

MEDICARE DEREGULATION, OPIOID LEGISLATION ON TAP BEFORE LABOR DAY

House Ways & Means health subcommittee Chair Peter Roskam (R-IL) said that he intends to advance legislation this year that would reduce regulations in Medicare, and he said that effort, along with a package of bills to address the opioid crisis, are likely to be the only health care legislation that Congress takes up this year.

"You will see an opioids bill moving forward," Roskam said in a speech to the American Hospital Association. "Between now and August, you'll see the regulatory relief package, as I mentioned. But in election years, on Capitol Hill, the traffic really tends to slow after Labor Day."

Roskam said the health subcommittee is reviewing hundreds of written submissions from health care

providers in response to a request for ideas about unnecessary regulations, and Ways & Means leaders met in April with hospitals and in March with 10 provider groups on the issue. In early March, Roskam said the initiative, which was started by former Ways & Means health subcommittee Chair Pat Tiberi (R-OH), was taken over by the tax debate, but he was renewing it. He hopes to garner bipartisan support for eliminating Medicare red tape.

The effort complements CMS' recent proposals to cut Medicare regulations the agency says are burdensome or duplicative. Some changes may need legislative action, Roskam said. ■