



Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Holds Hearing on the Individual Health Insurance Market on February 1, 2017

On February 1, 2017, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee held a hearing on the individual health insurance market entitled “Obamacare Emergency: Stabilizing the Individual Health Insurance Market.”

The hearing included focus on the following:

- **No repeal without replace:** Senate HELP Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) reiterated that repeal and replace must be simultaneous.
- **Individual insurance market reform:** Chairman Alexander indicated that he wishes to work with Democrats to stabilize the individual insurance market. He stated this market is in the most danger of collapse without swift Congressional intervention.
 - Chairman Alexander and witnesses agreed that Congress must act by March or April of this year to stabilize the individual market.
 - According to certain committee members and witnesses at the hearing, examples of policy options that potentially could help to stabilize the individual market include less rigid essential health benefits requirements; streamlined special enrollment periods; shorter grace periods for individuals who fail to pay premiums on time; modified cost-sharing reductions; and greater state flexibility to regulate the individual market.
- **Medicaid:** Democrats and former Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear (D) stressed that proposals to block grant or otherwise change the structure of the Medicaid program would lead to fewer insured individuals and poor health and economic outcomes.

If you have any questions regarding this Sidley Update, please contact the Sidley lawyer with whom you usually work or

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