



ML
STRATEGIES

Jeremy Rabinovitz, JRabinovitz@mlstrategies.com
Alexander Hecht, AHecht@mlstrategies.com
Joseph P. Hammang, PhD, JPHammang@mlstrategies.com
Abby Matousek, AMatousek@mlstrategies.com
David Shirbroun, DShirbroun@mlstrategies.com

ML Strategies, LLC
701 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004 USA
202 434 7300
202 434 7400 fax
www.mlstrategies.com

Follow us on Twitter @MLStrategies

HEALTH CARE REFORM UPDATE August 12th, 2013

Leading the News

HHS Launches Applications in Advance of October Rollout

On August 5th, on HealthCare.gov, HHS released a [MyAccount feature](#), which allows people to prepare for October 1st, when Americans will be able to fill out an application and purchase insurance on the ACA exchanges. The feature is available to people who live in one of the 34 states that will participate in a federal exchange.

OPM Releases Ruling on Congressional Staff and Exchanges

On August 7th, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a [proposed rule](#) that provides information on how the federal government will continue to contribute to insurance premiums of members of Congress and their staffs. A [fact sheet](#) on the rule from OPM notes the federal government will pay for about 75% of a plan's cost.

Implementation of the Affordable Care Act

On August 5th, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued [guidance](#) on income verification for insurance subsidies under the ACA.

On August 7th, the Department of Labor [said](#) it will not change a policy that provides a one-year grace period for certain health plans to comply with ACA out-of-pocket cost limits.

On August 8th, while speaking in Austin, Texas, [HHS Secretary Sebelius said](#) the federal government would be open to a unique approach to Medicaid expansion that fits Texas' needs.

On August 8th, [Oregon announced](#) that, while its health insurance marketplace will be available on October 1st, people will be unable to go online to purchase insurance until later in the month. According to state officials, the exchange website, Cover Oregon, requires additional debugging.

On August 9th, the Center for Public Integrity issued a [report](#) that suggests state regulations on ACA navigators largely benefit insurance agents and brokers, who fear the competition posed by the navigators.

Other HHS and Federal Regulatory Initiatives

On August 6th, HHS Secretary Sebelius announced in an email to colleagues that Farzad Mostashari, the National Coordinator for Health IT, will leave HHS in the fall.

On August 6th, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a [report](#) indicating obesity rates among low-income preschoolers have decreased slightly in 19 states, remained steady in 21 states, and increased slightly in three states.

Other Congressional and State Initiatives

On August 1st, Representative Tim Murphy (R-PA) [introduced legislation](#) to include mental health providers as part of the electronic health records (EHR) network. The bill ensures providers such as psychologists and substance abuse treatment facilities are eligible for grants through the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act.

Other Health Care News

On August 5th, the Center for Studying Health System Change released a [study](#) that suggests doctors act on their perception of malpractice risk and are more likely to order tests and emergency room visits when they fear a lawsuit.

On August 5th, *Health Affairs* published a [study](#) on the utilization of electronic health records (EHRs) that suggests small hospitals and care facilities are falling behind in meeting meaningful use criteria.

On August 11th, a Texas compounding pharmacy, Specialty Compounding, announced a [recall](#) of all its sterile products following reports from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that 15 patients developed infections from calcium injections developed by the company.

Hearings and Mark-Ups Scheduled

The Senate and the House of Representatives are in recess until the week of September 9th.