



Health Policy Briefing

September 8, 2025

House Appropriators Advance FY 2026 LHHS Spending Bill

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) advanced its fiscal year (FY) 2026 spending bill in an 11-7 party line vote last week. The [bill text](#) and a [summary](#) were released by the committee prior to the markup. The spending bill includes a total of \$108 billion for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), a 6% - or \$7 billion - cut compared to FY 2025. The House Republican package falls between the \$116.6 billion for HHS proposed by Senate appropriators and the President's budget request of \$94.7 billion. The House spending proposal would keep funding for the National Institutes of Health at \$48 billion - a decrease of \$456 million, or 1%, compared to FY 2025. Funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) would be reduced by \$1.7 billion - or 19% - for a total of \$7.4 billion. The Committee provided a total of \$7.1 billion for the Health Resources and Services Administration, \$866 million - or 11% - below FY 2025 levels. The Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health would see a 37%, or \$500 million, funding cut. The House Appropriations Committee is scheduled to mark up the bill on Tuesday. The committee report will be released around the time of the full committee markup and will provide additional details on program funding levels. Congress has yet to send any of its 12 annual appropriations bills to the President. Lawmakers face a September 30 deadline for funding the federal government before the end of the fiscal year. The White House is reportedly pushing for a clean stopgap spending measure that extends into 2026, while lawmakers in Congress are considering a continuing resolution of a shorter duration.

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HHS Secretary Testifies Before Senate Finance

Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. appeared before the Senate Committee on Finance last week to testify about the President's health care agenda for 2026. During the hearing he was pressed by members on both sides of the aisle about recent shakeups at HHS. The Secretary defended both his vaccine policy decisions and personnel changes, stating that he did not ask former CDC Director Susan Monarez to pre-approve recommendations from Kennedy's reconstituted Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. This is in conflict with an op-ed written by Monarez in *The Wall Street Journal* last week, in which Monarez said she was fired for refusing to compromise science. In his own op-ed, the Secretary explained that the recent overhaul of the CDC was necessary to eliminate "conflicts of interest and bureaucratic complacency." He argued that the CDC should return its focus to tracking infectious diseases and pandemic response.

All six Democratic-physician members of Congress called on Kennedy to resign on Thursday. Their [letter](#), signed by Reps. Ami Bera (D-Calif.), Herb Conaway (D-N.J.), Maxine Dexter (D-Ore.), Kelly Morrison (D-Minn.), Raul Ruiz (D-Calif.) and Kim Schrier (D-Wash.), characterizes the Secretary's recent decisions as reckless and a threat to American lives and public trust. "We are deeply concerned that your tenure at HHS undermines the core mission of the Department: to protect and promote the health of the American people. Your actions have not only eroded public trust but have actively endangered lives," the lawmakers state.

Lawmakers Consider Impact of ACA Tax Credit Expiration

Senate Democrats led by Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (N.H.) have released a new [analysis](#) of the expected impact of the loss of the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) enhanced premium tax credits, which are set to expire at the end of this year. The report indicates that marketplace enrollment will decline significantly if the subsidies are allowed to expire. Expiration of the credits, in conjunction with rising health care costs, are expected to drive premium increases. Last week, Reps. Jen Kiggans (R-Va.) and Tom Suozzi (D-N.Y.) introduced the Bipartisan Premium Tax Credit Extension Act (H.R. 5145). The legislation would extend, for one year, the Inflation Reduction Act's health care premium tax credits until January 1, 2027.

Senate Finance Approves HHS Nominees

The Senate Committee on Finance approved the nominations of Michael Stuart for HHS General Counsel and Gustav Chiarello to serve as Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources on Thursday. Both nominees were advanced in 14-13 party line votes. Stuart is Republican state senator from West Virginia, while Chiarello most recently served as senior special counsel to the House Judiciary Committee. The nominees now await floor consideration and a full Senate vote.

