

# ML Strategies Health Care Preview

*Week of April 9th*

Welcome back from a much needed recess following the conclusion to 2017 (yes, three months after the calendar flipped). Congress will be in session nine of the next eleven weeks with numerous issues on the table ranging from appropriations and immigration (it's not going away) to growing concerns around Facebook's digital privacy. Amidst conversation around these issues, time will be devoted to nominations for several key Cabinet positions, not to mention a push for appointments to federal benches across the country.

In health care, it's all about opioids. Unless it's not. It's reasonable to expect Congress to take bipartisan action in this space. But quietly, there's an effort brewing to prepare for a Christmas tree at some point in 2018. Remember 2016? CURES? In the end, CURES became a legislative vehicle that carried a wide variety of policies across the finish line. We heard rumblings throughout the break that folks are working on a number of policy items that go beyond opioids. We will listen for policies being considered to ride across the finish line with an opioid bill, as a CARA 2.0 bill could become a much larger vehicle. That process starts months before it actually happens, so the timing is now. Yes, it's all about opioids unless it's not.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Off the Hill, the Administration remains hard at work in the health space. HHS Secretary Alex Azar has his team in place and is now moving forward with policy design. What HHS puts out in the regulatory space is critical and will continue even as Congress slips into election mode.

Just last week, it was reported that the [2019 Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters](#) cleared OMB, a key hurdle before being released. This regulation sets the federal timeline for plan and rate submissions. This is particularly relevant in the context of any market stabilization efforts in Congress, which while seemingly dead, could respawn as insurers and stakeholders react to early forecasting for premium increases.

Lastly, we are continuing to follow [1115 waiver applications](#) that focus on work requirements and other priorities. With the number of gubernatorial races on tap this year, we expect that trend to continue.



## **THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE**

On Wednesday (4/11), the House E&C Health Subcommittee will hold a hearing titled, "Combating the Opioid Crisis: Improving the Ability of Medicare and Medicaid to Provide Care for Patients." Click [here](#) for more information.

On Thursday (4/12), the House Committee on Appropriations will hold a hearing titled, "FY 2019 Budget Investments in our Health Workforce and Rural Communities." Click [here](#) for more information.

## **THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE**

On Wednesday (4/11), the Senate HELP Committee will hold a hearing titled, "The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018." Click [here](#) for more information.

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## **OUR TEAM**

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