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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.

Roundtable News

The Roundtable hosted a Washington Breakfast & Congressional Outreach Day this Wednesday here in Washington, D.C. During our Breakfast, participants were briefed on the latest legislative and regulatory issues impacting the critical care community. Nearly twenty of us—including a Co-Chair from each of the Roundtable’s three Working Groups— then headed to Capitol Hill for our Outreach Day to meet with fifteen different Member offices and senior Committee staff in both the House and Senate to detail the challenges to the critical care system, and garner support for the Critical Care Assessment and Improvement Act (H.R. 971).

We anticipate adding new cosponsors to our House bill as a result, and have made important additional inroads in the Senate, which are added to new and valued relationships we accrued from our previous Lobby Day in March (indeed, we have been contacted by some of those offices since as a resource on legislative efforts they are considering).

We look forward to continuing our work on Capitol Hill to secure additional support for the Critical Care Assessment and Improvement Act of 2011, and will continue to keep you posted on any new developments.

Capitol Hill Events and Updates

[Senate Special Committee on Aging: Full Committee Hearing on Finding Consensus in the Medicare Reform Debate](#)

The Senate Special Committee on Aging will hold a full committee hearing on finding consensus in the Medicare reform debate. Witnesses are to be announced.

Date: Wednesday, October 12th
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Location: 562 Dirksen Senate Office Building

[Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee: Full Committee Hearing on “The State of Chronic Disease Prevention”](#)

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions will hold a full committee hearing on “The State of Chronic Disease Prevention,” Wednesday, October 12th, at 2:30pm. The hearing will take place in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building. Witnesses to be announced.

Date: Wednesday, October 12th
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Location: 430 Dirksen Senate Office Building

House Veterans' Affairs Committee: Full Committee Hearing on "Failures at Miami VAMC (VA Medical Center): Window to a National Problem"

The House Committee on Veterans Affairs will hold a full committee hearing entitled "Failures at Miami VAMC (VA Medical Center): Window to a National Problem." Witnesses to be announced.

Date: Wednesday, October 12th

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: 334 Cannon House Office Building

House Education and the Workforce Committee: Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee hearing on "Regulations, Costs, and Uncertainty in Employer Provided Health Care"

The House Committee on Education and Workforce subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions will hold a hearing on "Regulations, Costs, and Uncertainty in Employer Provided Health Care." Witnesses to be announced.

Date: Thursday, October 13th

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: 2175 Rayburn House Office Building

News and Reports

"MedPAC approves growth-formula recommendation," *The Hill*, October 6, 2011

Despite overwhelming provider opposition, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) voted 15-2 to pass a recommendation that would replace the "sustainable growth rate" (SGR) formula and its automatic cuts to doctors' payments. But MedPAC's alternative also includes automatic cuts — 6 percent per year for several years to most specialties—and medical groups quickly registered their disapproval Thursday

"Congressman Investigates High Drug Markups," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 6, 2011

The top Democrat on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee has launched an investigation into drug distributors that are obtaining cancer and other critical-care products in short supply and offering to resell them to hospitals at several times the wholesale price. Rep. Elijah E. Cummings of Maryland sent document requests to five closely held companies Wednesday seeking information about how they obtained drugs and how much they paid for them before offering to resell them to hospitals and other health-care facilities.

"Lawmakers: Revamp disaster recovery system," *The Clarion-Ledger*, October 3, 2011

Two Gulf Coast senators say the federal government's system for helping communities recover from disasters is rife with failures and missed opportunities and badly needs cost-saving reforms. Democratic Sen. Mary Landrieu of Louisiana and Republican Sen. Thad Cochran of Mississippi introduced a bill late last month that would change how the government provides some aid to state and local governments, victims and nonprofit groups after a disaster.

"Palliative-care access uneven among states," *The Republic (Columbus, IN)* October 5, 2011

Although most large hospitals around the country offer seriously ill patients the support of special teams to manage pain and complex symptoms, a report card issued Wednesday shows few states making top grades with palliative care. Palliative care is among the nation's fastest-growing specialties, intended to focus on patient comfort and quality of life. But unlike hospice care, it does not necessarily anticipate that a patient is nearing the end of life. To review the state-by-state report from the National Palliative Care Research Center and the Center to Advance Palliative Care, please click [here](#).

"Pressing for better quality across healthcare," *The Los Angeles Times*, October 5, 2011

As steward of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, Donald Berwick is leading a charge to cut errors and increase efficiency. But time for such measures may be running out.

"AHIMA: Failing to see healthcare quality as a science is 'huge mistake'," *CMIO.net*, October 5, 2011

Carolyn M. Clancy, MD, director of Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), used a quotation from Peter Pronovost, MD, PhD, an intensive care physician from Johns Hopkins in Baltimore to lay out her keynote presentation at the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) conference: "The fundamental problem with the quality of American medicine is that we've failed to view the delivery of healthcare as a science ... that's a mistake, a huge mistake."