

Legislative Update – September 9, 2022

President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act into law and NHMA president will attend the Signing Ceremony next week at the White House.

The Inflation Reduction Act will protect Medicare recipients from catastrophic drug costs by phasing in a cap for out-of-pocket costs and establishing a \$35 cap for a month's supply of insulin. Medicare will be able to negotiate prices for certain high-cost drugs for the first time ever. The law also extends health insurance premium subsidies for those who obtain insurance in the ACA Marketplace.

The FDA authorized and the CDC recommended new updated COVID-19 vaccines for all Americans 12 and above. The new vaccines are bivalent – for the COVID-19 virus and for the Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 variants, and safe and available this week across the nation. NHMA urges all eligible to be vaccinated.

Women's Reproductive Health Advocacy -

NHMA President & CEO, Dr. Elena Rios joined the AMA President, Dr. Jack Resneck, and leading OBGyn physicians from Planned Parenthood and others at a panel with the Hispanic and the Black Associations of Journalists National Conference last month to urge more media coverage about women's reproductive healthcare being taken away in the U.S. – that will impact our communities as we faced extra burdens prior to Roe policy in the 1960s - with more backdoor abortions, deaths to mothers, and more foster children. This time with so many states making abortion services illegal, doctors and other healthcare workers will be in danger of losing their jobs if they provide these services.

NHMA is joining the National Consumer League and the Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance in providing public comments to the FDA to continue to allow the only medication on the market for preterm birth prevention, Makena. Six million Latinas have preterm births annually and this medication has proven safe and effective for over a decade in women who take it.

NHMA has urged Congress to enact the bipartisan/bicameral Saving Access to Laboratory Services Act (S.4449/H.R.8188) that calls for a more effective payment system that calls for CMS to reimburse with a single national fee schedule based on private market data from all types of laboratories that service Medicare patients. These include independent labs, hospital outreach labs and physician office labs that would have less reporting burden.

NHMA has urged Congress to support the bipartisan Restore Protections for Dialysis Patients Act (H.R. 8594) in response to a recent SCOTUS decision that limits access to critical healthcare for patients with end stage renal disease (ESRD). We support the Congress bills to Medicare Secondary Payer Act of 1981 that saves the Medicare Trust Fund by ensuring individuals the right to maintain private insurance during the 30 months coordination of benefits period when Medicare is secondary.

NHMA provided comments to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to support Medicare Advantage programs for increasing health equity since they offer healthcare, vision, dental, nutrition, home improvement and transportation services that are benefits not found in FFS Medicare at this time. More than half of eligible Latino persons are in the MA programs and save an average of \$1100 compared to regular Medicare.

NHMA joined other public health organizations and supported the FDA Proposed Rule to decrease the level of nicotine in cigarettes this last month.

