Hawaii

In recent legislative terms, Hawaii introduced several legislation that seek to promote healthcare reform, price transparency, and contain prescription drug prices in 2019. HB 1286 seeks to establish a single health-care payer system. HB 1086 tackles healthcare transparency and surprise billing issues by requiring providers to disclose to patients whether they are in-network or out-of-network with respect to the patients’ health benefits plans. The state also made efforts to contain prescription drugs costs with legislation that require manufacturers to disclose proposed increase in wholesale prices (HB 267/SB 1328) and prevent pharmacy benefit managers from prohibiting disclosure of more affordable alternatives under insured individual’s health plan (SB 1401/HB 1361).

Hawaii was relatively active in the 2018 legislative term as well. While most bills failed to pass, the legislature passed SB 2340, which ensures that certain benefits under the Affordable Care Act are preserved under Hawaii law, including prohibiting health insurance entities from imposing a preexisting condition exclusion and prohibiting health insurance entities from using an individual’s gender to determine premiums or contributions.

In 2017, the state legislature passed HB 552, which established the Affordable Health Insurance Working Group to plan for and mitigate adverse effects of the potential repeal of the federal Affordable Care Act by Congress. Regardless of what happens on the federal level, the bill calls for the preservation of the primary provisions of the individual mandate. The Legislature also passed a bill that establishes a Hawaii Health Savings Account, which allows local employees to open a tax-exempt account funded by employer contributions. The bill was referred to the Governor and has not yet been signed.

Hawaii also continues to use the Hawaii Health Information Exchange, the state’s private sector non-profit designee for the receipt of federal funds to create a statewide health information exchange that will ultimately feed into the nationwide eHealth Exchange technology network.