



Policy Pathways for Healthcare Under a New Administration: Insights from Washington Insiders

Applied Policy, a leading authority in health policy and regulation, proudly sponsors the Northern Virginia Health Policy Forum. The Forum brings together key thought leaders, government officials, and industry experts to discuss critical trends in American healthcare.

On December 4th, the Northern Virginia Health Policy Forum welcomed two DC lobbyists, Brett Baker from the Nickles Group and Diane Major from the D. Major Group, who brought insider perspective on what to expect from the White House and Capitol Hill in the coming months. Major served on the Republican leadership team working for Senator John Kyle of Arizona and then founded her own consulting firm in 2013. Baker got his start in Washington working for the American College of Physicians and subsequently served on the staff of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee as health policy director prior to joining the Nickles Group.

THE ELECTION RESULTS AND WHAT THEY TELL US

According to the panelists, the key driver of voter behavior in the 2024 elections was the desire for change, focusing on the economy, immigration, and national security. Although healthcare was not a primary focus during the campaign, this does not rule out healthcare as an impetus for legislative action in the next administration.

With both the House and the Senate now Republican-controlled, Baker believes that Congress will likely be able to use the reconciliation process, as they did in 2017, which allows for passing legislation with a simple majority vote in the Senate. Inclusion of significant healthcare reforms within this framework remains uncertain but potential changes to Medicaid could be considered through reconciliation as a cost-saving measure.

THE PRIORITIES OF THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Major and Baker discussed what healthcare would look like in the next Trump Administration. Baker started off by saying the initial phase will likely include overturning some policies prioritized by the Biden administration that the Trump administration does not want to continue. This could include reproductive health policies as well as nursing home staffing ratios.



Major talked about what healthcare policies from the first Trump administration we could see in the second. Some of these include an increased focus on healthcare price transparency and a focus on expanding Medicare Advantage (MA), while acknowledging that MA does have its problems.

The panelists also discussed that there is some continuity of issues spanning both administrations, such as telehealth extension. Telehealth visits under Medicare are set to expire at the end of the year unless Congress moves to extend these flexibilities again. Widespread use and support for telehealth, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, make it politically challenging to discontinue, even though concerns about potential abuse and cost increases, particularly from the Congressional Budget Office, could limit the length of the extension.

HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

Both Major and Baker believe Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Dr. Mehmet Oz will be confirmed as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator, respectively. In meetings prior to the full hearings, Senators may seek clarification on Kennedy's stance on vaccines, with a focus on data transparency. Likewise, his views on corporate influence in medicine and its impact on FDA policies could be scrutinized, and Republican senators might inquire about his position on abortion given its relevance to party priorities.

The Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) movement, championed by Kennedy, emphasizes a holistic approach to health, prioritizing nutrition, diet, exercise, and advocates for addressing underlying conditions before resorting to medications. Major said this approach enjoys significant support in western states and may be a bridge to build bipartisan support.

LEARN MORE

The full Forum video as well as highlights can be found on both [Applied Policy's website](#) and the [Northern Virginia Health Policy Forum website](#).

Applied Policy®, a leading health policy regulatory and reimbursement consulting firm based in Alexandria, Virginia, proudly sponsors the Northern Virginia Health Policy Forum. The Forum brings together key thought leaders, government officials, and industry experts to discuss critical trends in American healthcare.

This extract was prepared by Applied Policy®.