



## Health Policy Briefing

October 6, 2025

### Government Shutdown Update

The federal government shut down on October 1 after Congress failed to pass government funding legislation before the end of the fiscal year. As a result, approximately 40% of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) workforce has been furloughed, and several major policies have expired, including Medicare telehealth flexibilities and the Acute Hospital Care at Home program. This is the first government shutdown in nearly seven years.

The Senate spent last week considering the opposing options for reopening the government. Senate Democrats have so far rejected the House-passed continuing resolution (CR) to extend government funding through November 21 four times. Senate Republicans have also continued to block Democrat's alternate funding proposal containing \$1.5 trillion in added spending. Senate Republicans need the support of at least five more Democrats to overcome a filibuster of the stopgap spending bill, with three members of the Democratic caucus (Sens. Catherine Cortez-Masto (D-Nev.), John Fetterman (D-Pa.), and Angus King (I-Maine) already backing the CR, and Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) remaining in opposition.

Late last week, House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) announced the cancellation of votes and the designation of October 7 through October 13 as a district work period for the House of Representatives. The extension of enhanced advanced premium tax credits continues to be at the center of the government funding debate, with Democrats refusing to support any spending measure that does not extend the Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies that are set to expire on December 31. Speaker Johnson has maintained that lawmakers can negotiate an extension of ACA subsidies later this month, but that the government must first be reopened through a clean CR free of any policy riders. This aligns with the position of Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-S.D.), who has expressed an openness to negotiations on the subsidies, but not while the government is shut down.

In the days leading up to the shutdown, the Office of Management and Budget instructed federal agencies to prepare plans for permanent reductions-in-force (RIF) should a government shutdown occur. The latest reports indicate that the firings so far have occurred in independent government agencies – like the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the National Endowment for the Humanities – but have yet to impact cabinet-level departments like HHS.

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## New GAO Report on Veteran Access to Community Care

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has released a new [report](#) on the barriers veterans face in accessing timely care when referred to community providers outside of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities. The GAO asserts that such challenges are tied to poor communication from the Office of Integrated Veteran Care (IVC), which was created in 2022 and tasked with improving coordination between the VA and community care providers. The IVC's efforts to reorganize and implement workforce reductions in recent years have raised concerns about the potential impact on veteran health care delivery. The GAO recommends that VHA ensure IVC develops a strategy for clear and continuous two-way communication with relevant employees and stakeholders as the office evolves and makes changes to its organizational structure.

## President Signs Executive Order on AI, Childhood Cancer Treatments

President Donald Trump signed an [executive order](#) on Tuesday aimed at using artificial intelligence to improve research and treatments for childhood cancer. Under the President's order, ***Unlocking Cures for Pediatric Cancer with Artificial Intelligence***, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services secretary is directed to ensure that artificial intelligence is used to maximize the potential for electronic health record and claims data to inform research and clinical trial design. The order coincides with an announcement from HHS that the administration will double funding for the Childhood Cancer Data Initiative at the National Cancer Institute. The Childhood Cancer Data Initiative was established in 2019 to collect, generate, and analyze childhood cancer data. Its budget will rise from \$50 million to \$100 million.

## Upcoming Congressional Hearings and Markups

Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Intellectual Property hearing "The Patent Eligibility Restoration Act – Restoring Clarity, Certainty, and Predictability to the U.S. Patent System;" 2:30 p.m.; October 8

Senate Special Committee on Aging hearing "Bad Medicine: Closing Loopholes that Kill American Patients;" 3:15 p.m.; October 8

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee hearing "AI's Potential to Support Patients, Workers, Children, and Families;" 10:00 a.m.; October 9

H.R.5611 — To authorize an individual who is transitioning from receiving treatment furnished by the Secretary of Defense to treatment furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to continue receiving treatment from such individual's mental health care provider of the Department of Defense, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Thanedar, Shri [Rep.-D-MI-13]; Committees: House - Armed Services; Veterans' Affairs

H.R.5609 — To direct the National Institutes of Health to reinstate funding to recipients of grants or other awards, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Stevens, Haley M. [Rep.-D-MI-11]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5605 — To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to establish nonvisual accessibility standards for certain devices with digital interfaces, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Schakowsky, Janice D. [Rep.-D-IL-9]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5593 — 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.5592 — To prohibit the performance of gender-related medical treatment on minors, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to prohibit payment and participation under the Medicare program with respect to such treatment, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Mace, Nancy [Rep.-R-SC-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Judiciary; Ways and Means

H.R.5582 — To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for hospital and insurer price transparency; Sponsor: James, John [Rep.-R-MI-10]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Education and Workforce; Ways and Means

H.R.5575 — To authorize grants to fire departments to conduct activities with the goals of reducing falls among older adults and reducing response time when responding to in-home emergencies, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Frankel, Lois [Rep.-D-FL-22]; Committees: House - Science, Space, and Technology

H.R.5571 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide no-cost coverage for PFAS testing under the Medicare program; Sponsor: Dingell, Debbie [Rep.-D-MI-6]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.Con.Res.52 — Supporting the designation of the week of September 22 through September 28, 2025, as "National Falls Prevention Awareness Week" to raise awareness, and encourage the prevention, of falls among older adults; Sponsor: Frankel, Lois [Rep.-D-FL-22]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

S.Res.420 — A resolution supporting the designation of September 19, 2025, as "National Concussion Awareness Day"; Sponsor: Hassan, Margaret Wood [Sen.-D-NH]; Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.

