

# ML Strategies Health Care Preview

*Week of September 17<sup>th</sup>*

This week is already well under way with drama unfolding on both sides of Capitol Hill. First, the allegations against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh upended his chances for a swift confirmation as several Republican & Democratic members expressed concern following his accuser coming forward this weekend. The committee vote was initially scheduled for Thursday; however, that is now in question.

The Senate is expected to move its opioid package this week and it looks as though they are working with the House to come to an agreement on a final package that can be sent to the President. The Senate bill left out several crucial House measures, like the partial repeal of the IMD exclusion, among several other Member priorities which the House will attempt to have included in the final deal. Will an opioid bill be signed into law before the election? It comes down to the Senate compromising or the House capitulating.

Appropriators are moving right along on authorizing funding for the departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services (H.R. 6157). However, Congress will likely attach a continuing resolution to this package which funds the agencies through December 7<sup>th</sup>. This CR would apply to all agencies not otherwise funded by September 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **DRUG PRICING IN THE SENATE**

The Senate is expected to vote on the [Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act](#), which would end practices that prohibit pharmacists from telling customers that they could save money by paying cash out-of-pocket rather than using insurance.

The House E&C Committee did advance its own gag clause bill which should send signals to stakeholders that Congress is keeping its eye on drug pricing as the midterms draw near. The Know the Cost Act of 2018 ([H.R. 6733](#)) would prohibit group health plans offered by employers and individual insurance plans, Medicare Advantage and Part D plans, from restricting a pharmacy's ability to inform a patient about a lower cost, out-of-pocket price option for their prescription. The Senate has a similar bill ([S. 2553](#)) related to Medicare plans that passed the Senate earlier this month.

Both Congress and the Administration are looking at ways to provide drug pricing relief for consumers. While many other approaches to drug pricing remain controversial, gag clause relief and transparency in pricing is an approach likely to stay on the radar for the balance of this session.



## **THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE**

The House is in recess this week returning on September 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE**

On Tuesday (9/18), the Senate HELP Committee will hold a [hearing](#) titled, “Examining How Transparency Can Lower Spending and Empower Patients.”

## **SIGN UP**

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