The U.S. House of Representatives approved the 21st Century Cures Act, by a 344-77 vote. The legislation is devoted to modernizing the health care system by investing in science and medical innovation, improving care quality, and modernizing the drug approval system to more quickly get cures to those who need them. The House approval is hoped to serve as a catalyst to obtain similar support from the Senate and turn the bill into law.

H.R. 6. The legislation is focused on taking innovations in science and translating them into treatments for disease. To do this, the bill would increase collaboration and research data access, incorporate patient perspectives into the FDA’s drug development process, and modernize the clinical trial process by focusing on more personalized and targeted medicine. The bill furthers advancement in other areas by reducing uncertainty for medical app developers, incentivizing the development of drugs for rare diseases, and providing funding for government research and innovation.

Impact. A Congressional Budget Office (CBO) analysis of the legislation estimated that between 2016 and 2020 implementing the bill would cost $106.4 billion. The CBO analysis also identified $11.9 billion in direct spending reductions that would result between 2016 and 2025 from implementing the law (see CBO projects 21st Century Cures Act implementation to cost $106B, June 24, 2015). The bill has received mixed reviews elsewhere. For example, the American Hospital Association offered comments on the legislation with strong support for provisions focused on innovation and condemnation for any provisions which had the potential to reduce payments to hospitals (see American hospitals are thrilled and sick with ‘21st Century Cures’ bill, May 13, 2015). On the other hand, patient organizations are rallying in support of the law, with over 250 organizations coming together to call the legislation “game changing” in a letter to Congress (see 251 patient organizations join in support of 21st Century Cures, June 19, 2015).