

New Congress Tackles Repeal and Replacement of the Affordable Care Act

When President-Elect Trump is inaugurated on Jan. 20, Republicans will control both the legislative and executive branches of the federal government for the first time in more than ten years. The two branches are expected to address deregulation, tax cuts, entitlement programs and repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Last week, Congress took the first step by introducing a budget resolution instructing key congressional committees to develop ACA repeal legislation, but this resolution is a statement of priorities and does not have the force of law. Practical implications for medical group practices will remain unclear until a specific replacement plan emerges. MGMA is closely tracking this issue and will engage Congress to ensure any resulting legislation supports policies that reduce the excessive administrative burden faced by practices in our healthcare system today.

Trump Administration Priorities Include Reducing Government's Role in Healthcare

President-Elect Trump's pick for the top position at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Rep. Tom Price, MD (R-GA), is no newcomer to the field. If confirmed, he would be the first physician Secretary of HHS since the first Bush Administration. Price has been a frequent and outspoken critic of government involvement in the patient-physician relationship and a vocal opponent of the ACA since its inception, authoring several legislative alternatives to the Act. Trump has also nominated Seema Verma, the president of a national health policy consulting practice, to head the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Trump has indicated price transparency and reducing drug costs will be a priority for his incoming Administration. What remains unclear are the details for how Trump will implement these policy priorities and how these would intersect with his and Price's goal to provide regulatory relief and reduce the federal government's influence in how healthcare services are delivered and paid.

Patient Data Security at Risk Now More Than Ever

The healthcare environment has witnessed a marked increase in the number of data breaches, both accidental and by unauthorized individuals. As more patient data is being stored and transmitted electronically, physician practices are increasingly vulnerable to internal and external security threats. Several federal agencies, including CMS, the Office for Civil Rights, and the Office of the Inspector General, are more actively enforcing HIPAA privacy and security regulations. Conducting a comprehensive risk analysis and review of your organization's policies and procedures is your best defense against experiencing a data breach or failing a government audit, and is required under MIPS. Access MGMA's [HIPAA Resource Center](#) for tools and guidance.

Questions? Call Todd at 915-774-5548