NEWS BRIEF

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New Bipartisan Bill Aimed at Reducing Health Care Costs Proposed

On Thursday, May 23, 2019, the Senate Health Committee proposed a bipartisan bill called the Lower Health Care Costs Act. This bill sets out to address surprise medical billing, reduce the cost of prescription drugs and the overall cost of delivering health care, and improve transparency.

The proposed bill is the latest move federal officials have taken to address rising health care costs. Earlier this month, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a rule that would require drug companies to disclose the price of prescription drugs on TV ads. In addition, President Donald Trump recently delivered a speech in which he laid out a blueprint for combating surprise medical billing.

The Lower Health Care Costs Act has five main components, including:

1. Addressing surprise medical bills

2. Lowering the cost of prescription drugs

3. Improving transparency

4. Improving public health

5. Improving the exchange of health information

The Senate Health Committee Chairman Sen. Lamar Alexander said that "Republicans and Democrats in the United States Senate have announced this proposal of nearly three dozen specific bipartisan provisions that will reduce the cost of what Americans pay for health care."

Additionally, bill co-sponsor Sen. Patty Murray explained that the bill focuses on "important issues like surprise medical billing, drug prices, maternal mortality, and vaccine hesitancy," and that the rare bipartisan effort demonstrates that "we can make progress when both sides are at the table ready to put patients and families first."

"These are common sense steps we can take, and every single one of them has the objective of reducing the health care costs that you pay for out of your own pocket."

- *Sen. Lamar Alexander*

Sen. Lamar Alexander hopes that the Lower Health Care Costs Act will be on the Senate floor for a vote by July of this year. To view the proposal, click here.