S.2927 — A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, to award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements for supporting new mobile cancer screening units to expand patient access to essential screening services in rural and underserved communities, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Marshall, Roger [Sen.-R-KS]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.2937 — A bill to establish legal standards for advanced artificial intelligence products; Sponsor: Durbin, Richard J. [Sen.-D-IL]; Committees: Senate - Judiciary

S.Res.422 — A resolution recognizing the seriousness of polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and expressing support for

the designation of September 2025 as “PCOS Awareness Month”; Sponsor: Warren, Elizabeth [Sen.-D-MA]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.Res.429 — A resolution designating September 2025 as “National Infant Mortality Awareness Month”, raising awareness of infant mortality, and increasing efforts to reduce infant mortality; Sponsor: Hyde-Smith, Cindy [Sen.-R-MS]; Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.

S.J.Res.84 — A joint resolution 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 “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Market Integrity and Affordability”; Sponsor: Warner, Mark R. [Sen.-D-VA]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.2941 — A bill to discontinue certain exceptions from H-1B nonimmigrant visa numerical limitation; Sponsor: Cotton, Tom [Sen.-R-AR]; Committees: Senate – Judiciary

S.2943 — A bill to amend chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to allow a veteran to receive a full-year supply of contraceptive pills, transdermal patches, vaginal rings, and other contraceptive products, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Duckworth, Tammy [Sen.-D-IL]; Committees: Senate - Veterans’ Affairs

S.2949 — A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to eliminate the coinsurance requirement for certain colorectal cancer screening tests furnished under the Medicare program; Sponsor: Booker, Cory A. [Sen.-D-NJ]; Committees: Senate - Environment and Public Works

S.2951 — A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to provide for certain adjustments to Medicare payment for items of durable medical equipment that were formerly included in round 2021 of the DMEPOS competitive bidding program; Sponsor: Lankford, James [Sen.-R-OK]; Committees: Senate – Finance

S.2954 — A bill to establish grant programs for health professional schools, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Sanders, Bernard [Sen.-I-VT]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.2955 — A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to establish Federal penalties for the knowing and intentional administration of any abortion-inducing drug to a woman without her informed consent, if the abortion-inducing drug has been shipped or transported in interstate commerce, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Banks, Jim [Sen.-R-IN]; Committees: Senate – Judiciary

H.Res.775 — Supporting the designation of September 2025 as “National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month”; Sponsor: DeLauro, Rosa L. [Rep.-D-CT-3]; Committees: House - Oversight and Government Reform

H.R.5621 — Physical Therapist Workforce and Patient Access Act of 2025; Sponsor: DeGette, Diana [Rep.-D-CO-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.5622 — To provide for a coordinated national research program to examine the nature, causes, consequences, and prevention of violence and unintended injury and death relating to gun ownership, use, and trafficking, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Foushee, Valerie P. [Rep.-D-NC-4]; Committees: House - Judiciary; Science, Space, and Technology; Energy and Commerce

H.R.5629 — To provide that the final rule of the Department of Health and Human Services titled “Medications for the Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder”, except for the portion of the final rule relating to accreditation of opioid treatment programs, shall have no force or effect; Sponsor: Houchin, Erin [Rep.-R-IN-9]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5630 — To amend the Public Health Service Act to require additional information in State plans for Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services block grants; Sponsor: Houchin, Erin [Rep.-R-IN-9]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5635 — To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity in connection with the furnishing of health care under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Kennedy, Timothy M. [Rep.-D-NY-26]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs

H.R.5644 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish new payment rules for certain catastrophic specialty hospitals under the Medicare program; Sponsor: Loudermilk, Barry [Rep.-R-GA-11]; Committees: House - Ways and Means

H.R.5646 — Sponsor: Miller, Mary E. [Rep.-R-IL-15]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Judiciary

H.R.5662 — To amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to remove the exclusion from medical assistance under the Medicaid program of items and services for patients in an institution for mental diseases; Sponsor: Thanedar, Shri [Rep.-D-MI-13]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5665 — To amend chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to allow a veteran to receive a full-year supply of contraceptive pills, transdermal patches, vaginal rings, and other contraceptive products, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Underwood, Lauren [Rep.-D-IL-14]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs

H.R.5671 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to eliminate the coinsurance requirement for certain colorectal cancer screening tests furnished under the Medicare program; Sponsor: Watson Coleman, Bonnie [Rep.-D-NJ-12]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means