

March 3, 2021

Senate to Begin Debate on Revised Version of \$1.9 Trillion COVID-19 Relief Bill with Provisions Affecting Hospitals and Health Systems

Senate bill includes \$8.5 billion targeted to rural providers for COVID-19 relief and increased COBRA assistance

Senate Democrats today are expected to release their \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill and begin debate with the hopes of passing it in the next few days under “budget reconciliation,” which allows the measure to pass with a simple majority, instead of the 60 votes required for most legislation.

The Senate bill, which may undergo more revisions before a final vote, is similar to the legislation the House passed Feb. 27. However, the Senate bill does include additional provisions and some notable changes.

- **Additional Financial Relief for Rural Providers:** Specifically, the Senate bill would allocate \$8.5 billion in new dollars for rural providers for COVID-19 relief. The House bill did not contain any similar funding.
- **Federal Subsidies for COBRA Coverage:** The Senate bill would provide federal subsidies valued at 100% of the health insurance premium for eligible individuals and families to remain on their employer-based coverage. This provision would remain in effect until Sept. 30, 2021. The House bill provided subsidies valued at 85%.

Senate Democrats intend to pass the bill in the next few days and send it back to the House for final approval as early as next week.

AHA staff are reviewing the Senate bill. We expect many of the provisions in the Senate bill to mirror those in the House-passed bill, which included many provisions to bolster the nation’s COVID-19 health care response with additional resources for vaccines, treatment, personal protective equipment, testing, contact tracing and workforce development. For a summary of provisions affecting hospitals and health systems that were included in the House-passed legislation, see our Feb. 27 [Special Bulletin](#).

FURTHER QUESTIONS

If you have questions, please contact AHA at 800-424-4301.