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## Attachments:

Click on link to view attachments:  
<https://www.ndha.org/resources/publications/>

- ♦ Surge Test Letter

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*There will not be an Informer the week of December 24th. The next newsletter will be the week of December 31st. Enjoy your holidays!*

## Washington Update ~ John Flink

Washington is reeling from Friday night's ruling by a federal district court judge in Texas that the Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional due to repeal of the tax penalty. It appears the ruling affects the entire ACA – not just the individual insurance mandate. Thus, the insurance protections would no longer be in effect, nor would Medicaid expansion; and, presumably, nor would the delivery system reforms.

The ruling came just hours before the close of the open enrollment period for individuals seeking health insurance on the federal exchanges. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services immediately tried to reassure the public that the ACA would go forward as planned in 2019. But, already it has created confusion – and this at a time when the ACA's individual insurance markets had appeared to be stabilizing.

This story continues to develop, but, it's clear that the ruling will be appealed. There also has been a lot of speculation in Washington that it will not stand the test of legal scrutiny. But, the uncertainty – especially if the Supreme Court has to weigh – is likely to last for at least a year. The AHA held calls Monday with state associations and members on next steps and how the hospital community can weigh in.

The ruling also has increased increase political anxiety among Republicans. Health care was the top issue for Democrats in the 2018 election – and Republicans were sharply criticized for their 2017 proposals to end the pre-existing conditions and other insurance reforms. Health care was likely to be a key issue in the 2020 campaign – now it's almost a certainty.

In other news, Congress is desperately trying to wrap up its work for the year, but, at this point, there is no resolution to the impasse over border security. A number of federal agencies will run out of funding on December 21, when the current continuing resolution expires. In the absence of a short- or long-term fix, a partial government shutdown will occur. Fortunately, the Department of Health and Human Services is funded for the entire fiscal year and Medicare and Medicaid payment will not be affected. But stay tuned for the rest of the story!!!

*...continued on next page*

*Washington Update continued....*

As adjournment nears, lawmakers are pushing through a number of measures. Among these is a bill reauthorizing farm and food stamp programs that also authorizes assistance for rural hospitals in refinancing debt obligations. In addition, the Secretary of Agriculture would set aside at least 20 percent of funding for Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants to address substance use disorders in rural areas, according to an AHA analysis. The bill also would increase annual funding for the program to \$82 million for FY 2019 – 2023. The president is expected to sign the bill.

Congress also sent the White House legislation that would provide funding for states to develop maternal mortality review committees to better understand maternal complications and identify solutions. Lawmakers also proposed several last minutes changes to Medicare, Medicaid and tax law, but it is unclear whether there is time to move these through the legislative process.

All this activity is likely to come to a head late in the week – after the House returns Wednesday night. Stay tuned for news about the budget debate as well as updates on other issues of interest.

Finally, thank you for the opportunity to advocate on your behalf over the past year. Your dedication to the patients and communities you serve makes it easy to represent you in Washington. I look forward to continuing our efforts in the new year. Have a joyous holiday season.



**NDHA**  
North Dakota  
Hospital Association Est. 1934

JANUARY 29, 2019

**ADVOCACY DAY**  
AT THE CAPITOL

Mark your calendars and plan to attend!

It's a great opportunity to visit with  
your state legislators.

## AHA Elects Doeling to Regional Policy Board 6

**Congratulations** to Mariann Doeling on her election as an at-large delegate to the American Hospital Association's Regional Policy Board 6.

The Regional Policy Boards meet three times a year to discuss policy issues and alternatives. Their recommendations and analyses are used by the AHA Board in its policy deliberations.



## HCC Coalition Surge Tests

The NDDoH EPR Section will be conducting a low/no notice HCC Coalition Surge test with the hospital facilities in the state between the dates of December 10, 2018 and February 13, 2019.

Please see the letter included in the attachments for more details. You are asked to include an executive representative of your hospital to be involved in this surge test along with staff.

Having staff members who are familiar with HC Standard; sign on, password, and entering bed availability for your facility would be very helpful.

# NDHA Education Update

Registration Fees for webinars are \$175 for NDHA members, and \$300 for non-members. This fee is per connection, not per person. You can have as many people gather in one location to watch on one connection as you'd like.

Seminars have their own fee schedule so you will have to review the information to determine the fee for each seminar.

Webinars with ★ are developed specifically for NDHA members and are presented by Melissa Hauer, General Counsel/VP.

## **December, 2018**

Chargemaster Coding Updates for 2019

Click [HERE](#) for more info & to download registration materials.

Unconscious Bias, Stereotypes & Discrimination in the Healthcare

Date: 01/10/2019 From: 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Click [HERE](#) for more info & to register.

Major CPT, HCPCS and ICD-10 Coding Changes for 2019

Date: 01/22/2019 From: 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM

Click [HERE](#) for more info & to register.

Coaching Employees for High Performance

Date: 01/24/2019 From: 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

Click [HERE](#) for more info & to register.

How to Address Bullying in the Workplace

Date: 01/29/2019 From: 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

Click [HERE](#) for more info & to register.

Mark your calendars for NDHA's 85th Annual Convention and Trade Show!  
October 1-3, 2019 | Holiday Inn, Fargo, ND

## 5 Practical Skills for the Holiday 'Host(ess) with the Mostest'

It's not easy playing the part of host or hostess with the "mostest" at the holidays. A lot of time, effort, and planning goes into making merry with family and friends. In all the excitement of getting the house and food ready for guests, honest mistakes, minor mishaps, and even life-threatening emergencies can happen.

Some accidents are just that ... accidents; others—like turkey fryer fires—are often preventable. You can prepare for all of them. [Read the entire CDC Blog.](#)



There are no shortages of things to do when running a healthcare facility. Let NDHA's Physician Recruitment Program help.

- Gain access to physician candidates nationwide who have expressed interest in working in our service area
- By having your own in-house recruiter, you will have support for all the steps in the recruitment process
- For additional information contact Kevin Malee at 701-320-2109

**NDHA**  
North Dakota Health Association

