



WASHINGTON UPDATE

JANUARY 2016

Leadership Council of Aging Organizations to Host “Seniors Decide 2016” Forum

On February 17, the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) will sponsor Seniors Decide 2016, the nation’s only forum where all of the presidential candidates are invited to address issues that are important to America’s older adults. The forum is scheduled less than two weeks before Super Tuesday, March 1, when 15 states’ voters participate in presidential primaries. The forum will be live-streamed on February 17 starting at 1pm ET. Let LCAO and the candidates know that you’ll be watching by signing up at SeniorsDecide.org. LCAO is posting a running list to show all of the communities nationwide that are participating. You can also submit questions to the candidates at the Seniors Decide website.

Congressional Update

House, Senate Pass Bill to Repeal ACA; Obama Vetoes

On January 8, President Obama vetoed H.R. 3762, which would have repealed most of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The veto ends any real chance that the ACA will be undone during the Obama presidency. This bill represents the closest that congressional Republicans have come to dismantling the ACA. The vetoed bill would have saved \$500 billion over the next 10 years, but would end up increasing the deficit over the next 20 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. 22 million people would have lost their health insurance coverage after 2017.

HHS Clarifies Patients’ Rights to Their Medical Records Under HIPAA

On January 7, the US Department of Health and Human Services released guidance clarifying which of their records patients have the rights to access under HIPAA’s Privacy Rule, which requires covered entities to give patients access to their protected health information if requested. The guidance says that patients have the right to access a “designated record set,” including medical and billing records, plan enrollment information, and payment and claims adjudication data. However, psychotherapy notes and any information about civil or criminal actions are excluded from this designated record set. For more information visit: hhs.gov/hipaa

Chronic Care Workgroup Paper Comments Due January 26

The Senate Finance Committee’s Chronic Care Working Group released its policy options paper in late December. The paper outlines the key policy ideas the working group is considering as part of upcoming chronic care legislation. The working group is soliciting comments on the paper, and comments are due January 26, 2016.

CMS Releases Accountable Health Communities Model Grant

HHS has announced a new five-year program funding opportunity of up to \$157 million called the Accountable Health Communities (AHC) Model.

The AHC Model is the first CMS Innovation Center model to focus on the health-related social needs of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, including building alignment between clinical and community-based services at the local level. The goal of this model is that beneficiaries struggling with unmet health-related social needs become aware of the community-based services available to them and receive assistance accessing those services.

Award recipients under this model, referred to as “bridge organizations,” will oversee the screening of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries for social and behavioral issues, such as housing instability, food insecurity, utility needs, interpersonal violence, and transportation limitations, and help them connect with and/or navigate the appropriate community-based services.

To apply and for more information, go to <https://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/ahcm/>. A fact sheet, FAQs and registration for a webinar explaining the AHC Model and application requirements can be found at [CMS.gov](https://www.cms.gov). Please email AccountableHealthCommunities@cms.hhs.gov if you have any further questions.

Contact Us

We welcome your feedback!
Please share questions,
suggestions or concerns.

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