

McDermottPlus Healthcare Preview

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 24, 2020

AZAR DEFENDS THE HHS BUDGET THIS WEEK.

- + **AZAR CONTINUES TO DEFEND THE HHS BUDGET.** It will be a busy week for Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar. He will be defending the HHS budget in front of four House and Senate Committees. (Two weeks ago, he defended the budget in front of the Senate Finance Committee.) Although we can expect that Democrats will ask Azar hard questions, there are a number of live subjects on the radar – Medicaid work requirements, coronavirus, Medicare for All, Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Regulation, and public charge. As a result, it is hard to predict all the questions he will be asked. So the real question is, how does he answer or not answer questions? We will be watching how he responds to all questions, but also keeping an eye out for answers that lack details or when the question is avoided. In many cases, an unanswered question can be informative.
- + **CONGRESSIONAL CALENDAR.** The congressional calendar is still tied to the May 22 deadline for the expiring health extenders, now only three months away. When it comes to congressional timelines, it is important to remember that, in general, deadlines drive conservations and policy decisions. Although Congress could address the healthcare extenders, surprise billing, and prescription drug pricing reforms soon, as they have a policy already written, it is more likely that policy decisions on these areas drag out until the May deadline. Delaying decision making becomes especially common when Congress has to make uncomfortable decisions, such as some of the tough choices involved in surprise billing and prescription drug reforms.

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

Senate Appropriations Committee
[The FY2021 HHS Budget](#)
Tuesday, February 25 at 10:30 AM

THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE

House Appropriations Committee
[Department of Health and Human Services Budget Request for FY2021](#)
Wednesday, February 26 at 9:30 AM

House Energy and Commerce
[The FY2021 HHS Budget and Oversight of the Coronavirus Outbreak](#)
Wednesday, February 26 at 1:30 PM

House Ways and Means Committee
[FY2021 Health and Human Services Budget](#)
Thursday, February 27 at 10 AM

[MACPAC February Meeting](#)
February 27-28th

CONTACT INFO

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