appeared in the Hill by ENA President Karen Wiley highlights the growing problem of human trafficking and calls for the mandatory training for health care professionals to better-identify potential victims of human trafficking.

ENA Priority Trauma Legislation Approved by House Committee

During the same July 27 markup that saw the SOAR Act advance, the House Energy and Commerce Committee approved by voice vote [H.R. 880](#), the MISSION Zero Act. This bill, which would provide grant funding to allow military trauma teams and providers to work alongside their civilian counterparts, is a priority for ENA and was one of the main “asks” for this year’s Day on the Hill. This bipartisan legislation had previously been approved by the Health Subcommittee on June 29. The MISSION Zero Act now awaits action on the House floor.

Federal Advocacy Update: ENA Priority Legislation

As discussed in June, we have started providing monthly updates on the status of bills that are of priority concern or focus for ENA. We will utilize this section to provide basic information such as new cosponsors that have signed on in the last month or updates on the status of the bill’s movement through Congress.

In June, we provided a listing of all cosponsors for each bill (except for H.R. 304, which passed the House in January and will no longer be adding cosponsors). Beginning last month and moving forward, we will only list new cosponsors added since the last Washington Update.

We have also added a piece of legislation as a new priority for ENA- the Stop, Observe, Ask, Respond to Health and Wellness Act discussed previously in this Update. We have listed all current cosponsors below.

Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act

[House \(H.R. 304\)](#)

Status: Passed House on January 9, 2017. Awaiting Senate action.

[Senate \(S. 916\)](#)

<u>Cosponsors</u>	<u>Party/State</u>	<u>Date Added</u>
Sen. Blumenthal, Richard	[D-CT]	7/17/2017
Sen. Heitkamp, Heidi	[D-ND]	7/19/2017
Sen. Klobuchar, Amy	[D-MN]	8/2/2017

Status: Passed HELP Committee on May 1. A Senate floor vote awaits.

MISSION ZERO Act

[House \(H.R. 880\)](#)

<u>Cosponsors</u>	<u>Party/State/Dist.</u>	<u>Date Added</u>
Rep. Jenkins, Lynn	[R-KS-2]	7/14/2017
Rep. Walberg, Tim	[R-MI-7]	7/14/2017
Rep. Kinzinger, Adam	[R-IL-16]	7/14/2017

Status: Passed Energy and Commerce Committee by voice vote on July 27, 2017.
This bill awaits action by the full House of Representatives.

[Senate \(S. 1022\)](#)

No New Cosponsors since May 3, 2017

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Accessibility Act

[House \(H.R. 1253\)](#)

<u>Cosponsors</u>	<u>Party/State/Dist.</u>	<u>Date Added</u>
Rep. Kaptur, Marcy	[D-OH-9]	7/11/2017

Senate: Please note there is no current Senate companion for H.R. 1253

Stop, Observe, Ask, Respond (SOAR) to Health and Wellness Act

[House \(H.R. 767\)](#)

<u>Cosponsors</u>	<u>Party/State/Dist.</u>	<u>Date Added</u>
Rep. Cohen, Steve*	[D-TN-9]	1/31/2017
Rep. Kinzinger, Adam**	[R-IL-16]	1/31/2017
Rep. Cardenas, Tony**	[D-CA-29]	1/31/2017

Rep. Wagner, Ann**	[R-MO-2]	1/31/2017
Rep. Meehan, Patrick	[R-PA-7]	5/16/2017
Rep. Kuster, Ann	[D-NH-2]	6/27/2017
Rep. Hudson, Richard	[R-NC-8]	6/27/2017
Rep. Eshoo, Anna	[D-CA-18]	6/29/2017
Rep. Castor, Kathy	[D-FL-14]	6/29/2017
Rep. Blumenauer, Earl	[D-OR-3]	7/27/2017

Status: Passed by Energy & Commerce Committee by voice vote on July 27, 2017.
This bill awaits action by the full House of Representatives

[Senate \(S. 256\)](#)

Cosponsors	Party/State	Date Added
Sen. Heitkamp, Heidi*	[D-ND]	2/1/2017
Sen. Collins, Susan**	[R-ME]	2/1/2017
Sen. Klobuchar, Amy	[D-MN]	6/22/2017
Sen. Cornyn, John	[R-TX]	6/28/2017
Sen. Blumenthal, Richard	[D-CT]	8/1/2017
Sen. Warren, Elizabeth	[D-MA]	8/2/2017

**Bill Sponsor*

***Original Cosponsor*