House Oversight to Probe Possible HIPAA Violations by CVS Health

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has opened an [investigation](#) into reports that CVS Health used confidential patient information to lobby the Louisiana State Legislature. According to the committee, patient information was used to influence legislators related to a state bill that would prohibit Louisiana providers from operating both pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and individual pharmacies. The letter to CVS Health President and CEO David Joyner raises the ethical and potential legal issues if CVS used confidential patient information to lobby against House Bill 358 in violation of the HIPAA privacy rule. "Given the wide breadth of CVS Health and its subsidiaries operations across the U.S.," the panel expresses concern that "CVS Health could easily misuse confidential patient information in the future when similar legislative measures to Louisiana H.B. 358 are considered in other states or Congress." According to a press release from the Committee, the investigation is a part of the ongoing effort to hold PBMs accountable for "their lack of transparency toward American consumers, engagement in anticompetitive behavior, and inflation of drug costs." The letter requests a response from CVS Health by September 18.

Former President Biden Undergoes Mohs Surgery

A spokesperson for Joe Biden has confirmed that the former president recently underwent Mohs surgery to remove skin cancer from his forehead. President Biden has previously had non melanoma skin cancers removed prior to his presidency, and also had a cancerous lesion removed during his time in the White House. Biden has made few public appearances since announcing his prostate cancer diagnosis in May.

Upcoming Congressional Hearings and Markups

House Appropriations Committee markup of fiscal year 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill; 11:00 a.m.; September 9

House Oversight and Accountability Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services hearing “Better Meals, Fewer Pills: Making Our Children Healthy Again;” 2:00 p.m.; September 9

Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations hearing to examine how the corruption of science has impacted public perception and policies regarding vaccines; 2:00 p.m.; September 9

Senate Commerce, Science, & Transportation Subcommittee on Science, Manufacturing, and Competitiveness hearing “AI’ve Got a Plan: America’s AI Action Plan;” 10:00 a.m.; September 10

Recently Introduced Health Legislation

H.R.5075 — To prohibit the award of Federal education funds to educational institutions and agencies that do not allow for religious exemptions to vaccination requirements, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Steube, W. Gregory [Rep.-R-FL-17]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce

H.R.5074 — To amend title V of the Public Health Service Act to direct the Center for Mental Health Services to develop and disseminate a strategy to address the effects of new technologies on children’s mental health; Sponsor: Steil, Bryan [Rep.-R-WI-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5068 — To decriminalize and deschedule cannabis, to provide for reinvestment in certain persons adversely impacted by the War on Drugs, to provide for expungement of certain cannabis offenses, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Nadler, Jerrold [Rep.-D-NY-12]; Committees: House - Judiciary; Energy and Commerce; Agriculture; Education and Workforce; Ways and Means; Small Business; Natural Resources; Oversight and Government Reform; Transportation and Infrastructure

H.R.5067 — To amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act with respect to the disbursement of certain reimbursements provided under such Act, and for other purposes; Sponsor: McDonald Rivet, Kristen [Rep.-D-MI-8]; Committees: House - Transportation and Infrastructure

H.R.5066 — To repeal the Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990 and amendments to that Act; Sponsor: Massie, Thomas [Rep.-R-KY-4]; Committees: House - Judiciary

H.R.5064 — To amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to modify certain limitations on disproportionate share hospital payment adjustments under the Medicaid program, and for other purposes; Sponsor: LaLota, Nick [Rep.-R-NY-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.666 — Supporting the goals of Overdose Awareness Day and strengthening efforts to combat the opioid crisis in the United States; Sponsor: Trahan, Lori [Rep.-D-MA-3]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.670 — Expressing support for the designation of September 22 as “National Military and Veterans Suicide Awareness Day”; Sponsor: Self, Keith [Rep.-R-TX-3]; Committees: House - Oversight and Government Reform

H.Res.671 — Prioritizing mental health to the same degree as physical health to address the epidemics of suicide and drug overdose in the United States; Sponsor: Thanedar, Shri [Rep.-D-MI-13]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5081 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend certain telehealth flexibilities under the Medicare program; Sponsor: Carter, Earl L. “Buddy” [Rep.-R-GA-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.5094 — To repeal changes to Medicaid cost sharing requirements and the exclusion for orphan drugs under the Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program; Sponsor: Pappas, Chris [Rep.-D-NH-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

