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Budget Battles Continue

With the potential of an August 2nd default looming, both houses of Congress and the President remain at an impasse in the debate over whether and how to increase the Nation's borrowing limit. While it is likely that a final package would include some form of deficit reduction (with the possibility of cuts between \$2.5 and \$4 trillion over 10 years), the President and Congressional leaders cannot reach an agreement on the manner in which this should be achieved. Congressional Democrats would favor a plan that includes an increase in Federal revenue through the closure of some tax loopholes and other changes to the tax code. Many Congressional Republicans, however, are as yet unable to support revenue increases and are also calling for entitlement reform as a condition to raise the debt.

While rumors circulate about whether the President and House Speaker John Boehner are quietly brokering a deal, the Senate "Gang of Six", a bipartisan group that has been working on the issue, has released its own

plan. The plan, which, according to the Gang, would stabilize the debt by 2014, would cut the deficit by \$3.7 trillion over 10 years. It accomplishes this, in part, by reducing or eliminating some tax deductions, cutting \$145 billion in defense and nations security spending, changing the way in which Medicare payments and Social Security Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) are calculated, and repealing the CLASS Act, a voluntary long-term care insurance program that was created by the Affordable Care Act. The plan has bipartisan support from 40 Senators. However, it is less likely to gain that sort of support in the House.

Should the August 2nd deadline be reached without a plan, leaving the Treasury without about 40% of the funds required to pay all of its bills, it is unclear exactly what would happen. Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and Veteran's benefits have the potential to be negatively affected, as well as Federal salaries. Because there is no precedent to look to, however, predictions remain speculative. NIHB is monitoring the situation carefully and will provide updates as it develops.

Interior Appropriations Bill to be Voted on Next Week, Vetoed by President

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, expected to be voted on next Monday by the House of Representatives, has received a veto threat from President Obama. Although it does contain a nearly \$400 million increase in Federal funding to the Indian Health Service



(IHS), which has broad bipartisan support, the bill, which passed the full House Appropriations Committee during a 10-hour mark-up on July 12th, contains a number of controversial cuts and riders limiting the ability of both the Department of the Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct oversight and enforce regulations.

In addition to a \$1.5 billion reduction in funding to the EPA, the lengthy list of policy riders the White House opposes includes language preventing the EPA from regulating greenhouse gas emissions from stationary sources, blocking Interior from stopping uranium mining claims near the Grand Canyon and stopping new regulations on mountaintop removal mining. Before the President can veto the bill, it must be taken up and approved by the Senate, where it stands little chance of passing.

HEALTH REFORM UPDATES

OPM Releases Second Set of Issue Papers

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has released the second set of issue papers regarding the development and implementation of tribal employer access to the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program and Federal Employee Group Life Insurance (FEGLI). OPM has developed these papers to solicit feedback on the design for tribal employers accessing FEHB and FEGLI. This second set of papers covers enrollment, premium collection system and appeal process. These follow the first issue paper set which covers eligibility, enrollment, termination of coverage, and tribal employer/employee contributions. OPM is accepting comments on these draft policies. Comments may be submitted to:

tribalprograms@opm.gov

This set of issue papers can be viewed at:

<http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/tribes/Set2.pdf>

HHS Issues Proposed Rule on Consumer Oriented and Operated Plans

On July 18th, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a proposed rule regarding the creation of non-profit Consumer Oriented and Operated Plans (CO-OP) insurance plans under the Affordable Care Act. The CO-OP Program provides loans to foster the creation of consumer-governed, private, nonprofit health insurance issuers to offer qualified health plans in the Affordable Insurance Exchanges. The purpose of this program is to create a new CO-OP in every State in order to expand the number of health plans available in the Exchanges with a focus on integrated care and greater plan accountability.

The proposed rule for the CO-OP program also seeks to promote integrated models of care and enhance competition in the Affordable Insurance Exchanges. Provisions of the rule propose eligibility standards for the CO-OP program, establish some terms for loans, and provide certain basic standards that organizations must meet to participate in this program and become a CO-OP.

Click [here](#) to read the proposed rule.

AHRQ Requests Comments on Draft Tribal Consultation Policy

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is in the process of drafting a tribal consultation policy to continue working with tribal leaders to increase and improve evidence-based research to deliver high-quality health care and to work with their patients as partners. The policy includes proposed annual consultation meetings, identifies different forms of consultation, and defines consultation reporting requirements. You can read the draft tribal consultation policy [here](#) and provide feedback or comments to Wendy Perry at Wendy.Perry@ahrq.hhs.gov.



