

Congress swings attention back to price transparency

As polls show voters are increasingly worried about health care costs, lawmakers are looking again at requirements for providers to show plainly what patients will have to pay. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Chairman [Bill Cassidy](#), R-La., highlighted such price transparency legislation ([S 2355](#)) during a field hearing in Louisiana during the congressional recess. "I have found as a physician practicing for many years that when you give the patient the power of knowing what the price is and the patient the power of controlling her health care dollar, then prices tend to come down," he said, even as the effect of such actions is [much debated](#).

The bill, sponsored by Sen. [Roger Marshall](#), R-Kan., has a raft of cosponsors from each party, including introductory cosponsor [John Hickenlooper](#), D-Colo. Cassidy's interest could signal the legislation, and others like it, are moving to the front of the line at HELP. The bill would go beyond current hospital price transparency rules that were established in the first Trump administration by extending requirements to clinical laboratories, imaging centers, and ambulatory surgical centers. It would increase the financial penalties for hospitals and insurers that fail to disclose their negotiated rates. The bill also aims to make the information more accessible and understandable to patients.

Meanwhile, Rep. [Virginia Foxx](#), R-N.C., introduced legislation ([HR 8684](#)) on May 7 that would amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act to require group health plans only pay claims submitted by hospitals that have separate identifiers for outpatient departments. It is cosponsored by [Robert C. Scott](#), D-Va. The bill would highlight situations in which hospital outpatient departments receive higher payments for the same services provided in independent physician offices.