

# McDermottPlus Healthcare Preview

WEEK OF OCTOBER 21, 2019



*Administrator Verma is testifying, and the debate on prescription drug pricing reforms continues.*

**+ CMS ADMINISTRATOR SEEMA VERMA IS IN THE HOT SEAT.**

Administrator Verma will be testifying before the House Energy and Commerce Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee this week, her first testimony before a Committee of jurisdiction since she began her role leading the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). There are likely to be fiery exchanges between House Democrats and Administrator Verma regarding some of the Trump Administration's policies. Given the number of controversial policies coming from CMS, it will be interesting to watch if Democrats can stay focused and effectively question her on a small number of hot button issues or if they will run through a laundry list of issues that raise concerns. It wouldn't be surprising for them to drift into topics that are outside Administrator Verma's jurisdiction. Regardless, it will be an interesting hearing to watch.

**PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICING REFORM REMAINS THE FOCUS**

**IN CONGRESS.** Last week, the House Energy and Commerce, and Education and Labor committees both advanced Speaker Pelosi's drug pricing package, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act of 2019 (H.R. 3). This week, the House Ways and Means Committee will markup the bill. House Democrats are moving very quickly to get the bill through the committees and onto the House floor for a vote. A vote could happen as early as next week since the House only has two weeks left in session before a one week recess in early November. However, they might be moving faster than the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) can score changes to the bill. CBO's score on the bill is very important in not only understanding effects, but also in garnering support for the bill. Regardless of the completeness of a CBO score, the House will likely pass H.R. 3 within the next few weeks, but its journey will likely stop there. The Senate is highly unlikely to take up H.R. 3. So will Congress then turn to find a compromise? It is important to note that in the hearings and markups last week, House Republicans left room for negotiating with Democrats on prescription drug pricing reforms. There will likely be pressure on both sides to pass legislation on prescription drug pricing that gets signed into law. Is it enough pressure to cause them to act once H.R. 3 reaches the end of the road? We will be watching for the answer.

**THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE**

Senate Finance Committee

[Treating Substance Misuse in America: Scams, Shortfalls, and Solutions](#)

Thursday, October 24 at 10:30am

**THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE**

Ways and Means Committee

[Markup of Health Care Legislation](#)

Tuesday, October 22 at 9:30am

Energy and Commerce Committee

[Sabotage: The Trump Administration's Attack on Health Care](#)

Wednesday, October 23 at 10am

**CONTACT INFO**

Please reach out to us at:

[rwhitlock@mcdermottplus.com](mailto:rwhitlock@mcdermottplus.com)

[kwaldo@mcdermottplus.com](mailto:kwaldo@mcdermottplus.com)

[emmazimmerman@mcdermottplus.com](mailto:emmazimmerman@mcdermottplus.com)