

From Capitol Hill to the Workplace:

June Health Policy Updates

Congress has continued to focus on healthcare affordability, transparency, and hospital accountability, with several committees taking up bills that have direct implications for employer-sponsored health plans. This week, House Energy & Commerce, Education & Workforce, and Ways & Means advanced legislation aimed at strengthening hospital price transparency, improving access to health plan data, enhancing oversight of tax-exempt hospitals, and increasing accountability in the 340B Drug Pricing Program. Here's what employers and coalition members need to know.

Congressional Markups Advance Hospital and Data Transparency Legislation

House Energy & Commerce and House Education & Workforce committees are marking up bills designed to strengthen transparency across hospitals, health plans, and the broader healthcare market. For employers, the focus on meaningful data access, pricing information, and plan accountability is especially important given the continued rise in healthcare costs and the challenges purchasers face when trying to understand what is being paid, what is being denied, and who owns or controls healthcare assets.

What is included in the Energy & Commerce markup:

- Patients Deserve Price Tags Act: Strengthens hospital price transparency requirements.
- Prices on the Wall Act: Requires hospitals to prominently display actual cash prices in a consumer-friendly format.
- Lower Costs, More Transparency Act: Expands price transparency across the healthcare system.
- Claim Denial Transparency Act: Increases transparency of health plan claim denials.
- Health Plan Transparency Act: Improves reporting on health plan spending and medical loss ratios.
- Health Care Ownership Transparency Act: Increases disclosure of healthcare ownership and transactions.

The Energy & Commerce package is a bipartisan package focused on hospitals, health plans, and market accountability. Greater visibility into pricing, ownership, and claims practices can help employers, employees, and policymakers better understand where healthcare dollars are going and where market practices may be driving higher costs.

What is included in the Education & Workforce markup:

- Health Data Use & Transparency: Improves access to health data and increases transparency.
- Employer Health Plan Transparency: Enhances disclosures for self-insured employers and plan participants.
- Strengthening ERISA Enforcement: Supports compliance and fiduciary oversight to protect plan participants.
- Lower Costs, More Transparency Act: Includes provisions related to health coverage and plan transparency.

Employer Implications: Self-funded employers have fiduciary responsibilities to monitor plan performance, oversee vendors, and ensure plan assets are being used appropriately. These proposals

could improve employer access to the data needed to meet those obligations, compare costs across providers and plans, and identify issues such as claims denials or excessive spending.

What's next? Committee markups are an important step in moving legislation forward, but these bills will need to continue advancing through the House and, ultimately, the Senate. The National Alliance will continue monitoring these proposals and communicating how they may impact employer-sponsored coverage.

Ways & Means Markup Focuses on Nonprofit Hospital Accountability

House Ways & Means is also marking up legislation focused on tax-exempt hospital oversight. The proposal looks more closely at Form 990 and Schedule H reporting for nonprofit hospitals, including greater detail on community benefit, charity care, 340B activity, financial assistance applications, Community Health Needs Assessment-related spending, and the value of hospitals' federal tax exemption.

Why this matters:

- Tax-Exempt Hospital Oversight: Examining whether hospitals are meeting requirements tied to their federal tax exemption.
- Enhanced Reporting Requirements: Proposed updates to Schedule H and Form 990 reporting to give policymakers and communities a clearer view into how hospitals use their tax-exempt status.
- Community Benefit & Charity Care: Strengthening accountability around community benefit spending, charity care policies, and how hospitals assist patients who cannot afford care.
- Financial & Market Transparency: Increasing visibility into hospital finances, executive compensation, consolidation practices, and other market behavior.

Employer Implications: When nonprofit hospitals receive federal tax benefits, employers need to know whether those benefits are translating into lower costs, more affordable care, and meaningful support for the communities they serve. More detailed reporting on charity care, community benefit, financial assistance, and 340B activity can help determine whether tax-exempt hospitals are fulfilling their public obligations or using the benefits in ways that increase costs across the commercial market.

What's next? The Ways & Means markup reflects growing bipartisan interest in hospital accountability and transparency. The National Alliance will continue supporting efforts that tie public benefits to public value.

340B Reform Momentum Continues

Momentum is also building around reforms to the 340B Drug Pricing Program, with new bipartisan legislation expected from Rep. Scott Peters and continued congressional interest in strengthening oversight of the program. The National Alliance recently hosted Capitol Hill briefings to highlight how the growth and current structure of 340B can impact employer-sponsored plans and working families.

What is expected in the legislation:

- Greater transparency and reporting: Requiring clearer information about how 340B savings are generated and used.
- Stronger accountability and oversight: Giving policymakers better tools to understand whether the program is meeting its safety-net mission.

- Guardrails for appropriate program growth: Ensuring the program continues to serve vulnerable patients and communities without creating unchecked incentives that increase costs elsewhere in the system.
- Patient and community benefit: Ensuring savings benefit patients and communities while preserving the safety-net mission of 340B.

Employer Implications: Employers are concerned that the expansion of 340B, particularly among large hospital systems and contract pharmacy arrangements, can increase drug costs in the commercial market without clear evidence that savings are being passed through to patients. Transparency is essential to understanding how 340B discounts are used and whether the program is contributing to affordability or cost-shifting for employers and workers.

National Alliance engagement: The National Alliance is working with Rep. Peters and other policymakers to address employer concerns and protect the ability of self-funded employers to manage pharmacy costs. As Congress considers 340B legislation, the National Alliance will continue to emphasize the need for transparency, accountability, and guardrails that preserve the program's safety-net purpose while reducing unintended cost impacts on employer-sponsored coverage.

What's next? 340B reform remains a growing area of bipartisan interest. Coalition members should expect continued congressional activity, additional stakeholder engagement, and opportunities to weigh in on how proposed reforms may affect employers, employees, and the communities they serve.