S.2696 — A bill to establish a Foundation for Enabling Biotechnology Innovation; Sponsor: Padilla, Alex [Sen.-D-CA]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.2697 – A bill to authorize the National Science Foundation to conduct research for biotechnology risk assessment, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Young, Todd [Sen.-R-IN]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.2699 — A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize certain education and training programs relating to geriatrics, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Collins, Susan M. [Sen.-R-ME]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

H.Res.675 — Expressing support for the designation of September 2025 as “National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month”; Sponsor: Carter, Troy A. [Rep.-D-LA-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5104 — To reduce the health risks of heat by establishing the National Integrated Heat Health Information System within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Integrated Heat Health Information System Interagency Committee to improve extreme heat preparedness, planning, and response, requiring a study, and establishing financial assistance programs to address heat effects, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Bonamici, Suzanne [Rep.-D-OR-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Science, Space, and Technology

H.R.5120 — To amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act and title 10, United States Code, to provide no-cost coverage for the preventive distribution of opioid overdose reversal drugs; Sponsor: Pettersen, Brittany [Rep.-D-CO-7]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means; Armed Services

H.R.5123 — To authorize a national program to reduce the threat to human health posed by exposure to indoor air contaminants, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Tonko, Paul [Rep.-D-NY-20]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

S.Res.374 — A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert Fitzgerald Kennedy Jr. does not have the confidence of the Senate or of the American people to faithfully carry out the duties of his office and should be removed from his position; Sponsor: Alsobrooks, Angela D. [Sen.-D-MD]; Committees: Senate – Finance

S.2709 — A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend certain telehealth flexibilities under the Medicare program; Sponsor: Scott, Tim [Sen.-R-SC]; Committees: Senate – Finance

S.2710 — A bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to require pharmaceutical and device manufacturers to publicly disclose covered payments made to patient advocacy organizations; Sponsor: Grassley, Chuck [Sen.-R-IA]; Committees: Senate – Finance

S.2715 —A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require hospitals with approved medical residency training programs to submit to the Secretary of Health and Human Services certain information regarding osteopathic and allopathic candidates for such programs; Sponsor: Daines, Steve [Sen.-R-MT]; Committees: Senate – Finance

H.Res.679 — Honoring Paul Kawata for his unwavering commitment to communities of color, the LGBTQ+ community, and work to end the HIV epidemic; Sponsor: Waters, Maxine [Rep.-D-CA-43]; Committees: House - Oversight and Government Reform

H.R.5126 —To provide funding for programs and activities of the National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and Tuberculosis Prevention of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Waters, Maxine [Rep.-D-CA-43]; Committees: House – Appropriations

H.R.5127 —To amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act, titles XVIII, XIX, and XXI of the Social Security Act, and title 5, United States Code, to require no-cost coverage of certain HIV prevention services; Sponsor: Waters, Maxine [Rep.-D-CA-43]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means; Oversight and Government Reform

H.R.5133 —To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act regarding the patient medication information required to be included in the labeling of prescription drugs, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Bentz, Cliff [Rep.-R-OR-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5139 —To amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish requirements with respect to cost sharing for epinephrine delivery systems under group health plans and group and individual health insurance coverage; Sponsor: Frost, Maxwell [Rep.-D-FL-10]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Education and Workforce; Ways and Means

H.R.5142 —To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure stability in payments to home health agencies under the Medicare program; Sponsor: Hern, Kevin [Rep.-R-OK-1]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce

H.R.5145 —To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the enhanced premium tax credit, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Kiggans, Jennifer A. [Rep.-R-VA-2]; Committees: House - Ways and Means

H.R.5158 — To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act regarding the approval of combination products consisting of a generic drug and a device, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Scholten, Hillary J. [Rep.-D-MI-3]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5160 — To reauthorize the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Smith, Christopher H. [Rep.-R-NJ-4]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5162 — To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to make grants to States to increase awareness and education for colorectal cancer and improve early detection of colorectal cancer in young individuals, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Stevens, Haley M. [Rep.-D-MI-11]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce