



Health Policy Briefing

October 28, 2024

Health Professionals Running for Congress

As the 119th Congress approaches, there will be a significant number of changes in the health professionals serving in the U.S. Congress. The following five health professionals are retiring from the House of Representatives at the end of this year:

- Rep. Michael Burgess, MD (R-TX-26) – OB-GYN
- Rep. Brad Wenstrup, DPM (R-OH-02) – Podiatrist
- Rep. Drew Ferguson, IV, DMD, PC (R-GA-03) – Dentist
- Rep. Larry Bucshon, MD (R-IN-08) - Cardiothoracic Surgeon
- Rep. Cori Bush, RN (D-MO-01) - Registered Nurse

While these prominent health professionals are leaving Capitol Hill, there is still potential to see a record number of health professionals serving in Congress. Health professionals campaigning for House seats this election cycle include:

- **ARIZONA: Amish Shah, MD (D)** – Emergency physician running against incumbent Rep. David Schweikert (R-AZ-01)
- **INDIANA: Tim Peck, MD (D)** – Emergency physician running against incumbent Erin Houchin (R-IN-09)
- **KANSAS: Prasanth Reddy, MD (R)** – Doctor of internal medicine, medical oncology, and hematology running against incumbent Rep. Sharice Davids (D-KS-03)
- **MINNESOTA: Kelly Morrison, MD (D)** – OB-GYN running against Tay Jude (R) for the MN-03 seat vacated by Rep. Dean Phillips (D)
- **MISSOURI: Bob Onder, MD (R)** – Allergist/immunologist running against Bethany Mann (D) for the MO-03 seat vacated by Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R)
- **NEW JERSEY: Herb Conaway, MD (D)** – Doctor of internal medicine running against Rajesh Mohan (R) for the NJ-03 seat vacated by Rep. Andy Kim (D)
- **OREGON: Maxine Dexter, MD (D)** – Pulmonary and critical care physician running against Joanna Harbour (R) for the OR-03 seat vacated by Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D)
- **SOUTH CAROLINA: Sheri Biggs, DNP (R)** – Family and mental health nurse practitioner running against Bryon Best (D) for the SC-03 seat vacated by Rep. Jeff Duncan (R)
- **TEXAS: Mayra Flores (R)** – Respiratory care practitioner running against incumbent Rep.

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Vicente Gonzalez, Jr. (D-TX-34)

- **UTAH: Mike Kennedy, MD (R)** – Family physician running against Glenn Wright (D) for the UT-03 seat vacated by Rep. John Curtis (R)
- **WISCONSIN: Kristin Lyerly, MD (D)** – OB-GYN running against Tony Wied (R) for the WI-08 seat vacated by Rep. Mike Gallagher (R)

Five health professionals currently serve in the U.S. Senate:

- Sen. John Barrasso, MD (R-WY) - Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Sen. John Boozman, OD (R-AR) – Optometrist
- Sen. Bill Cassidy, MD (R-LA) - Gastroenterologist/Heptalogist
- Sen. Roger Marshall, MD (R-KS) - OB/GYN
- Sen. Rand Paul, MD (R-KY) – Ophthalmologist

Senator John Barrasso, from Wyoming is the only Senate health professional in cycle this year; he is expected to retain his seat. Sen. Barrasso currently serves as chairman of the Senate Republican Conference and plans to seek the #2 Republican leadership post in the 119th Congress.

Health professionals bring unique insights to Congress, grounded in their experiences within the nation's health care system. These candidates are poised to influence legislation that impacts millions of Americans.

Senate Democrats Question Pfizer, Eli Lilly on Telehealth Platforms

A group of Democratic senators led by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) has sent letters to the CEOs of [Pfizer](#) and [Eli Lilly](#) inquiring as to whether the companies' new advertising websites directing patients to telehealth platforms present a conflict of interest that could steer patients toward particular medications. The lawmakers express concern that such arrangements create "the potential for inappropriate prescribing that can increase spending for federal health care programs." The letters request information about the specifics of the companies' contracts with their telehealth platforms. They also ask for data on the percentage of patients who receive branded medications through the portals, and about the nature of patients' visits with them. The letters were co-signed by Sens. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), and Peter Welch (D-Vt.).

E&C GOP Examine HHS' COVID-19 Public Health Campaign

Republicans on the House Energy and Commerce Committee have released a new [report](#) assessing the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) "We Can Do This" COVID-19 public health campaign. The lawmakers characterize the public education campaign as a failure that led to a loss of public trust in HHS, and make the following recommendations:

- Congress should consider formally authorizing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and clearly define the agency's core mission.
- HHS and its agencies should abide by the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) product labeling guidelines, and be barred from promoting information regarding an FDA-regulated product that does not reflect the FDA-approved label.
- Congress should consider clarifying responsibility for evaluating the safety of vaccines and streamline existing reporting systems for capturing vaccine injuries and adverse reactions.
- HHS and its agencies should embrace a culture of transparency and accountability.
- HHS and public health officials should not attempt to silence dissenting scientific opinions.
- HHS and its agencies should overhaul their website archival process to mimic that of prior White House administrations.

Democrats Submit Amicus Brief in Idaho EMTALA/Abortion Case

A group of 259 congressional Democrats are calling on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to rule that the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) preempts conflicting abortion restrictions under state law. EMTALA requires hospitals that receive Medicare funding to provide stabilizing treatment to patients experiencing medical emergencies. The [amicus brief](#) urges the federal appeals court to affirm a lower court's decision that EMTALA preempts an Idaho abortion ban that could otherwise lead to the prosecution of doctors who perform abortions in emergency situations. The lawmakers argue that EMTALA "makes clear that in situations in which a doctor determines that abortion constitutes the '[n]ecessary stabilizing treatment' for a pregnant patient, federal law requires the hospital to offer it." The Supreme Court sent the case back to the appeals court this summer.

