



HEADLINE DC

JUNE 15, 2013

HILL & LEGAL HAPPENINGS: POLICY AND POLITICS

- **TEMPS IN THE SENATE...NEW SENATOR TO BE SEATED SOON.** New Jersey Governor Christie named Republican State Attorney General, Jeff Chiesa to fill the seat of the late Senator Frank Lautenberg until an October 16 special election. As a result, the Senate Democratic majority drops to 54-46. That's why the June 25 special election in Massachusetts is hot. John Kerry's Senate seat is being vied for by long-time Democratic Representative Ed Markey against newcomer, Republican Gabriel Gomez. Stay tuned!
- **"NO WAY" ON MEDICAID CHANGES.** At a hearing on the future of Medicaid, Democratic House Energy and Commerce members vowed opposition to Republican proposals to cap Medicaid spending by categories of beneficiaries, one of over 30 recommendations made in a 2011 National Republic Governors' Association report.
- **PRESIDENTIAL VETO THREAT.** The President has threatened to veto any appropriation measure that doesn't reflect a mix a mix of mandatory spending cuts and tax increases in lieu of current sequestration-imposed discretionary cuts. Yet, the House continues to work from the assumption that sequestration will remain in effect and has proposed increased military spending above the sequestration line on the back of discretionary programs. FY 2014 Labor, Health and Education appropriations by the House are targeted at 18% below the sequester. In contrast, the Senate is proceeding on the assumption the sequester cuts are dropped. Can you say "conference committee?"

AROUND THE AGENCIES: NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **OUT OF THE SHADOWS.** On June 3, President Obama hosted a National Conference on Mental Health at the White House to launch a national conversation to increase understanding and awareness about mental health. NACBHDD was there. View clips at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/06/05/bringing-mental-illness-out-shadows>
- **MENTAL HEALTH.GOV LAUNCHED.** Concurrent with the June 3 mental health conference, HHS unveiled Mentalhealth.Gov, an online resource for people looking for information about mental health. Check it out at <http://www.mentalhealth.gov>
- **SUICIDE PREVENTION APP CHALLENGE.** SAMHSA challenges individuals and organizations to develop a mobile app to link to continuity of care and follow-up care for persons at risk for suicide who have been discharged from an inpatient unit or emergency department. Submit by: August 9, 2013. For more: <http://suicidepreventionapp.challenge.gov>

ORGANIZATIONALLY SPEAKING

- **Medicare and Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital Payments: Proposed Rules** reviews the DSH changes made by the ACA as well as proposed rules on DHS in Medicare (comments due 7/25) and Medicaid (Comments due 7/12). Go to <http://healthreformgps.org/resources/medicare-and-medicare-disproportionate-share-hospital-payments-proposed-rules/>
- **KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION** Beyond Rebates: How Much Are Consumers Saving from the ACA's Medical Loss Ratio Provision? A study of the ACA requirement that insurance companies spend no less than 80 percent to 85 percent of premiums on medical care, the medical loss ratio. The findings: \$1.9 billion in premium savings and \$1.1 billion in consumer rebates last year. Go to: <http://kff.org/health-reform/perspective/beyond-rebates-how-much-are-consumers-saving-from-the-acas-medical-loss-ratio-provision>.
- **ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION.** *Premium Assistance in Medicaid* examines whether giving Medicaid beneficiaries a voucher to purchase private insurance—a "private option"—can be cost-effective and still provide benefits equal to those under traditional Medicaid. Go to: http://www.rwjf.org/en/research-publications/find-rwjf-research/2013/06/premium-assistance-in-medicare.html?cid=XEM_A7232

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- **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RURAL MENTAL HEALTH.** The NARMH annual conference. *Lassoing Rural Solutions for Rural Challenges* is slated for July 31-August 3, 2013 in San Antonio, Texas. A preconference will focus on veterans; a special peer track is being featured as part of the conference proper. To register and for more information, go to: www.narmh.org.
- **AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION.** *141 Annual Meeting*, November 2-6, Boston, MA. Go to: <http://www.apha.org/meetings/AnnualMeeting>
- **AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE TREATMENT OF OPIOID DEPENDENCE.** *2013 National Conference*, November 9-13, Philadelphia, PA. Go to: <http://www.aatod.org/national-conference/2013-aatod-conference-philadelphia/conference-at-a-glance/> ###