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AMCP Submits Comments to Senate Finance Committee on Bipartisan Drug Pricing Bill

Lawmakers are on summer recess through Labor Day, but congressional staff members have continued to work on drug pricing legislation. On July 23, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR) released the Chairman's Mark of the [Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act \(PDPRA\) of 2019](#), a bipartisan bill designed to reduce pharmaceutical costs in Medicare and Medicaid. AMCP [outlined provisions](#) relevant to managed care pharmacy, and submitted comments on the bill. AMCP will continue to advocate for relevant provisions with the Finance Committee, and Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee.

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Regulatory Update

HHS Announces Action Plan for Safe Importation of Prescription Drugs

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) last month published a [Safe Importation Action Plan](#) that lays out steps they will take to allow the safe importation of prescription drugs.

The two-fold action plan includes a potential HHS Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to authorize demonstration projects to allow drug importation from Canada, and potential FDA-issued guidance to manufacturers of FDA-approved drugs that seek to import versions of those drugs that are sold in foreign countries into the United States.

Advocacy Tip

Stay up-to-date: Read AMCP's [Letters, Statements and Analysis](#) on all legislation and regulation impacting managed care pharmacy.

In a statement, HHS Secretary Alex Azar noted that the announcement, "outlines the pathways the administration intends to explore to allow safe importation of certain prescription drugs to lower prices and reduce out of pocket costs for American patients. This is the next important step in the administration's work to end foreign freeloading and put American patients first."

AMCP opposes [prescription drug importation](#) legislation, and will closely monitor the administration's latest initiatives, including the potential NPRM and FDA guidance noted in the HHS Action Plan.

CMS Issues 2020 Physician Fee Schedule

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) proposed Calendar Year (CY) 2020 [Physician Fee Schedule](#) (PFS), released last month, includes [new Medicare coverage](#) for opioid treatment programs (OTPs), including medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for beneficiaries suffering from opioid use disorder.

In September 2018, AMCP [submitted comments](#) on CMS' 2019 PFS regarding a bundled episode-of-care payment that would ensure patients with substance use disorders (SUDs) have access to care. AMCP supported the use of bundled episode-of-care payment for SUDs, but encouraged CMS to consider several additional factors, including that provider payments recognize and distinguish the many differences in management, administration, and cost of various MAT therapies currently available (e.g., oral, injectable, implantable).

AMCP is now reviewing CMS' 2020 PFS proposal and its potential impact on managed care pharmacy, and will submit comments by Sept. 27. As we prepare comments, AMCP is seeking member input on opioids or other issues of importance to managed care. Please provide feedback on the CMS proposal by Sept. 20 to Afton Wagner, director, regulatory affairs, at awagner@amcp.org.

AMCP Submits Comments on Reducing Administrative Burdens in Health Care

AMCP [submitted comments](#) on Aug. 12 in response to CMS' [Request for Information](#) (RFI) seeking new ideas on continuing the progress of its 2017 Patients over Paperwork initiative. The RFI included potential solutions to relieve clinician burden and improve prior authorization (PA) procedures, as well as reporting and documentation requirements. AMCP's comments focused on how the organization and the managed care profession is working to ensure more timely, efficient, and collaborative PA processes.

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