



# Highlights from the Hill

January 2017

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As we kick off a new year, we encourage you to invite others to join our **Speak Up, Speak Out!** advocacy network. Members receive the monthly *Highlights from the Hill* newsletter and alerts about opportunities to advocate throughout the year. Growing our advocacy network is critical to achieving our public policy goals as we head into new state and federal legislative sessions.

Make a difference today by sharing our Speak Up, Speak Out! Network on

**Facebook** and **Twitter**.

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## **National Advocacy**

### **Epilepsy Foundation Sends Letter to President-elect and Congressional Leadership Opposing Current ACA Repeal Efforts**

On January 11, 2017, the Epilepsy Foundation wrote to President-elect Trump and Congressional leadership to express our continued commitment to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The letter highlights the provisions in the ACA that have been particularly important to the epilepsy community, including coverage for individuals with pre-existing conditions.

The Epilepsy Foundation actively advocates in support of meaningful access to health care services and medications for individuals living with epilepsy. We oppose practices that limit access to physician-directed care, like high cost-sharing and discrimination against people with pre-existing conditions. Since passage of the ACA, we have worked to ensure implementation in

a way that benefits our community. Repealing the provisions of the ACA that are currently being proposed for repeal in Congress would send our health care system into disarray, making prescription medications even more unaffordable and limiting access to health care for millions. We hope that the President-elect and Congress will take a measured approach and ensure the aspects of the law we discussed in our letter are preserved.

Read our full letter here: [bit.ly/2j8M88c](http://bit.ly/2j8M88c)

## **House Passes Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act of 2017**

The Epilepsy Foundation has supported and advocated for this bill in previous years and will continue to advocate for passage in the Senate and for eventual signature by the president this year. The bill (H.R. 304), which passed by a vote of 404-0, makes changes to the Drug Enforcement Administration's registration process for emergency medical services (EMS) agencies and clarifies that they can administer certain approved medications to their patients.

This bill would directly benefit many people in the epilepsy community. There is a demonstrated clinical need for administering controlled substance medications, such as those to treat active seizures, during an emergency. Delaying immediate treatment by first responders with a readily available emergency medication can be life-threatening. Prolonged, cluster, or status seizures may cause serious injury and even death.

## **115<sup>th</sup> Congress Committee Leadership**

Committee membership in Congress has been finalized for the 115th Congress. The committee structure is a critical part of the legislature and it is important to target relevant committee leadership when advocating for our priorities throughout the year. The following list includes these key members.

### **Key Senate Committee Leadership**

#### **Appropriations**

- Chairman: Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Mississippi)
- Ranking Member: Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont)

#### **Finance**

- Chairman: Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah)
- Ranking Member: Ron Wyden (D-Oregon)

#### **Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP)**

- Chairman: Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tennessee)
- Ranking Member: Sen. Patty Murray (D-Washington)

### **Key House of Representatives Committee Leadership**

#### **Appropriations**

- Chairman: Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-New Jersey)
- Ranking Member: Rep. Nita Lowey (D-New York)

## **Education and Workforce**

- Chairman: Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-North Carolina)
- Ranking Member: Rep. Robert Scott (D-Virginia)

## **Energy and Commerce**

- Chairman: Rep. Greg Walden (R-Oregon)
- Ranking Member: Rep. Frank Pallone (D-New Jersey)

## **Ways and Means**

- Chairman: Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Texas)
- Ranking Member: Rep. Richard Neal (D-Massachusetts)

## **DEA Rule on CBD**

On December 14, 2016, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) finalized a rule that was proposed in 2011 related to the status of extracts of cannabis. The rule explicitly defines CBD as a separate category on the Schedule I controlled substances list as "Marihuana Extract." Practically, this rule results in no change to the status quo because the DEA was already defining CBD products as Schedule I under the marihuana listing. Further, this rule will not impact the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) treatment of CBD products currently in the pipeline.

See more on medical cannabis on our website here: [www.epilepsy.com/make-difference/advocacy/advocacy-priorities/access-care/medical-cannabis](http://www.epilepsy.com/make-difference/advocacy/advocacy-priorities/access-care/medical-cannabis)

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## **State Advocacy**

### **Continuing State CBD Rescheduling for FDA Approved Therapies**

The Epilepsy Foundation is bringing together the epilepsy community to advocate for changes to state scheduling laws in order to allow therapies derived from cannabidiol (CBD) and approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to become available to patients in a timely manner. There is currently a product in the FDA pipeline, which could be approved as soon as early 2018. Even after FDA approval and subsequent rescheduling by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), patients would not have access to this medication without state action. Each state has its own laws and processes for scheduling drugs separate from the federal system and we will continue to work with our affiliates and chapters in the states to determine steps forward to accomplishing this goal.

Follow the effort here: [cqrcengage.com/efa/statefdapathway](http://cqrcengage.com/efa/statefdapathway)

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Email us at [TSU@efa.org](mailto:TSU@efa.org)

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