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Support ADA Grassroots Campaign on Water Fluoridation Congressional Resolution

Congressman and dentist Mike Simpson (R-ID) recently introduced H. Res. 416, a non-binding resolution in the House of Representatives commemorating the 70th anniversary of community water fluoridation. The resolution calls water fluoridation the “single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay” and points out that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognizes community water fluoridation “as one of ten great public health achievements of the 20th century.” AAOMS joins the American Dental Association (ADA) in support of this important resolution and encourages members to
urge their congressional representatives to cosponsor H. Res. 416, using the ADA’s Legislative Action Center.

House Republicans Advance Reconciliation Bill to Repeal Portions of Obamacare

In an effort to eliminate portions of President Obama’s signature legislation, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), congressional Republicans are seeking to use a reconciliation procedure that allows them to expedite legislation by skirting the normal 60-vote requirement for a bill to pass the Senate without being filibustered. Under the process, both chambers’ Budget Committees must agree upon a plan for changes in spending, taxes and/or the debt limit, and include in the budget resolution reconciliation instructions directing specific House and Senate committees to achieve these ends. The House and Senate Budget Committees agreed to such instructions earlier this year.

On Friday, October 9, the House Committee on the Budget approved its markup of a legislative budget package from the House Committees on Ways and Mean, Energy and Commerce, and Education and the Workforce that would repeal, among other items, the medical device tax, the Cadillac tax on high value insurance plans and Medicare Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB), which were instated as part of the ACA in 2010. The budget reconciliation bill, which would reduce the deficit by $78.9 billion over the next 10 years, is expected to go to the House floor after the Columbus Day congressional recess. If approved, the bill will be sent to the Senate where it would only require a simple majority vote to advance to the President's desk. President Obama has promised to veto the legislation should it reach his desk.

State Affairs

Five States Holding Elections in November

Voters in Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey and Virginia will cast ballots this November to determine the control of their state legislatures and/or governors. Citizens in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Virginia will be determining the composition of both state legislative chambers, while those in New Jersey will vote only on representatives to the state assembly. Kentucky voters, meanwhile, will vote on a new governor and all its executive officers. If you live in one of these states, exercise your right as a citizen and vote. Only you have the power to determine your legislative representatives. For more information on these elections, please contact your state board of elections.

New England Governors Urge FDA Label Changes

The governors of all six New England states sent a letter on August 31, urging the head of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to require changes on labels for immediate release (IR) opioids to assure patients and doctors understand the risk of addiction, overdose, neonatal abstinence syndrome and death associated with these drugs. Noting that the FDA already requires the most restrictive labeling "black box" warning language for extended release and long-acting (ER-LA) opioids, the governors urged the FDA to require similar warning language for IR opioids.

Health Information Technology

CMS Offers Guidance for Switching EHR Vendors
CMS has released two new FAQs providing information on how to continue participation in the federal EHR (Electronic Health Records) Incentive Programs or apply for a hardship exception after switching vendors. The new FAQs address switching vendors and decertified products. For more information, please visit the CMS EHR Web site.

Practice Management

Avoid Medicare Payment Reductions with the AAOMS PQRS Wizard

In January 2015, many OMSs received a 1.5% payment reduction on their Medicare Part B claims because they did not successfully report PQRS measures on their claims in the 2013 calendar year. Those OMSs who did not successfully report quality measures in 2014 will see payment reductions once again in January 2016. There is still time to avoid the 2.00% payment reduction in 2017 by reporting quality measures now. As a reminder, the AAOMS has partnered with CECity to offer our members and their staff the PQRSwizard, an online portal customized to the specialty to assist OMSs in accurately participating in the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS). The PQRSwizard allows members and their staff to submit all eligible PQRS quality measures directly to CMS. In doing so, OMSs will avoid the payment reductions from their Medicare Part B reimbursement, which some may have already seen from the previous reporting years.

The AAOMS strongly encourages those who treat Medicare patients to review the Medicare incentive programs, especially the PQRS program. For more information on the incentive programs, visit the Practice Management page of the AAOMS website. For more information on the PQRSwizard to assist in the reporting of quality measures to avoid any payment reductions through Medicare, review the AAOMS PQRSwizard flyer.

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