

06/25/2021

Good Afternoon REDC Members,

Before we launch into our policy update for the week, we wanted to announce a couple team changes on our end.

Luke Kopetsky Going to Law School:

Our amazing Associate, Luke Kopetsky, will be transitioning off the team to start law school at the University of Michigan. His last day will be **Friday, July 2nd**. He has been an invaluable member of our team, and really rocked virtual advocacy days, securing co-sponsors for REDC initiatives, research and more! I'm working on enticing him to come back for summer internships, haha, so hopefully this won't be the last you'll see him! If you'd like to reach out to him after his transition, feel free to email him at luke.kopetsky@berkeley.edu

New Senior Associate, Emily Rosenberg:

On the flip side, we are excited to introduce you to Luke's replacement, Emily Rosenberg. She is our new Senior Associate for Center Road Solutions and brings several years of advocacy and grassroots experience in Pennsylvania for NEDA lobbying lawmakers, training advocates, grassroots advocacy, assisting in state advocacy days and forging connections all in a volunteer capacity. She most recently worked on a grant-funded program for youth providing after school programming, activity books, produce and other supports during the COVID-19 pandemic. Emily has her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from American University, and Masters from Villanova University. She can be reached at emily.rosenberg@centerroadsolutions.com

I. SERVE Act

- We have a number of additional cosponsors of the SERVE Act that include:
 - Rep. Strickland, Marilyn [D-WA-10], Armed Services Committee
 - Rep. Lynch, Stephen F. [D-MA-8]
 - Rep. Suozzi, Thomas R. [D-NY-3]
 - Rep. Wild, Susan [D-PA-7]
 - Rep. Schakowsky, Janice D. [D-IL-9]
 - Rep. Brownley, Julia [D-CA-26]
 - Rep. Pocan, Mark [D-WI-2]
 - Rep. Veasey, Marc A. [D-TX-33], Armed Services Committee

II. Telehealth

- **White House Meeting, July 14**

- We have secured a meeting with the White House Domestic Policy Council on July 14 to discuss our legislation regarding telehealth coverage for essential health benefits within ACA plans.
- We have secured a great mix of groups to participate with us including: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, American Psychiatric Association, Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare, Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action and the Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness.
- **Flurry of New Telehealth Legislation**
 - [Advancing Telehealth Beyond COVID-19 Act](#) (H.R. 7338) led by Reps. Cheney (R-WY) and Dingell (D-MI)
 - Seeks to make permanent the flexibilities of telehealth after the Public Health Emergency including:
 - Eliminating geographic restrictions on Medicare coverage for telehealth;
 - Expanding Medicare coverage to include audio-only;
 - Expand telehealth coverage for Federally-Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Centers
 - **Telemental Health Access Act** ([H.R. 4058](#)/S. 2061) led by Reps. Matsui (D-CA), Johnson (R-OH) and Sens. Cassidy (R-LA) and Smith (D-MN).
 - This is the House companion bill to the Senate bill that was endorsed by the REDC Consortium.
 - The bill would remove the 6-month in-person requirement for behavioral health services prior to being covered for telehealth services.
 - **CURES 2.0 Discussion Draft (attached)**
 - House Energy and Commerce Committee members, Rep. DeGette (D-CO) and Upton (R-MI) have released the discussion draft of the CURES 2.0 bill.
 - The bill draft includes telehealth provisions that include:
 - Provide guidance and strategies to states on effectively integrating telehealth into their Medicaid program and CHIP, review the impact of telehealth on patient health and encourage better collaboration.
 - Permanently remove Medicare's geographic and originating site restrictions which require a patient to live in a rural area and by physically in a doctor's office or clinic to use telehealth services.
 - Would also give the HHS Secretary to permanently expand the types of health care providers that can offer telehealth services and the types of services that can be reimbursed under Medicare.

III. ACA

• CMS Increase ACA Marketplace Support

- CMS opened up applications for \$20 million in grants for states to upgrade their ACA enrollment websites including finance technology, upgrades to improve performance and consumer experience.
- The funding was allotted by the American Rescue Plan and allows the agency to dole out 21 grants.
 - These state platforms have enrolled more than 3.8 million so far this year.
 - Grants will be issued in September.

• ACA Supporters Look to Strengthen the Law

- After the Supreme Court decision retained the ACA, experts and advocates have told Biden officials they must ramp up scrutiny of issues that have lingered since the law's inception.
- Some experts have pointed to a Kaiser Family Foundation report showing that insurers on Healthcare.gov denied 17% of submitted medical claims in 2019. Appeals had a success rate of just 0.1%
- Solutions advocates have brought include HHS to audit health plans' denials of out-of-network claims.
 - There is a dearth of data on whether the ACA insurers' provider network have grown more robust since the law's early days.
 - Experts worry that provider networks may have narrowed further as health care costs continued to climb.
 - Additionally, there is growing evidence that insurers are overpricing their plans, even though the ACA essentially caps their profits by requiring them to provide rebates over a certain threshold. Health plans this year are expected to make a record-breaking level of rebate payments for the third straight year.

Best,
Allison & the Center Road Solutions Team