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ORGANIZATIONALLY SPEAKING

New Congress Brings Changes In Leadership, Expertise

Politico offers insights regarding the leadership style and health law attitudes of Rep. Jack Kingston, R-Ga., who will chair the House Labor, HHS appropriations subcommittee. Meanwhile, The Wall Street Journal reports that two physicians were sworn in yesterday -- doubling the number of doctors in the Democratic caucus.

Politico: Jack Kingston Has Bipartisan Goals For ACA Funding

Rep. Jack Kingston wants to repeal Obamacare, and his ascension to the top of an Appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over health funding puts him in a powerful position to leave an imprint. But the affable Georgia Republican -- set to chair the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services in the new Congress -- wants it known he's not a saber-rattling, repeal-at-any-cost zealot (Cheney, 1/4).

The Wall Street Journal's Washington Wire: House Call: Democratic Caucus Adds Two Doctors

House Democrats doubled the number of doctors in their caucus with the swearing-in of California freshmen Raul Ruiz and Ami Bera, both of whom have signaled their eagerness to weigh in on health care issues (Radnofsky, 1/3).

The Hill: Isakson, Portman, Toomey To Join Finance Panel

Republican leaders in the Senate Thursday announced three new appointments to the chamber's elite Finance Committee, which governs Medicare and Medicaid. GOP Sens. Johnny Isakson (Ga.), Rob Portman (Ohio) and Pat Toomey (Pa.) received Finance positions for the 113th Congress. Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) will leave the panel. Leaders also announced that newly appointed Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) will join the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee starting Thursday (Viebeck, 1/3).

Republicans in the new Congress too are taking aim at the health care law --

The Hill: House Rules Aim To Block Controversial Health Care Board's Medicare Cuts

House Republicans signaled Thursday they will not follow rules in President Obama's health care law that were designed to speed Medicare cuts through Congress. The House is set to vote Thursday afternoon on rules for the 113th Congress. The rules package says the House won't comply with fast-track procedures for the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) -- a controversial cost-cutting board Republicans have long resisted (Baker, 1/3).

In other news from Capitol Hill --

CQ HealthBeat: Lawmakers Urge Implementation Of 2008 Mental Health Law

A group of House Democrats called on three Cabinet secretaries Thursday to release a delayed final rule to provide equal insurance coverage for mental health services. The 32 Democrats, led by Ted Deutch of Florida and Tim Ryan of Ohio, said that last month's deadly shootings at a Newtown, Conn., elementary school bring "newfound urgency" to ensuring access to mental health care. They requested the issuance of final rules set in a 2008 mental health law that would require insurers to offer mental health benefits coverage comparable to other medical benefits (Ethridge, 1/3).