

Publications

Senate HELP Committee Releases Sweeping Legislative Package Targeting Health Care Costs

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On May 23, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee released a comprehensive health care package (the “Draft Bill”) that would target rising health care costs and billing practices. Entitled the “Lower Health Care Costs Act,” the Draft Bill—released on a bipartisan basis by Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Patty Murray (D-WA), the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate HELP Committee, respectively—takes aim at so-called “surprise” balance medical bills, which have been the subject of various legislative proposals in recent years. The Draft Bill also proposes a number of measures addressing prescription drug costs, price transparency, and certain public health initiatives. The Senate HELP Committee accepted comments on the package until June 5, with the hopes of marking up the bill in late June, with potential Senate floor consideration some time over the summer. While passage of any large scale health care legislation in the current political environment seems unlikely, the current bipartisan support, along with the Administration’s support for both surprise balance billing solutions and price transparency, means that the proposal is a serious one.