This Week in Health Policy...

- The Need To Move Beyond The SGR
- Protecting Medicaid
- The Value of Community Health Centers
- Young Adult Coverage
Medicare Reimbursements: Time to Jettison the SGR?

This week, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce convened a hearing on the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR), the system by which physicians are reimbursed under Medicare.

Witnesses argued that paying for value, measuring and rewarding improved quality, and encouraging the establishment of patient-centered medical homes (PCMH), should all feature in whatever payment mechanism replaces the SGR. Written testimony here.

**Hearing Highlights:**

- ACA reforms should be allowed a chance to work
- Increased care coordination can save Medicare money
- Physician-led innovations should be encouraged
- SGR should be repealed
The budget proposal for FY 2012 recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives would turn Medicaid into a block grant. This week, over 150 advocacy organizations, including the National Medical Association, wrote to Congress explaining why this is a bad idea. More details here.
A report recently issued by the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) describes the growth in the number of low-income patients treated at their facilities, even in the face of budgetary pressures. The report emphasized the quality of the care, which in many cases has improved even when resources dwindle. Full report here.

Key Facts:

- 8,000 locations
- 23 million patients
- 25% of all primary care for low income
- $24 billion in annual savings
Dependent Care Coverage: Staying On Till Age 26

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is encouraging college-age Americans to take advantage of staying on their parents’ health insurance plans until age 26. Secretary Kathleen Sebelius recently outlined the user-friendly tools HHS has created to facilitate enrolment. More details here.

**Key Facts:**

- 600K young adults signed up since Sept. 2010
- 1.2M young adults expected to sign up in 2011
- Higher unemployment rate in this age group
What You Can Do

• Please call your Governors and Members of Congress, and urge them to preserve funding for VITAL health care programs such as Medicaid and Community Health Centers. Contact info here and here.

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