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The Critical Care News Summary is an update from The Roundtable on Critical Care Policy. For further information on the Roundtable, please visit our website at www.CriticalCareRoundtable.org.

BREAKING NEWS

The White House released the text of President Obama's strategy for emergency preparedness this afternoon. The six-page Presidential Policy Directive, Obama's eighth and signed by him last week, preserves core elements of the Bush administration's emergency preparedness plan released in 2003, but is designed to put the administration's imprint on the way the nation responds to major emergencies, including terrorism. It instructs the Department of Homeland Security to set up a National Preparedness System, which the summary says "will enable the nation to achieve the goal" of maximum preparedness and to undertake "a comprehensive campaign to build and sustain national preparedness; and an annual National Preparedness Report to measure progress in meeting the goal." The directive seeks to build up key capabilities the nation needs to confront any challenge, instructing federal agencies involved in disaster management to place more emphasis on determining what capabilities they have, and requiring the development of emergency plans that mitigate the potential for future disasters. Agencies must submit reports about how well they're prepared to handle disasters that fall under their purview, which will then be reviewed by the National Security Council who will draw up the government's Homeland Security budget based in part on what these reviews say. The directive also calls for closer collaboration with the private sector and for better and more effective ways for the government to communicate with communities during a crisis by fusing together the capabilities of federal, state, and local authorities to respond to such events.

To view the directive, please click [here](#).

Roundtable News

Following the tremendous success of the Roundtable on Critical Care Policy's March 8th [Congressional Breakfast & Washington Outreach Day](#), the Roundtable is pleased to announce the **Third Annual National Summit on Critical Care Policy on Wednesday, June 8, 2011 at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, DC**. The critical care community has already begun to have a voice and impact in the current federal policy environment, and the Summit will provide a timely forum for select thought-leaders to focus on policy and action priorities to optimize federal policy impacting the delivery of U.S. critical care.

Space is limited! Confirm your attendance today by contacting skubikowski@criticalcareroundtable.org.

Capitol Hill Events and Updates

On Tuesday, Congressman Paul Ryan (R-WI), Chairman of the House Budget Committee, released the House Republicans' fiscal year 2012 Budget Resolution. The resolution includes \$5.8 trillion in cuts to government spending over the next decade, which is estimated to reduce the deficit by \$4.4 trillion.

The resolution also proposes to convert the Medicaid system into a block grant program, which is estimated to provide over \$700 billion in savings over ten years. Moreover, the resolution would turn the Medicare program into a premium support program— operated like the current Medicare Prescription Drug Program— in which beneficiaries would choose from a list of guaranteed coverage options and receive premium support subsidies adjusted by income. And finally, the budget proposes a complete repeal of the Affordable Care Act, which the resolution indicates will save \$1.4 trillion over the next ten years. The House Budget Committee considered the resolution on Wednesday, voting to advance the approved by a party-line vote of 22 to 16, and it could come to the House floor for a vote as early as next week, assuming the government does not shut down. It is unlikely to win approval in the Democrat-controlled Senate and would certainly not be supported by the Administration.

Also on Tuesday, the Senate voted to repeal the health care overhaul's 1099 tax reporting requirements, finally ending months of debate and votes over a provision that, by the end, had few defenders. The 87-12 vote on a bill passed earlier by the House gives President Barack Obama the first opportunity to sign or veto a bill repealing a piece of his Administration's signature law. He's expected to sign it despite concern over how to replace the money the provision would have raised. For more information, please click [here](#).

In the meantime, leaders in the Senate and House continue to negotiate over funding levels for 2011 to avert a government shutdown. The government is currently operating under a short-term funding resolution that expires tonight at 11:59pm. If and when a deal is struck, congressional leaders plan to move rapidly to set up a House vote, either on the long-term spending bill itself or a stopgap measure that would buy time for the full legislation to be completed. If no such agreement is reached, or another short-term extension is not passed, the government would be shut down starting at midnight tonight.

[House Education and the Workforce Committee: Full Committee Hearing on "Policies and Priorities of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services."](#)

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce will hold a full committee hearing, "Policies and Priorities of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services." Witnesses include Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

Date: Wednesday, April 13th

Time: 10:00am

Location: 2175 Rayburn House Office Building

House Homeland Security Committee: Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications Subcommittee Hearing on "Taking Measure of Countermeasures (Part I): A review of government and industry efforts to protect the homeland through accelerated research, development, and acquisition of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear medical countermeasures."

On Wednesday, April 13, 2011 the Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications will hold a hearing entitled "Taking Measure of Countermeasures (Part 1): A review of government and industry efforts to protect the homeland through accelerated research, development, and acquisition of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear medical countermeasures." Witnesses to be announced.

Date: Wednesday, April 13th
Time: 2:00pm
Location: 311 Cannon House Office Building

News and Reports

"U.S. Health Care System Unprepared for Major Nuclear Emergency," ProPublica, April 7, 2011

U.S. officials say the nation's health system is ill-prepared to cope with a catastrophic release of radiation. A 2010 Department of Homeland Security internal report acknowledges that officials are poorly prepared to communicate with the public and that the current organization of medical care "does not support the anticipated magnitude of the requirements" following an attack with an improvised nuclear device. The Homeland Security report, plus several other reports and interviews with almost two dozen experts inside and outside the government, reveal other gaps that may increase the risks posed by a nuclear accident or terrorist attack.

"Medicare Cost Would Rise for Many Under Ryan Plan," The Wall Street Journal, April 6, 2011

The House Republican plan for overhauling Medicare would fundamentally change how the federal government pays for health care, starting a decade from now, likely resulting in higher out-of-pocket costs and greater limits to coverage for many Americans.