

This Week in Health Care Reform: July 9, 2010

While lawmakers spent the week campaigning in their states in preparation for the November midterm elections, President Obama appointed a new director to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

As opportunities arise during implementation of the health care reform legislation, we encourage you and others to engage members of Congress by visiting the [Health Action Network](#).

Health Care Reform

Administration Appoints CMS Director: On [Wednesday](#), President Obama appointed Dr. Donald Berwick, president of the non-profit Institute for Healthcare Improvement, as Director of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ([CMS](#)). According to news reports, the Administration appointed Dr. Berwick during the congressional recess to [bypass](#) dissent among lawmakers who opposed his [nomination](#) earlier in the year.

Democrats and Republicans expressed disapproval of the process for appointment, including Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max [Baucus](#) (D-Mont.) who said, "Senate confirmation of presidential appointees is an essential process prescribed by the Constitution that serves as a check on executive power and protects Montanans and all Americans by ensuring that crucial questions are asked of the nominee – and answered."

Virginia Lawsuit Moving Forward: Last [week](#), a federal judge in Richmond, Virginia heard arguments from Justice Department officials and [Virginia](#) Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli regarding the state's lawsuit challenging the health care reform law. The suit cites a Virginia [law](#) that exempts state residents from being required to have health care coverage. Justice department officials argued that states cannot simply pass a statute alleging to nullify a federal law.

Attorneys General in 20 additional states, led by Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum, filed a multiparty lawsuit last March alleging that the new health care reform law infringes on Constitutional rights by mandating that citizens purchase health care coverage or pay a penalty. A hearing is set for Sept.14 to review the case.

Public Opinion

Voters Overwhelmingly Favor Repeal of Health Care Reform Law: In a recent [Rasmussen report](#), 60 percent of voters continue to favor repeal of the health care reform law. Fifty-three percent of Americans think the new law is bad for the country, while 43 percent believe repeal would be good for the nation's economy.

Looking Ahead

After a two-week recess, lawmakers will return to Washington on Monday to begin the final three weeks of legislative business leading up to the August recess.