NAM Welcomes 100 New Members

The National Academy of Medicine (NAM) announced the election of 100 new members during its annual meeting last week. New members are elected by current members through a process that recognizes individuals who have made major contributions to the advancement of the medical sciences, health care, and public health. The newly elected members bring NAM's total membership to more than 2,400, including nearly 200 international members. The new class was praised by NAM President Victor J. Dzau as representing "the most exceptional researchers and leaders in health and medicine, who have made significant breakthroughs, led the response to major public health challenges, and advanced health equity." More information on the newly elected NAM members can be found [here](#).

GAO Makes 2024 PTAC Appointments

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) announced the appointment of two new members to the Physician-Focused Payment Model Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) last week. The newly appointed members are Henish Bhansali, MD, FACP and Krishna Ramachandran, MBA, MS. Their terms will expire in 2027. Dr. Bhansali is board certified in internal medicine and obesity medicine, and currently works as Chief Medical Officer for Medical Home Network, an organization that partners with federally qualified health centers, primary care associations, and clinically integrated networks to support success in value-based care. Mr. Ramachandran is Senior Vice President of Health Transformation and Provider Adoption at Blue Shield of California. In addition, current members Lawrence R. Kosinski, MD, MBA and Soujanya R. Pulluru, MD have been reappointed to PTAC. Their terms will also expire in 2027.

Congressional Retirements and Resignations

A running list of members of Congress who are retiring or seeking other office can be found below.

SENATE	
Stabenow (D), MI	Braun (R), IN
Cardin (D), MD	Romney (R), UT
Carper (D), DE	
Butler (D), CA	
Manchin (D), WV	
Sinema (I), AZ	
Menendez (D), NJ (effective Aug. 20, 2024)	
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	
Porter (D), CA	Mooney (R), WV
Lee (D), CA	Banks (R), IN
Gallego (D), AZ	Bishop (R), NC
Schiff (D), CA	Lesko (R), AZ
Slotkin (D), MI	Granger (R), TX
Allred (D), TX	Burgess, MD (R), TX
Trone (D), MD	Wenstrup, DPM (R), OH
Blunt Rochester (D), DE	McHenry (R), NC
Napolitano (D), CA	Ferguson, IV, DMD, PC (R), GA
Wexton (D), VA	Curtis (R), UT
Kim, Andy (D), NJ	Luetkemeyer (R), MO
Jackson, Jeff (D), NC	Lamborn (R), CO
Sarbanes (D), MD	Bucshon, MD (R), IN
Blumenauer (D), OR	Pence (R), IN
Kilmer (D), WA	Duncan (R), SC
Spanberger (D), VA	Armstrong (R), ND
Kildee (D), MI	McMorris Rodgers (R), WA
Phillips (D), MN	Gallagher (R), WI (effective April 19, 2024)
Cardenas (D), CA	Rosendale (R), MT
Eshoo (D), CA	Carl (R), AL
Manning (D), NC	LaTurner (R), KS
Nickel (D), NC	Posey (R), FL
Sablan (D), MP	González-Colón (R), PR
Ruppersberger (D), MD	Graves (R), LA
Kuster (D), NH	Good (R), VA
Bowman (D), NY	
Bush (D), MO	
Payne (D), NJ (died April 24, 2024)	
Jackson Lee (D), TX (died July 19, 2024)	
Pascrell (D), NJ (died Aug. 21, 2024)	

Upcoming Congressional Hearings and Markups

Senate Judiciary Committee field hearing “Reducing Prescription Drug Prices: How Competition Can Make Medications Affordable for Patients;” Chicago, IL; 10:00 a.m.; October 29

Recently Introduced Health Legislation

H.R.10012 — To amend title 38, United States Code, to include eyeglass lens fittings in the category of medical services authorized to be furnished to veterans under the Veterans Community Care Program, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Maloy, Celeste [Rep.-R-UT-2]; Committees: House - Veterans’ Affairs

H.R.10007 — To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to authorize the admission of nonimmigrant emergency medical technicians and paramedics. Sponsor: Higgins, Clay [Rep.-R-LA-3]; Committees: House - Judiciary

H.R.10006 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve transparency with respect to the suspension of Medicare payments pending an investigation into a credible allegation of fraud. Sponsor: Harder, Josh [Rep.-D-CA-9]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.10000 — To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that sexual assault nurse examiners are employed at certain Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Burchett, Tim [Rep.-R-TN-2]; Committees: House - Veterans’ Affairs

H.R.9997 — To name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Toms River, New Jersey, the Leonard G. ‘Bud’ Lomell, Jr. VA Clinic, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Smith, Christopher H. [Rep.-R-NJ-4]; Committees: House - Veterans’ Affairs

H.J.Res.216 — Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services relating to “Medicare Program; Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility Prospective Payment System for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 and Updates to the IRF Quality Reporting Program”. Sponsor: Palmer, Gary J. [Rep.-R-AL-6]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1550 — Designating October 23, 2024, as “AADC Deficiency Awareness Day”; Sponsor: Murphy, Gregory F. [Rep.-R-NC-3]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.10030 — To require hospitals, medical examiner offices, and coroner offices to report to the Consumer Product Safety Commission with respect to certain incidents involving the death or serious injury of a child, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Mace, Nancy [Rep.-R-SC-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means