

OVERNIGHT HEALTH: Opposition to reform law falls ahead of vote

By Healthwatch staff - 01/17/11 05:55 PM ET

Welcome to The Hill's evening roundup of the day's health policy news and advance look at Tuesday's schedule.

On the agenda for Tuesday:

Repeal debate begins: The House on Tuesday will kick off seven hours of debate on a bill to repeal the healthcare reform law a day before the chamber is scheduled to vote on the measure. The debate and vote were delayed by a week in the wake of last weekend's Arizona shooting. Lawmakers have called for toned-down rhetoric in light of the tragedy.

House Dems stage reform law hearing: House Democrats will kick off the repeal debate by staging a hearing on Tuesday where individuals will testify in favor of consumer protections included in the reform law. The House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee – not an official congressional committee – is billing the event as an opportunity to hear from individuals who benefit from the reform law's consumer protections. Dems have criticized the GOP for rushing through a repeal vote without holding any hearings, but Republicans say the November elections proved that Americans want the House to quickly repeal the bill. <http://bit.ly/fYgofB>

Abortion debate expected: A looming debate on federal funding for abortions will challenge lawmakers' calls to tone down political rhetoric in light of the Arizona shooting that left six dead and Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz) critically wounded. After Wednesday's repeal vote, the House will vote on a resolution that instructs committees to propose replacement pieces including provisions that "prohibit taxpayer funding of abortions and provide conscience protections for health care providers." <http://bit.ly/hfCC7k>

Former leaders launch bipartisan health initiative: A bipartisan group of former congressional and state leaders on Tuesday will launch a new health project focusing on state-based initiatives. The Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) project will be announced by former Senate majority leaders Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) and Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) and former Gov. Ted Strickland (D-Ohio). The

BPC made headlines in June 2009 when it offered a bipartisan blueprint for healthcare reform. <http://bit.ly/gMdhGF>

Liberal budget group challenges GOP on CBO score: The left-leaning Center for Budget and Policy Priorities on Tuesday will counter the GOP's dismissal of the nonpartisan congressional scorekeeper's projection that repealing the reform law will add \$230 billion to the deficit over the next 10 years. House Republican leaders, contending that the reform law will increase the deficit, said the Congressional Budget Office reached that conclusion on the account of Democrats' "budget gimmickry."

Conservative groups to boost reforms: Several conservative associations will propose replacements for 10 provisions included in the reform law. For starters, the groups will propose repealing the individual and employer mandates in place of a "generous" tax subsidy for individuals to obtain insurance. Groups appearing at the Capitol Hill event include the National Center for Policy Analysis, American Action Forum, Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute and Cato Institute.

Ways and Means get new Medicare staffer: Brett Baker, the former director of regulatory and insurer affairs for the American College of Physicians, starts with the Ways and Means Committee Tuesday. He'll be working with the health subcommittee Republican staff handling Medicare Part B issues.