

McDermottPlus Healthcare Preview

WEEK OF MARCH 2, 2020

CORONAVIRUS SPREADS TO POLITICS.

- + **THE CORONAVIRUS IS TAKING OVER WASHINGTON.** Last week, the coronavirus became the focal point for Congress, the Administration and the general public. The growing attention to the virus is appropriate as the disease continues to spread globally. During the fiscal year 2021 Health and Human Services (HHS) Budget hearings with Secretary Alex Azar last week, much of the discussions focused on the Trump Administration's efforts to address the coronavirus. Members of both parties expressed alarm at the threat and suggested that the Administration's \$2.5 billion request for supplemental funding is not sufficient. Additionally, the Administration announced that Vice President Mike Pence will lead the Administration's coronavirus taskforce, which is coordinating with state and local governments to contain the spread of the disease. Ambassador Debbie Birx was appointed to be the White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator, reporting directly to Vice President Pence (Birx currently serves as US Global AIDS Coordinator).
- + This week, we expect that Congress will work to finalize a spending package to combat the virus. The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committee will also hold a hearing on the topic. It is highly likely that we will continue to talk about the coronavirus until we see signs that the virus is under control.
- + **CONGRESSIONAL CALENDAR AND CORONAVIRUS.** With the continued spread of the coronavirus, it may be difficult for stakeholders to raise attention on other issues. This makes getting policy priorities accomplished more challenging, as the congressional calendar is getting shorter and shorter. Remember that the calendar is still tied to the May 22 deadline for the expiring health extenders.

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee

[An Emerging Disease Threat: How the U.S. Is Responding to COVID-19, the Novel Coronavirus](#)

Tuesday, March 3 at 10 AM

THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE

House Energy and Commerce

[Combatting an Epidemic: Legislation to Help Patients with Substance Use Disorders](#)

Wednesday, March 3 at 10 AM

[MedPAC March Meeting](#)

March 5-6th

CONTACT INFO

Please reach out to us at:

rwhitlock@mcdermottplus.com

kwaldo@mcdermottplus.com

emmazimmerman@mcdermottplus.com