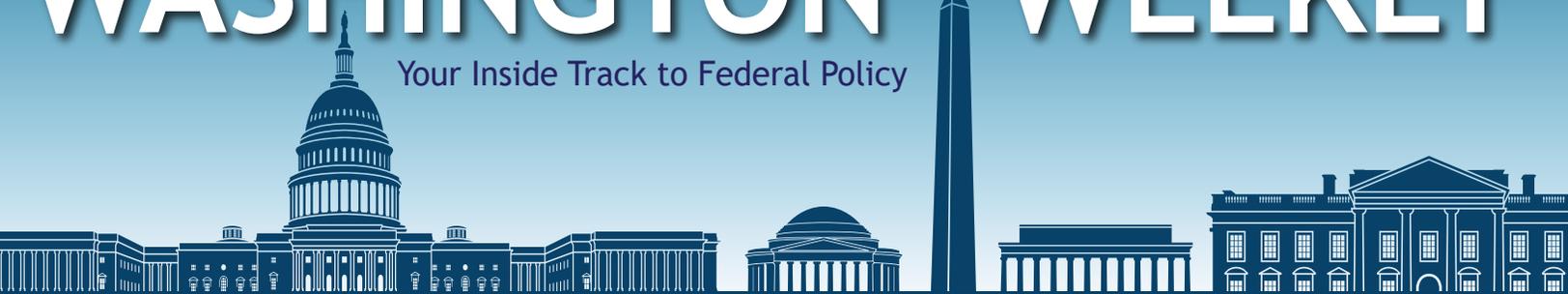


AACN's

WASHINGTON WEEKLY

Your Inside Track to Federal Policy



September 19, 2018

Onto Conference: Senate Passes their Opioid Bill

On Monday, by a vote of 99-1, the Senate passed their version of comprehensive opioid legislation. Now, the House and Senate are working to reconcile differences between their two packages through a conference committee.

At the end of June, the House passed their opioid bill, [H.R. 6](#), the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act. H.R. 6 that includes a provision, Section 3003, would permanently authorize nurse practitioners to prescribe Medication-Assisted Treatments (MATs), specifically buprenorphine, to patients struggling with opioid misuse and addiction. This section would also provide a five-year authorization for clinical nurse specialists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and certified nurse-midwives to prescribe MATs. This critical provision was not included in the Senate version.

With conference conversations underway, a compromised opioid package could go back to the House and the Senate for a final vote as soon as next week. We must continue to push to ensure Section 3003 is included. [Ask your Members of Congress to support Section 3003 of H.R. 6 in any final opioid package to allow APRNs to prescribe MATs today.](#) For additional background on this bill, view AACN's National Opioid Epidemic [factsheet](#).

AACN is also closely monitoring the conferenced language for the Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment Act ([H.R. 5102/S. 2524](#)) that was included in H.R. 6. This provision offers student loan repayment of up to \$250,000 to those who work as a substance use disorder professional in areas of national need. While the Senate opioid package includes similar language, it is not as comprehensive as the House version. AACN has strongly supported this legislation and continues to advocate for its inclusion, as outlined in H.R. 6, in any final opioid package.

Minibus on the Move: Nearing the Finish Line for LHHS-ED FY 2019 Spending Bill

On Friday, September 14, the House and Senate released their conferenced Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS-ED) and Defense Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 "minibus" ([H.R. 6157](#)). This compromised spending package included level funding for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs (\$249.472 million) and a 3.14% increase in National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) funding totaling \$162.992 million, which comes from a \$2 billion overall increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Combined, this minibus accounts for roughly 60% of all discretionary spending for FY 2019.

Yesterday, by a vote of 93-7, the Senate approved the conferenced minibus for FY 2019. The House is expected to approve the minibus next week and send it to the President for his signature. The current Fiscal Year expires September 30, 2018. While this minibus is moving forward, additional federal funding packages remain. To avert any possible government shutdown, appropriators included language in this LHHS-ED/Defense minibus that would extend funding to December 7, 2018 for any minibuses not agreed to before the September 30 deadline. For AACN's funding chart and an overview of FY 2019 appropriations, [click here](#).

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