Congressional Outlook

Week of November 12th

With the end of the year's legislative calendar in sight, the major focus this week is on House and Senate negotiations to forge a budget package, and uncertainty percolates over the status of tax-reform efforts. House Republicans will keep a spotlight on the troubled rollout of the 2010 healthcare law, with five hearings scheduled and a floor vote planned on legislation that would allow people to keep their health insurance plans. Senate hearings will be held on the nomination of Jeh Johnson to be Homeland Security secretary, and Janet Yellen to be chair of the Federal Reserve Board.

Week in Review

President Obama Selects Members of Climate Task Force

President Obama established a [Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience](#) to advise the Administration on how the Federal Government can respond to the needs of communities nationwide that are dealing with the impacts of climate change. Members include state, local and tribal leaders from across the country who will lend their experience in building climate preparedness and resilience in their communities to inform their recommendations to the Administration. NATaT nominated Mr. David Calderone from Coventry Township, OH, and Ms. Barbara Welty from Kathio Township, MN, to serve on this task force. Unfortunately, they were not selected but we appreciate their willingness to represent NATaT on this important issue.

Senate Passes Bill to End Workplace Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation

Last Thursday the Senate passed the [Employment Non-Discrimination Act](#) (S. 815) with a 64 to
32 vote. The bill would set a federal non-discrimination standard to ensure that private employers cannot fire employees on the bases of sexual orientation or identity. There is little hope the bill will see movement in the House.

Final Rule Issued on Mental Health Parity

Years after mental health parity legislation was passed into law and amended under the Affordable Care Act, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services finally issued updated guidance and official policy to create parity between mental health benefits and more traditional medical/surgical benefits for health insurance plans. For more, click here.

Community Clinics Receive Funding Boost

On Thursday, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced over $150 million in funding awards to community health centers around the country to help with the delivery of care under the Affordable Care Act. For more, click here.

Senate Hearing for Sebelius No Easier Than House Appearance

HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius testified on Wednesday before the Senate Finance Committee on the rocky roll out of the health care exchanges established under the Affordable Care Act. This time, she faced tough questions and met the ire of both Republicans and Democrats on the Committee. For more, click here.

ACA Implementation Creates Election Woes

The failed rollout of the ACA enrollment website appears to be a growing area of concern for Democrats seeking election. For more, click here.

DHS Scores New Partner to Fight Human Trafficking

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced a new alliance with Western Union under its Blue Campaign. DHS will receive language training from Western Union along with increased awareness of materials that signify potential human trafficking. The partnership is nationwide. For more, click here.

Congressional Hearing Schedule

Tuesday, November 12

- Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee's Employment and Workplace Safety Subcommittee hearing on "Payroll Fraud: Targeting Bad Actors Hurting Workers and Businesses."

Wednesday, November 13

- Joint Economic Committee hearing on the current economic outlook.
- House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing on "ObamaCare

- House Education and the Workforce Committee hearing on "Keeping College Within Reach: Simplifying Federal Student Aid."
- Senate Judiciary Committee's Privacy, Technology and the Law Subcommittee hearing on "The Surveillance Transparency Act of 2013."
- Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee hearing on "The Role of Manufacturing Hubs in a 21st Century Innovation Economy."

**Thursday, November 14**

- House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee hearing on "Hurricane Sandy Recovery - One Year Later."
- House Education and the Workforce Committee hearing on "The Effects of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act on Schools, Colleges, and Universities."
- House Energy and Commerce Committee's Health Subcommittee hearing on "Obamacare Implementation Problems: More than Just a Broken Website."
- House Science, Space, and Technology Committee hearing on "Strengthening Transparency and Accountability within the Environmental Protection Agency."
- Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee hearing on "Ensuring Access to Higher Education: Simplifying Federal Student Aid for Today's College Student."

**Friday, November 15**