

Dear Members,

Happy New Year! A few things to let you know about.

First, if you haven't already, please check out the [December newsletter](#) (my last as Governor!).

Next, today the Senate passed the 2017 budget resolution which takes a step closer to repeal of important provisions of the Affordable Care Act. The House is expected to follow. It's not clear the Republicans have a sufficient plan to help the 30 million who have received coverage from the ACA. Stay up to date by following the [ACP Legislative Action Center](#) and make your voice heard.

Finally, if you are not already aware, CT DSS has a new requirement that went into effect December 1, 2016 that forces prescribers to complete a prior authorization request when prescribing long-acting opioids, even if the drug is on the CT Medicaid Preferred Drug List (PDL). For the medication to be approved at this step, the prescriber needs to certify that the patient has a diagnosis of cancer and is under the care of a cancer specialist with training in the safe prescribing of these medications. If the patient does not have cancer, to get the medication approved the prescriber must also write a letter of medical necessity to the DSS Medical Director (Dr. Robert Zavoski) asking for a special exception to be made. It appears that patients already taking an approved long-acting opioid on a chronic basis will have a few months before the prescriber needs to submit the prior authorization request. Information about this can be found in "[Provider Bulletin 2016-79](#)". ACP Council Member Dan Tobin and others have opened discussions with Dr. Zavoski to lobby for a more balanced approach that supports patient safety while also avoiding unnecessary barriers to treatment. If you haven't yet had the chance, now is a good time to review the [CDC guideline on prescribing opioids for chronic pain](#).

Best regards,  
Rob Nardino