POLICY BEAT
Weekly Digest
March 26th – March 30th, 2012

This Week in Health Policy...

• ACA Before Supreme Court
• Implications of the Court’s Ruling
• Colloquium 2012
• Ryan Budget

Office of Health Policy and Government Relations
This week, the U.S. **Supreme Court heard oral arguments** about whether or not the Affordable Care Act (ACA) should be upheld. They considered the following specifics:

* is the individual responsibility provision **unconstitutional**?;
* if mandate falls, should the rest of the law be **struck down, in part, or in whole**?;
* is it coercive to require the states to dramatically **expand Medicaid eligibility**?;
* can a **pending federal tax** be struck down before it has a chance to take effect?

The Court posted [audio](#) transcripts soon after each day’s deliberations.

A ruling is expected in June. For a summary, click [here](#).
What Then?

What’s Likely To Happen If The ACA Is Not Upheld

The Supreme Court’s ruling on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will raise many questions, the answers to which portend profound implications for the health care of all Americans. More details are available [here](#).

*The following are likely if the law is not upheld:*

- Prescription drugs will become less affordable for seniors;
- Insurers will no longer be required to accept patients with *pre-existing conditions*;
- The uninsured will become more vulnerable, since premiums are likely to become more expensive;
- Cash-strapped states will have to repay the federal government all grant money received under ACA;
- Young adults would no longer be able to stay on their parents’ plans till age 26.

Policy Beat archive: [Click here](#)
This week, the National Medical Association concluded its 13th National Colloquium on African American Health. A springtime tradition in the nation’s capital, this premier policy and advocacy forum is focused on preparing NMA’s elected officers for more effective advocacy, at the state and local level. This year’s theme was All Advocacy is Local: The Roadmap to Health Equity.

Sessions included discussions on essential health benefits, media training for increased effectiveness in health advocacy, why immunization matters, how the social determinants of health impact health equity, and the implications of the Supreme Court hearings on the Affordable Care Act. For program details, click here.

Image credit: National Medical Association
This week, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 228-191 in favor of slashing discretionary spending in the federal budget. The plan, proposed by Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI), would turn Medicare into a “premium support” program that would require seniors to pay more out of pocket for their healthcare. It also assumes a repeal of the Affordable Care Act and draconian cuts to Medicaid spending, without raising any new revenues to reduce the deficit. More details are available here.

What You Can Do

• Please **call or visit your Members of Congress**, while they’re home for the spring recess, and urge them to **preserve optimal funding for Medicare and Medicaid services**. Contact info [here](#).

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