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## HILL UPDATES

### Coburn Leaves ‘Gang of Six’ Deficit Reduction Group

Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) left the self-appointed bi-partisan federal deficit reduction negotiation group, otherwise known as the ‘Gang of Six’, this Tuesday, citing irreconcilable differences on entitlement spending. He said that because the group could not come to an agreement on Medicare and Social Security reforms, he was taking a “break” from the discussion.

Some within the group, which also includes Republican Senators Saxby Chambliss (GA) and Mike Crapo (ID) and Democratic Senators Kent Conrad (ND), Dick Durbin (IL), and Mark Warner (VA), plan to continue to seek a solution without Coburn, although it is unclear whether they will arrive at a passable deficit reduction plan without him. Many believe that Coburn’s approval is needed for any package to be palatable to the more conservative arm of the Senate. Coburn said he would consider resuming talks with

the group if they are able to “bridge the gap” in differences.

### Coburn Introduces Senate Version of MOE Repeal

Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK), along with Senators Richard Burr (R-NC) and Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), has introduced a bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Medicaid “maintenance of effort” (MOE) provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. S.1031, *The Medicaid Improvement and State Empowerment Act*, would also shift the traditional federal matching fund model to a grant model for some Medicaid beneficiaries. Now that there is MOE repeal legislation in both chambers of Congress, it is looking more likely that it will be used as a bargaining chip in debt ceiling negotiations.

NIHB continues to monitor the situation in both the House and Senate, and will provide additional information as it becomes available.

## ADMINISTRATION UPDATES

### STAC Moves Forward

The Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary’s Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC) met in Washington, DC on May 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. The first of its kind, STAC was formed to advise Secretary Kathleen Sebelius on the interaction of HHS policy and Tribes, STAC approved its by-laws this week. The



Committee also heard from Secretary Sebelius herself who affirmed her commitment to meaningful consultation with Tribes at the state and federal levels.

STAC members updates from each operating division within HHS, and heard from the “Intradepartmental Council on Native American Affairs”, a group of Administration officials representing each division that meets regularly on Tribal issues. The Council intends to help expand Tribal access to grants within HHS divisions, as well as provide greater technical assistance to Tribes.

The next meeting of STAC will take place in Washington, DC this September.

### **CMS Announces New ACO Initiatives**

In an effort to encourage more health providers to form Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced three new initiatives designed to help support their establishment. Under ACA, an ACO is a group of providers that while managing the full continuum of care for patients, agree to financial incentives, both negative and positive, based on the cost, quality, and efficiency of care that they provide.

For a more information on the initiatives, please visit:  
<http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/countablecare05172011a.html>

### **SAMHSA to Consult with Tribes on State Block Grants**

As a result of consultation with Tribes, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has included a Tribal consultation requirement in its draft unified application for the 2011 and 2013 Community Mental Health Services Block Grant and Substance Abuse Prevention and

Treatment Block Grant. This means any state application would be required to include a narrative of how that state consulted with Tribes and how Tribal matters were included in any block grant plans.

SAMHSA has requested comments on the draft application, due by June 9<sup>th</sup>. For more information or to comment, please visit:  
<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2011/pdf/2011-8520.pdf>  
Or <http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/blockgrant/>

#### **NEXT WEEK ON THE HILL**

#### **HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH HEARING ON, “PURCHASING HEALTH COVERAGE ACROSS STATE LINES”**

MAY 25, 2011

ROOM: 2123 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE  
BUILDING

TIME: 9:00 AM

WASHINGTON, DC

#### **SAVE THE DATE**

#### **INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE CONSULTATION SUMMIT**

JULY 6-7, 2011

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