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Health Care Forecast - Massachusetts Legislature

November 12, 2019 | Blog | By **Caitlin R. Beresin**, **Kaitlyn C. Sprague**, **Taylor C. Shepherd**

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As the Legislature approaches the Holiday recess, health care costs and access continue to be at the forefront of the agenda. The Baker Administration released the VALUE Act on October 18th and the Senate filed the PACT Act on November 7th. The Governor's bill, An Act to improve health care by investing in VALUE, establishes a comprehensive approach to health care reforms in the Commonwealth in the following areas:

1. Prioritizing investments into primary care and behavioral health services
2. Protecting consumers by way of managed health care cost drivers
3. Improving access to coordinated care
4. Stabilizing community hospitals and health centers
5. Promoting insurance market reforms for small and mid-sized employers

As for the Senate's Pharmaceutical Access, Cost and Transparency ("PACT") Act, the focus falls on three main topic areas specifically relevant to pharmaceutical cost control:

1. Access and cost improvement
2. Transparency
3. PBM and drug price oversight

Although pharmaceutical pricing will be the first major health care debate this session, the Senate aims to produce several pieces of health care legislation in the coming months. With amendments to the PACT Act due Tuesday, November 12th and debate scheduled for Thursday, November 14th, the Senate is moving forward with goals of ushering health care legislation across the goal line, as time ran out during the last session before any formal action could be taken.

The House plans to take a similar approach to the Governor's proposal, offering a sweeping health care omnibus bill targeting similar topic areas included in the VALUE and PACT pieces of legislation.

ML Strategies will continue to monitor legislative action relative to the Governor and Legislature's take on health care reform as the legislative session approaches July 31st. With health care reform coming up short last session, ML Strategies will keep a close eye on proposals that may cross the goal line this time around.

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