

MEMORANDUM

June 19, 2009

To: AAP Chapter Presidents
AAP Chapter Vice Presidents
AAP Chapter Executive Directors

Fr: Erin Howard, Assistant Director of Public Affairs and Member Advocacy

Cc: AAP Executive Committee
Dr. Olson Huff
Dr. Molly Droge
Dr. Jay Berkelhamer
Jackie Noyes
Bob Hall, JD, MPAff
Claire Bornstein
Judy Dolins
Jim Pawelski
Dan Walter

Re: Federal Health Care Reform Update

Despite progress in the both the Senate and House of Representatives last week, this week proved to be slower going for Congress and the Administration. As reported in today's *Washington Post*, "President Obama's hopes for quick action on comprehensive health care reform ran headlong this week into the realities of Congress, as lawmakers searching for the money to pay for a broad expansion of coverage discovered that it wasn't easy to find and descended into partisan bickering."

In a speech to the American Medical Association on Monday, President Obama tried to quell the fears regarding a public plan option, and what that could mean for providers. A link to the full text of President Obama's speech is found here:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-to-the-Annual-Conference-of-the-American-Medical-Association/.

While the Administration and some members of Congress support the idea of the public option as a necessary component in covering all Americans, there is work to be done on what a public option would look like, specifically what coverage would be available under the plan, and how to pay for it. Additionally, a public option continues to be a point of contention and concern for many Republicans and other organizations.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee convened for the first week of debate on Wednesday, and plans to continue through next week. While the

Senate Finance Committee was scheduled to release a draft proposal today, Chairman Baucus and seven of his colleagues from the Committee are meeting behind closed doors in an effort to produce a cost effective, bi-partisan proposal. The Finance Committee hopes to release a draft next week, and is scheduled to begin debate following the Fourth of July recess. The three committees in the House of Representatives that have been crafting a tri-committee bill (Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce and Education and Labor), plan to release their legislation by the end of the day.

Even though it appears that Congress will be forced to temporarily delay negotiations due to cost estimates and strong opposition to the bill, we cannot delay! Now is the time to act on behalf of our children. As members of Congress deliberate on how to reduce cost, they need to hear from you as to the importance of providing children with the services they need and deserve.

The Fourth of July recess is quickly approaching and as a result your members of Congress and their staff in the district are already working to accommodate what surely will be a very busy schedule. Please call the congressional office as soon as possible to schedule a meeting. The Department of Federal Affairs will be sending around a set of talking points and materials that you can use in your meetings.

Please contact Claire Bornstein (cbornstein@aap.org) or Erin Howard (ehoward@aap.org) if you have any questions.