

Health-Care Items Included in Stimulus Package

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House passes the measure

This week, three House Committees (Appropriations, Energy and Commerce, and Ways and Means) held markups and approved their respective sections of the \$825 billion House economic stimulus bill, and the full House passed the measure on Wednesday, January 28. The stimulus speaks to health-care issues in both direct aid to states, and grants and loans for the modernization of our health-care system.

Specifically, the legislation increases spending for Medicaid, Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP), extension of Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) coverage, health information technology (HIT) investment, comparative effectiveness research and preventive services.

A legislative priority of ASA is also addressed in the House version of the stimulus. Funding for IDEA has been woefully short over the last decade, and H.R. 1 seeks to address this shortfall by spending almost \$14 billion on the program.

In the Senate, both the Appropriations Committee and Finance Committee have marked up their respective sections of the economic stimulus bill, and the full Senate is expected to take up the legislation the week of February 1. The Senate markup contains similar health-care items as the House stimulus bill (e.g., enhanced Medicaid FMAP funding, HIT funding, expanded COBRA coverage, comparative effectiveness).

Following Senate consideration, the package is expected to be debated in a House and Senate Conference, where the differences in the two pieces of legislation will be addressed, before Congress votes on final passage and sends it to President Obama's desk.