
From: Schulze, Connie R
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 11:27 AM
To: Russell, Thomas; Becker, Aimee M; Link, Mary T; Kvitrud, Tricia; Ross Josh; Bidar-Sielaff, Shiva; Benzel, Sara A; Marso, Leanne M
Cc: Stokes, Kyle
Subject: RE: Washington Update – January 16, 2026

The info below is from the Children's Hospital Association, Tom.

From: Russell, Thomas <TRussell@uwhealth.org>
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 11:24 AM
To: Becker, Aimee M <ABecker@uwhealth.org>; Link, Mary T <MLink@uwhealth.org>; Kvitrud, Tricia <tricia.kvitrud@wisc.edu>; Schulze, Connie R <CSchulze@uwhealth.org>; Ross Josh <jcross@medicine.wisc.edu>; Bidar-Sielaff, Shiva <SBidar-Sielaff@uwhealth.org>; Benzel, Sara A <SBenzel@uwhealth.org>; Marso, Leanne M <LMarso@uwhealth.org>
Cc: Stokes, Kyle <KStokes@uwhealth.org>
Subject: RE: Washington Update – January 16, 2026

Who is making that statement on immunity? Is that CHA or is that HHS?

From: Becker, Aimee M <ABecker@uwhealth.org>
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 11:14 AM
To: Link, Mary T <MLink@uwhealth.org>; Kvitrud, Tricia <tricia.kvitrud@wisc.edu>; Schulze, Connie R <CSchulze@uwhealth.org>; Ross Josh <jcross@medicine.wisc.edu>; Bidar-Sielaff, Shiva <SBidar-Sielaff@uwhealth.org>; Benzel, Sara A <SBenzel@uwhealth.org>; Marso, Leanne M <LMarso@uwhealth.org>
Cc: Russell, Thomas <TRussell@uwhealth.org>; Stokes, Kyle <KStokes@uwhealth.org>
Subject: FW: Washington Update – January 16, 2026

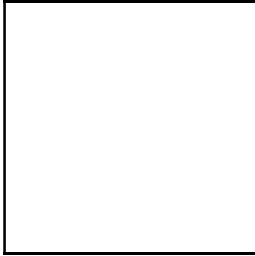
So all have this.
Aimee

From: Schulze, Connie R <CSchulze@uwhealth.org>
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 9:32 AM
To: Kvitrud, Tricia <tricia.kvitrud@wisc.edu>; Link, Mary T <MLink@uwhealth.org>; Becker, Aimee M <ABecker@uwhealth.org>
Subject: FW: Washington Update – January 16, 2026

See statement I highlighted below. Totally consistent with what you have been saying.

From: Children's Hospital Association <public.policy@comms.childrenshospitals.org>
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 9:28 AM
To: Schulze, Connie R <CSchulze@uwhealth.org>
Subject: Washington Update – January 16, 2026

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Children's Hospital Association

Washington Update

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Monday Call

The Public Affairs Update Call scheduled for January 19 is canceled in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Congressional Schedule

The House will be in session, and the Senate will not be in session next week.

ACTIONS

Input Requested: CHA Strategy and Timeline for Comments on Recent Medicaid Rules — On Dec. 19, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released two proposed rules restricting hospital Medicaid and Medicare program participation and Medicaid funding for gender affirming care (GAC). CHA released a [statement](#) in response to these rules, opposing any actions that limit access to care for children.

