



Quality Benefits, Targeted Advocacy & Education for Today's Seniors
1-800-906-ASBA (2722)

Summer Recess is Underway for Both Chambers, But House Will Return to Finalize Medicaid FMAP Bill

AHIP, Washington Update, 8/6/2010

Yesterday, shortly before leaving for its summer recess, the Senate approved legislation, H.R. 1586, addressing the funding needs of state Medicaid programs. The House will return briefly from recess on August 10 to vote on this bill, and President Obama will sign the bill into law soon thereafter.

The Senate approved H.R. 1586 by a vote of 61 to 39. This bill will increase federal matching funds for state Medicaid programs by an estimated \$16 billion and provide \$10 billion for an education jobs fund. The Medicaid provision will provide states with a higher Medicaid FMAP for six additional months, with the increase set at 3.2 percentage points in the second quarter of fiscal year 2011 and 1.2 percentage points in the third quarter of fiscal year 2011 (these increases represent a phase-down of the 6.2 percentage point increase that states are receiving under the 2009 economic recovery law).

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has indicated that a small business lending bill and a defense authorization bill will be top priorities on the Senate's legislative agenda in September. Another significant issue is the extension of the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts that are scheduled to expire at the end of this year. In addition, because the annual appropriations process will not be completed before the federal government begins its new fiscal year on October 1, Congress will need to take action on a continuing resolution to provide temporary funding for most federal programs and agencies.

The Senate is scheduled to return from recess on September 13 and the House will return on September 14. Leader Reid's office announced yesterday that the Senate will remain in session for four weeks before recessing again on October 8. In addition, a post-election lame duck session will begin during the week of November 15 – followed by a one-week recess for Thanksgiving – with additional legislative action beginning on November 29.



Quality Benefits, Targeted Advocacy & Education for Today's Seniors
1-800-906-ASBA (2722)

Missouri Voters Reject Individual Coverage Requirement

On August 3, voters in Missouri approved a ballot initiative that amends state law to prohibit the government from penalizing citizens who do not purchase health insurance coverage.

This ballot initiative was launched as a direct challenge to the individual coverage requirement that was enacted as part of the "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" (PPACA). The language on the ballot asked whether Missouri state law should be amended to "deny the government authority to penalize citizens for refusing to purchase private health insurance or infringe upon the right to offer or accept direct payment for lawful healthcare services?" Among the 23 percent of registered Missouri voters who participated in the August 3 primary election, 71 percent voted "yes" and 29 percent voted "no" on this ballot initiative.

Similar ballot initiatives will be decided by voters in Arizona and Oklahoma in the November 2 general election. The approval of either of these initiatives, along with the Missouri initiative, will create conflicts between federal and state law that will be the focus of court challenges in the years leading up to the 2014 effective date of PPACA's individual coverage requirement.

The American Senior Benefits Association (ASBA) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit association where membership is completely free. ASBA is committed to lifestyle enhancement through benefits, advocacy and education for the over-50 population. ASBA concentrates its efforts on the issues that are of greatest concern to its members. Through its partners and programs, ASBA members receive product and service discounts, as well as other benefits. Current ASBA membership stands at over 500,000 nationally.