ACF Announces Tribal Consultation Planning Calls and Session

The Administration for Children and Family (ACF) will host a Tribal Consultation Session on Thursday, August 18, 2011 in Washington, DC. During the Tribal Consultation Session, ACF Principals will be available to speak with Tribal Leaders to discuss issues important to the Tribes. This year's session will focus on ACF tribal program priorities and will include a listening session on tribal self-governance. To help tribal leaders and ACF Principals prepare for this consultation, ACF plans to host a series of teleconference calls to identify who will be providing testimony and for which office. The [agenda](#) may change based on the testimonies ACF expects to receive. The last planning teleconference call will be held:

- Wednesday, July 27, 2011 @ 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. (EDT)

The call-in number and passcode are: 866-763-4038, 354503#.

CDC to Host Biannual Consultation Session

Hosted by the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board in Suquamish, WA, the 7th Biannual Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Tribal Consultation Session will engage CDC senior leadership from various CDC offices and national centers, including the Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support (OSTLTS), National Center for Environmental Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (NCEH-ATSDR), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP) as well as others. Opportunities will be provided during the Consultation Session for tribal testimony. In addition, there will be sessions on the following CDC Winnable Battles: HIV, Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAIs), and Motor Vehicle Injuries.

To view a draft agenda and to register, please visit: <http://www.ppleventreg.com/cdc-tcac/>

NIHB UPDATES

NIHB Requests Letters of Support for Cooperative Agreement

The National Indian Health Board (NIHB) has been anxiously awaiting the announcement of the availability of the funds that support NIHB's core operations through the Indian Health Service. The announcement was issued July 19th and we need your support right away. The opportunity is divided into two cooperative agreements with two very different scopes of work. Both of these scopes of work are a continuation of the core functions and work of the NIHB and we respectfully request your support for our application and proposals. The announcement can be viewed at: <http://www.ihs.gov/NonMedicalPrograms/ogp/documents/HHS-2011-IHS-NIHOE-0001.pdf>

In essence, the scopes of work for the Cooperative Agreements (2 total) are as follows:

Cooperative Agreement 1:
NIHB Tribal Shares
Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee
Health Policy Analysis and Communication (largely through the Medicare/Medicaid and Health Care Reform Policy Committee, a Committee of NIHB)

Cooperative Agreement 2:
Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services
Policy Analysis and Support

Both of these scopes of work are the work that NIHB has been doing for years and this funding is essential to the NIHB's ability to continue providing this service to the Tribes.

The application deadline is August 2, 2011, so please provide NIHB with your letter of support by Friday, July 29, 2011.



We have provided a [sample letter](#) that we invite you to use to articulate your support for NIHB's proposals. Please place this on your letterhead, scan it or save as a PDF file and email it to Stacy Bohlen at sbohlen@nihb.org and to her assistant, Lena Marceno, at lmarceno@nihb.org.

Please contact Stacy Bohlen, Executive Director of NIHB, if you have any questions or need additional information.



ACC Call for Proposals released! See www.nihb.org for details.

Sign Up for Washington Report, at:
http://www.nihb.org/legislative/washington_report.php

For More Information Contact:
 Jennifer Cooper, JD, Legislative Director
jcooper@nihb.org or

Liz Malerba, Legislative Assistant
lmalerba@nihb.org

NEXT WEEK IN WASHINGTON

DC NATIVE ORGANIZATIONS' RECEPTION FOR NATIVE SUMMER INTERNS IN WASHINGTON, DC

AN EVENING OF NETWORKING AND SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF INDIAN COUNTRY LEADERS

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 25, 2011

TIME: 6PM-7:30PM ET

LOCATION: 750 1ST ST. NE WASHINGTON, DC

RSVP TO KRISTIE JOHNSON AT

[KJOHNSON@NAIHC.NET](mailto:kjohnson@naihc.net) OR CALL HER AT 202.789.1754

MMPC AND TTAG FACE-TO-FACE MEETING

DATES: JULY 26TH – JULY 28TH

LOCATION: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

300 MARYLAND AVE SW

WASHINGTON, DC

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE HEARING ON, "AUDIT OF USDA COMMODITY AND DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS"

DATE: JULY 27TH

TIME: 10AM ET

LOCATION: 1300 LONGWORTH BUILDING

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM HEARING ON, "IMPROPER MEDICARE PAYMENTS"

DATE: JULY 28TH

TIME: 9:30AM

LOCATION: 2247 RAYBURN BUILDING

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM HEARING ON, "THE IMPACT OF THE HEALTH CARE OVERHAUL ON BUSINESSES OFFERING HEALTH INSURANCE"

DATE: JULY 28TH

TIME: 9:30AM

LOCATION: 2154 RAYBURN BUILDING