Manatt has developed a detailed [summary](#) of these two rules for your review. **Our timeline and key deadlines for developing and submitting comments are below.**

- Members to send initial feedback to inform draft letter: **by Jan. 23 COB.**
- CHA will publish a draft comment letter for member review: **by Jan. 30.**
- Members to send feedback on comment letter draft: **by Feb. 13 COB.**
- Comments for both rules are due to CMS: Feb. 17 **by 5pm ET.**

Please send initial feedback to both [Aimee Ossman](#) and [Milena Berhane](#) to inform our draft comments by EOD next Friday, Jan. 23. Please contact us if you would like to schedule a time to discuss the rules and your feedback. **Comments are due to CMS by Feb. 17.**

In addition, on Dec. 18, HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy issued a [declaration](#) stating that GAC services are “neither safe nor effective.” Twenty-one states and D.C. have

filed a joint motion for summary judgment in response to this declaration. HHS has currently agreed not to initiate any provider exclusion actions based on this declaration until the earlier of: a court ruling on the states' motion for summary judgment challenging the declaration's validity, or 30 days following oral argument on that motion. The court has scheduled oral argument for March 19, meaning HHS could initiate provider exclusions by April 18 unless the court rules earlier. **This does not grant providers immunity but instead clarifies that HHS has agreed not to issue notices of intent to exclude or notices of exclusion during this time period.**

NEWS

HHS Reinstates SAMHSA Mental Health and SUD Grants After Recent Terminations — On the evening of Wed. Jan 14, the [Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#) reinstated \$2 billion in mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) grants administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). An estimated 2,600 SAMHSA grants were initially terminated Wednesday morning, with several children's hospitals being impacted. CHA published this [statement](#) in response to the initial grant terminations.

Thank you to those who shared information on the impact of the initial terminations on your hospitals. If you have any questions or have additional information to share, please reach out to [Milena Berhane](#) and [Cynthia Whitney](#).

ASPR Releases Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2029 — This week, the Administration for Strategic Preparedness & Response (ASPR) released its 2026-2029 [strategic plan](#), broadly outlining the agency's priorities for health security and emergency preparedness nationwide. The document specifically addresses empowering its workforce, strengthening preparedness and resiliency of state and local governments, improving federal response amid emergencies, securing the medical supply chain, and addressing emerging health security threats. We will closely monitor federal updates to assess potential impacts on children's hospitals. Please reach out to [Natalie Torentinos](#) or [Kaleigh Koudela](#) with questions.

CMS Announces New Medicare GME Slots — In late December, CMS announced the [allocation of 400 new Medicare GME slots](#) to 169 hospitals, as authorized under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. At the same time, it opened up [the application process](#) for hospitals to apply for the fifth round of new slots. Applications are due by March 31. New slots will be announced by Jan. 31, 2027, and are effective July 1, 2027. CMS also released a [set of FAQs](#) on the slot availability.

Hospitals that meet one or more of the following criteria are eligible: 1) is located in a rural area; 2) is training in excess of its GME cap; 3) is in a state with new medical schools; 4) serves a health professions shortage area.

Hospitals may apply for direct GME (DGME) and/or indirect GME FTE residency slots. IPPS-exempt children's hospitals may only apply for DGME slots. [Jan Kaplan](#)

CHA CEO on the Pediatric Flu Surge and Changes to Vaccine Schedule — This week, *Chief Healthcare Executive* featured an interview with CHA CEO Matthew Cook at the center of their coverage of the pediatric flu surge and the recent changes to the childhood immunization schedule. Based on an interview conducted last week, the piece highlights CHA's concerns about changes to flu vaccine recommendations in the midst of a significant surge. Read the full feature [here](#). [Addy Toevs](#)

Next C-Suite Fly-in will be at Family Advocacy Day — Please plan for your c-suite executives to join us at Family Advocacy Day, June 3-5, for our next fly-in opportunity. Reach out to [Elizabeth Brown](#) with questions.

EVENTS

Save the Date: Family Advocacy Day is June 3-5, 2026 — FAD 2026 will be held on June 3, 4, and 5 at the [Hilton Washington DC Capitol Hill](#). Registration will open February 16, 2026. Please start thinking about which family or families you would like to attend. Reach out to [Elleni Almandrez](#) if your hospital has financial constraints that would prevent its participation in this critical advocacy event.

