

Afternoon Pulse

Baucus: Release the McKinsey survey questions

By [DAVID NATHER](#), [DIANE WEBBER](#) | 6/16/11 3:50 PM EDT

With help from Kate Nocera, Matt DoBias, Brett Coughlin, Jennifer Haberkorn and J. Lester Feder

And a happy Thursday to all. Pulse is pondering what the news world will be like without Anthony Weiner or Tracy Morgan. (OK, he hasn't resigned from "30 Rock" yet, but it could happen.) Who will we all get mad at now? Charlie Sheen, you've been quiet for a while.

"And you know what they call a ... a ... a Quarter Pounder with Cheese in Paris? ... They call it a Pulse with Cheese."

BAUCUS: RELEASE THE MCKINSEY SURVEY QUESTIONS: Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus asked McKinsey & Company to release its methodology for that survey that said 30 percent of employers might stop offering health coverage to their workers because of the ACA. According to his letter, McKinsey has agreed to meet with the Finance Committee staff to discuss it — but Baucus says the methodology should still be available to the public. He wants McKinsey to discuss what questions they asked, who their clients are, how the survey participants were chosen and what kinds of jobs they have at their companies, among other things. Here's Jason Millman's story: <http://politico.pro/kLq3mw>

GLAMOROUS JOB: A large protest gathered outside the AHIP conference in San Francisco chanting "Medicare for all!" and "Single payer now!" A few of the signs were targeted at Rep. Paul Ryan accusing him of being bought by insurance companies. Former Gov. Tim Pawlenty was "glittered" by two protesters while signing books inside. A pair of women dumped pink glitter and confetti on the governor demanding "Tim Pawlenty, where is your courage to stand? Stand for reproductive rights! Stand for gay rights!" Kate Nocera documented the aftermath of the glittering: <http://politico.pro/lxAjIq>

THE PREVENTION STRATEGY IS OUT: If you were waiting on that national prevention strategy, wait no longer! You can read all 122 pages of it at your leisure. Or you can just read Lester Feder's writeup. The report is full of ideas on what the federal government can do, and what state and local governments can do. And if you find any surprises in there, let us know. No one's screaming about it yet — but it's only been out a few hours. <http://politico.pro/kboKea>

HARKIN FLASHBACK: 1992: That's the year Senate HELP Committee Chairman Tom Harkin ran for president. Apparently, he was talking about preventive care back then too — and Lester reports that he brought it up at today's release of the national prevention strategy. "In 1992, I made a brief run for president — some of you may have missed it," he said. "Don't feel bad, a lot of people did." Pulse didn't miss it, senator. Here's a quick taste of the No. 1 song from that era: <http://bit.ly/jbtNYk>

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BIDEN TALKS DELAYED TO A REALLY INCONVENIENT HOUR: The deficit reduction talks headed by Vice President Joe Biden have been pushed back until 4 p.m. They were supposed to start at 1 p.m., but Biden, who had been on Capitol Hill hours ahead of the talks, got called back to the White House. Aides to some of the participants have said they expect today's discussion to focus on potential cuts to Medicare and Medicaid.

CONRAD'S WORRIED ALREADY: In the meantime, Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-N.D.) said he was concerned that the Biden negotiations would yield only surface fixes that meet the goal of extending the debt ceiling, yet fall short of putting the country on a steadier fiscal path. "I am very concerned that there will be something that has the appearance of being significant but does not solve the problem," he said. Conrad's not in the budget negotiations, but he is a member of the "Gang of Five" — also known lately as Five Guys, a title Pulse likes a lot better.

LESSONS FROM HIV/AIDS ADVOCACY: A new report looks at the accomplishments — political, social and scientific — of 30 years of HIV/AIDS advocacy and sets up the movement as a model that other advocacy groups could learn from to create change. The study by HCM Strategists and FasterCures: <http://politico.pro/k5hnES>

SENATE DEMS TRY A NEW TACK: The letter from Senate Dems to Mitch McConnell today is an interesting one. In it, Dems point to the ACA as their plan to fix Medicare, even digging down into the details of successful demonstration projects that have managed to save some money. That's the kind of thing we're used to hearing CMS Chief Don Berwick talk about.

-- Why does it matter? It's significant because it goes beyond Nancy Pelosi's flip answer to Paul Ryan's budget: "We have a plan. It's called Medicare." And even the president didn't point to the ACA in his response to Ryan. He held up IPAB, which was created by the ACA, as a way to control costs, without mentioning the ACA.

-- Jen Haberkorn has the story: <http://politico.pro/l7KGSc>

KEEP WAITING, PRIVACY PEOPLE: The Supreme Court didn't issue its opinion in the data-mining case of *IMS v. Sorrell* today, which concerns the First Amendment rights of data-mining companies to buy, analyze and sell prescriptions written by doctors. This is the case about the Vermont law that allows doctors to restrict the use of their prescription data. Court watchers believe the high court could issue an opinion in the matter Monday.

Correction: An earlier version misidentified the company that conducted the study on HIV/AIDS advocacy. It is HCM Strategists.

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