

Carlos Jackson - Key Points

1. Election Year Motivation

- Emphasizes the urgency and motivation for lawmakers to address health care costs due to the upcoming elections.
- Stresses that reforms to pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) are a priority for both Congress and the White House.

2. Legislative Opportunities

- Highlights that there is one remaining opportunity for Congress to pass health care reforms before the year's end.
- Notes the bipartisan and bicameral efforts in committees to push forward PBM reforms and prescription drug price reductions.

3. Transparency and Spread Pricing

- Points out the core provisions agreed upon by various committees, such as transparency requirements for PBMs and banning spread pricing in Medicaid and potentially the commercial market.

4. Legislative Hang-ups

- Discusses the primary obstacle being the disagreement between the House and Senate, particularly within the Republican party, on extending PBM reforms to the commercial market.
- Indicates that this disagreement prevented PBM reforms from being included in the March health care package.

5. Year-End Priorities and Political Dynamics

- Explains the importance of the end-of-year deadline due to expiring health care priorities and the need to avoid decreases in funding for Medicare, Medicaid, and community health centers.
- Highlights the political necessity of including revenue-raising PBM provisions to offset funding needs.

6. Advocacy Strategy

- Advises stakeholders to continuously remind lawmakers of the work needed on PBM reforms and the impact on high prescription drug prices.
- Emphasizes communicating the benefits of reforms in terms of reducing out-of-pocket costs for voters, particularly during the election year.

Q&A Insights

- Recommends framing advocacy messages around the everyday American's experience and the direct benefits to consumers.
- Suggests focusing on the personal impact of health care costs and access to care to resonate with lawmakers' constituents.

Karen Richmond - Key Points

1. Fiscal Constraints and Appropriations

- Discusses the one percent increase in funding for FY24 under the Fiscal Responsibility Act, highlighting that it doesn't keep up with inflation and fixed costs, effectively resulting in budget cuts.
- Mentions the drying up of funding streams like the 21st Century CURES Act and COVID supplemental funding, creating challenges for NIH and CDC programs.

2. COVID Funding Cliff

- Talks about the innovative programs developed with COVID funding and the struggle to sustain them as these funds are retracted.
- Stresses the need to incorporate these programs into base funding despite the tight budget environment.

3. Appropriations Politics

- Notes the importance of Tom Cole as the new chair of the Appropriations Committee, given his support for public health and research.

- Acknowledges the ongoing reputational challenges for agencies like the CDC due to the pandemic but sees improvement.

4. Advocacy Strategies

- Urges stakeholders to present unified requests for funding rather than individual program asks to avoid overwhelming appropriators.

- Encourages the use of directed-report language and collaboration with agencies on grant guidance as alternative strategies to secure funding.

Q&A Insights

- Emphasizes knowing the audience and making advocacy personal and compelling, with state-specific examples.

- Recommends avoiding trigger words and tailoring messages to the political background of the audience to ensure effective communication.

- Suggests looking to CMS for reimbursement strategies and building champions in Congress who understand the costs and impacts of hypertension and other public health issues.