



KHA's Federal Advocate

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Congress Gears Up for the End of the Year

The 118th Congress is winding down, but the endgame may include interesting negotiations on health care extenders.

While President-Elect Donald Trump's cabinet nominees are taking center stage politically, Congress must find a way to pass a great deal health care tax extenders, a continuing resolution funding the federal government until sometime early next year and a reauthorization of the United States Department of Defense. Including tax extenders in the DOD's bill, the National Defense Authorization Act was on the table last week; however, it appears to be too heavy a lift. Instead, tax committee negotiators are looking to put them in the CR as a tactic for members to vote for it.

Republicans are looking to extend Medicare provisions, including the Low-Volume Hospital, Medicare-Dependent Hospital and telehealth provisions for three years. They plan to fund it partially with suspending the current administration's rule requiring minimum staffing requirements for nursing homes. Democrats want a two-year extension on the Medicare and telehealth provisions and a one-year extension on premium insurance exchange tax credits while removing the GOP's PAYGO.

For the Kansas Hospital Association's purposes, the GOP's proposal is better both in terms of policy and term. We will continue to work with the Kansas Delegation as they look to include some plan in the year-end CR.