RESOURCES

CHA Publishes 2025 Impact Report — Last year, CHA advanced our mission to make children's health a national priority through bold advocacy, innovation, and collaboration. From data-driven solutions to high-impact public awareness campaigns, CHA turned challenges into opportunities — driving informed, actionable progress for every child in every community. [Read the report](#) to learn more. [Chelsea Adams](#)

Speak Our Minds Podcast Schedule — Please find the [Speak Our Minds](#) podcast schedule below:

Jan. 14: Dr. Jamie Becker, Dallas Children's
Jan. 21: Dr. Martine Lamy, Cincinnati Children's
Jan 28.: Micaela Thordarson, Rady Children's
Feb. 4: Dr. Justine Larson, Children's National
Feb. 11: Brooke Briscoe, Children's Wisconsin
Feb 18: Dr. Bob Batterson, Children's Mercy
[Heidi Baskfield](#)

NEW State Policy Model Tracker Available to Inform Your Advocacy — CHA created a [State Model Policy Tracker](#) to track model policies by national organizations that have implications for children and children's hospitals. The tracker includes both model legislation and regulations on such issues as site neutral payment, hospital price transparency, 340B, and others. We encourage hospitals to use this resource to identify legislation or regulations which could be introduced in their state (both challenging and positive) or to identify states where similar legislation may have already

been enacted. We will continue to monitor national organizations for new or amended state model legislation and update this tracker periodically. Please reach out to [Matthew Snider](#) with any questions and usefulness in your state advocacy.

CHA Congressional Calendar for 2026 — CHA has released a [Congressional calendar](#) for the 2nd session of the 119th Congress. The calendar also includes relevant dates for CHA events. [Paige Mihalik](#)

Gun Violence Prevention Resources for Health Care Professionals — The Ad Council's Agree to Agree campaign includes new resources for Youth Firearm Injury Prevention specifically developed for health care professionals (HCPs). The campaign encourage HCPs to be part of the solution by having nonjudgmental, collaborative conversations with patients and families – helping to normalize conversations between clinicians and patients. Visit the [digital resource hub](#) for access to over 65+ vetted, curated resources and conversation guides for HCPs and their patients. [Stacy Wathen](#)

NAMD Timeline of Key Deadlines for Upcoming H.R. 1 Medicaid Provisions — The National Association of Medicaid Directors (NAMD) has published a [resource](#) that highlights upcoming deadlines for key H.R. 1 Medicaid provisions. [Milena Berhane](#)

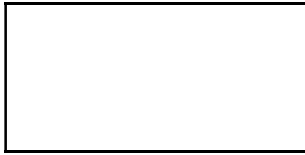
State Advocacy – Member Resources Library – In response to member feedback, CHA has created a member resource [library](#) on the GR Community. This folder hosts a range of member-created resources to give insight into how others are framing or presenting their hospital's stories in advocacy with state and federal policymakers and to give ideas for designing or producing similar materials. Please reach out to Matthew Snider with any questions or to share any resources you would like to include in the library for other members to look to as examples. [Matthew Snider](#)

The State of Children's Health Dashboard — [The State of Children's Health Dashboard](#) is a CHA resource designed to help you better understand children's health in your state and congressional district. In this dashboard, you can explore statistics about children's health care coverage, mental health/well-being, and access to preventive care. Please direct questions to [Olivia Erim](#) and [Mitch Harris](#).

Tariff Tracker Available — CHA has created a [tariff tracker](#) to follow all executive orders and administrative actions that impose new tariffs and trade deal agreements. We are closely monitoring potential impacts on pharmaceuticals and medical devices. Please direct questions to [Natalie Torentinos](#) and [Gabby Ahearn](#).

Public Relations, Marketing and Communications Higher Logic Community – Did you know that CHA has a [community](#) for those in public relations and marketing and communications? Ask your PR and MarComms colleagues if they are a part of the valuable community. If not, forward them this email with [directions on how to sign up!](#)

Public Affairs Staff and Policy Issue List – We created a [document](#) that lists CHA's Public Affairs' staff, their contact information and the issues they cover. We hope you find this helpful! [Liz Brown](#)



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