

Capitol Comments

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Federal

2018 Midterm Elections—Who Represents Colorado in the U.S. House Now?

The U.S. House was the Only Congressional Body with Seats Up for Reelection in 2018.

Representative	Incumbent?	US House District
Diane DeGette (71.7%)—D	Incumbent	1) Denver
Joe Neguse (60%)—D	Initial Term, previously a D District	2) Boulder & Fort Collins
Scott Tipton (51.7%)—R	Incumbent	3) Western Slope and SW CO
Ken Buck (60.9%)—R	Incumbent	4) Eastern Plains
Doug Lamborn (58.3%)—R	Incumbent	5) Colorado Springs
Jason Crow (54.1%)—D	Initial Term, previously a R District	6) East Metro Area of Denver
Ed Perlmutter (60.3%)—D	Incumbent	7) West Metro Area of Denver

Neither of Colorado's senate seats were up for election in 2018. Senator Gardner is up for reelection in 2022, and Senator Bennet is up for reelection in 2022.

Potential Shut Down

A shutdown, will it or won't it happen, yet again? Remember way back in September when the president signed a spending bill into law to avoid a shutdown? Well that spending bill, and subsequently the funding for 25% of the federal government, runs out of money on Friday, December 7th. And it all comes down to whether money will be allocated to fund a border wall. Luckily, a bill was introduced Monday, Dec 3rd to extend the funding to December 21st. Hopefully the next two weeks will be used wisely, and Congress and President Trump will come to an agreement that avoids a shutdown.

Oh, and what does the 25% of the federal government include, you ask? Just the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, State and Transportation. Get to it, Congress!

Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety Act

This bill is on a docket to hopefully be passed before the start of 2019. It would give healthcare providers access to HIPAA-protected information for patients with substance use disorders (i.e., circumvent 42 CFR, Part 2). This bill passing would make initiatives like those being developed for the Hospital Transformation Project much more realistic when it comes to working with behavioral health and substance abuse populations. Currently, 42 CFR Part 2, makes sharing behavioral health and substance abuse patient information outside the office of the behavioral health provider incredibly difficult. Initiatives meant to better integrate or address behavioral health needs in primary care settings usually must make do with partial information. This bill would allow for access to much-needed information while still (and this is very important) protecting the patient's information.

Medicare Final Rule

Just crickets there. Hopefully the Final Rule will be published. Any day now, please, Ms. Verma.

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Member driven solutions for local population health



Colorado

The 2019 Legislative Session convenes on January 4th, 2019. So, get excited and pay attention. The new Governor (see below) promised to bring universal healthcare to Colorado. And, HCPF is barreling ahead with the Hospital Transformation Project. It will be interesting to see if the state legislature makes funds available for Hospital Transformation Project work, and if the new Governor approves the Hospital Transformation Project Section 1115 waiver.

2018 Mid Term Election Run Down

Jared Polis (D), previously representing Colorado in the U.S. House of Representatives, is now Governor of Colorado. He beat Walker Stapleton (R) 52.3% to 44%. Democrats won 39 of the 65 House seats. They gained 3 seats compared to what they held last year, and now control 19 of the 35 Senate seats. This means Colorado is now a trifecta state: one party controls the Governorship, Senate and House. And, it is now also a triplex state: one party holds the Governor, Attorney General and Secretary of State positions. This is particularly of interest because the winner of the 2018 governor's election will have the power to influence Colorado's redistricting process that will occur after the 2020 census. Luckily, Colorado passed two Congressional Amendments (Y and Z), that both stand to make Colorado's redistricting process much more bipartisan.

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