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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](http://www.CriticalCareRoundtable.org).*

## Capitol Hill Events and Updates

### **House Passes PAHPA Bill with Roundtable-Endorsed Critical Care Provisions**

On Tuesday, a bipartisan effort aimed at prioritizing critical care into the nation's emergency planning unanimously passed the United States House of Representatives. The Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act of 2011 (H.R. 2405), introduced by Congressman Mike Rogers (R-MI), would bolster the nation's ability to respond to a public health emergency and would, among other things, reauthorize key components of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA) of 2006. The critical care provisions were endorsed by the Roundtable on Critical Care Policy.

Since our inception in 2009, one of the Roundtable's top priorities has been identifying the challenges and needs to optimizing the delivery of high quality critical care services in the event of a major public health crisis. Until now, critical care medicine has received little consideration in the United States' disaster preparedness efforts. The actions of the House of Representatives have brought us a step closer to addressing these challenges by recognizing that strengthening our critical care infrastructure is an essential factor in enhancing our nation's medical preparedness for a health emergency.

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP) is scheduled to mark-up its version of PAHPA next Wednesday, and we hope that at this time, the legislation will include the critical care provisions incorporated into the House bill. As we've previously mentioned, the Roundtable recently sent a letter to the HELP committee urging their inclusion, and has been reaching out to Members of the HELP Committee—several of whom we met with during the Roundtable's October 5th Congressional Outreach Day and who indicated a willingness to work with our organization on our PAHPA efforts—to garner their support for including these critical care provisions in the legislation. We will continue to keep you updated on any developments in the Senate.

### **The Good Samaritans Health Professionals Act**

Late this week Congressmen Cliff Stearns (R-FL) and Jim Matheson (D-UT) introduced the Good Samaritans Health Professionals Act, which would provide limited civil liability protection to licensed health care professionals providing health care services as a volunteer during a declared national disaster. H.R. 3586 uses the same protective standards as the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997.

Moreover, thanks to the expert input and guidance of the Roundtable's National Preparedness & Infrastructure Working Group, Congressman Stearns made changes to his draft bill to ensure that all health professionals would qualify under the legislation, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists,

physician assistants, EMTs, respiratory therapists and many others. Please click [here](#) to view the press release sent out by Congressman Stearns' office. As you can see, several other organizations including the American College of Surgeons, American Medical Association, American Nurses Association, American Association of Emergency Physicians and the National Community Pharmacists Association have endorsed the legislation.

### **House Republican Proposal Funds SGR Fix with Health Care Cuts**

Today, House Republicans introduced the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011: a three-part bill to extend the temporary payroll tax rate reduction for one year, continue unemployment benefits, and prevent a 27 percent scheduled cut in Medicare physician reimbursements. The bill would provide a one percent payment increase in Medicare physician reimbursements for 2012 and 2013, and also extends other Medicare-related policies that are set to expire at the end of year.

However, the Republican plan offsets these extensions with the following cuts to the healthcare sector:

- \$8 billion from the prevention and public health fund;
- \$10.6 billion in hospital bad debt; and
- \$4.1 billion in reductions to disproportionate share hospital payments.

It remains unclear whether Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH) will have enough votes in his own Chamber to pass the measure, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has said the bill has little chance of passing the Democratic-controlled Senate because of several divisive provisions that are also included in the bill such as gradually increasing Medicare premiums for high income beneficiaries, and restarting the controversial Keystone oil pipeline project. For more information on the proposal, please click [here](#).

### **Hearings**

#### **Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee: Full Committee Hearing on "Prescription Drug Shortages: Examining a Public Health Concern and Potential Solutions"**

*The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions will hold a full committee hearing titled, "Prescription Drug Shortages: Examining a Public Health Concern and Potential Solutions." Witnesses are to be announced.*

**Date:** Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 10:00 a.m.

**Location:** 106 Dirksen Senate Office Building

#### **House Small Business Committee: Investigations, Oversight and Regulations Subcommittee Hearing on "New Medical Loss Ratios: Increasing Health Care Value or Just Eliminating Jobs?"**

*The House Small Business Committee Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight and Regulations will hold a hearing entitled "New Medical Loss Ratios: Increasing Health Care Value or Just Eliminating Jobs?" Witnesses include: Mitchell West, Insurance Broker, HealthChoiceOne, Greenwood Village, CO (Testifying on behalf of the National Association of Health Underwriters); Gary Livengood, Principal, What a Stitch, LLC, Mt. Airy, MD; Grace-Marie Turner, President, Galen Institute, Alexandria, VA; and Timothy Stoltzfus Jost, Robert Willett Family Professor of Law, Washington and Lee University College of Law, Lexington, VA.*

**Date:** Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 10:00 a.m.

**Location:** 2360 Rayburn House Office Building