



Health Policy Briefing

October 13, 2025

Government Shutdown Update

During the second week of the government shutdown, the Senate continued holding votes on 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 seven times. Senate Republicans have also continued to block Democrats' alternate funding proposal containing \$1.5 trillion in added spending. Discussions on ending the government shutdown are ongoing as the shutdown enters another full work week, but there have been few signs of progress that an agreement is close to being reached. The House of Representatives remains in a district work period as a means to pressure senators into supporting the House-passed CR; House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) has indicated that the House will remain out of session until the government is reopened. Democrats are refusing to support any spending measure that does not extend the Affordable Care Act (ACA) advanced premium tax credits that are set to expire on December 31, while Republican leadership insists that the government be reopened before lawmakers debate the extension of the subsidies. 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.

Federal workers missed a paycheck on October 10 as a result of the shutdown, while the military will miss its first paycheck on October 15. The administration circulated a draft memo last week indicating that furloughed government workers may not be eligible for back pay. This stance appears to contradict the Government Employee Fair Treatment Act, signed into law by President Donald Trump during his first term in office. The White House has also begun laying off federal workers, in line with the Office of Management and Budget's instructions to federal agencies on permanent reductions-in-force (RIF) ahead of the government shutdown. Reports indicate that multiple divisions across the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services began receiving RIF notices on Friday.

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Senate Adds BIOSECURE Provision to NDAA

The Senate voted to add a provision to this year's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to bar Chinese "biotechnology companies of concern" from receiving federal funding. The BIOSECURE Act was added to the annual defense policy bill via voice vote. A previous version of the legislation was omitted from last year's NDAA due to concerns about naming specific biotech companies to be scrutinized. This year's bill does not single out companies that pose a national security risk. The NDAA passed the Senate in a bipartisan 77-20 vote on Thursday.

Cassidy Criticizes AMA, CPT Coding System

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chair Bill Cassidy, MD (R-La.) has penned a [letter](#) to the American Medical Association (AMA) regarding the Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) coding system. Sen. Cassidy criticizes the AMA for "abusing its government-endorsed CPT monopoly to charge every stakeholder in the health care system significant amounts of money while advancing an anti-patient agenda," specifically highlighting the fees charged to anyone using the CPT code set, including doctors, hospitals, health plans, and health IT vendors. As HELP Committee Chairman, Cassidy notes that he is actively reviewing the "government-backed monopoly around CPT codes and the impact on patient health care costs, especially in the wake of the AMA's anti-patient, anti-science advocacy efforts." Cassidy has previously raised concerns about AMA's policy positions related to gender transitions, abortion, and diversity, equity, and inclusion mandates. His latest letter, which requests that the AMA disclose its revenue from licensing the CPT system, asks for a reply by October 20.

Capito Expresses Support for Health Care Visa Fee Exemption

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), chair of the Senate Appropriations Labor-Health and Human Services Subcommittee, has expressed support for exempting health care workers from the Trump administration's new \$100,000 fee for H-1B visas. H-1B work visas are used by employers looking to hire international workers for specialty jobs; current H-1B visas are typically paid by the employer. In remarks last week, Sen. Capito acknowledged concerns that the fee could exacerbate health care workforce shortages, particularly in rural areas. The proclamation signed by the President in September would allow for exemptions to the fee if the Department of Homeland Security deems them in the national interest.

Senate Republicans Push for Mifepristone Safety Review

Republicans in the Senate are [urging](#) the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to suspend the approval of any new generic versions of mifepristone pending the outcome of a Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies safety review. The lawmakers also request that HHS reinstate the in-person dispensing requirement for mifepristone and all its generic versions, and withdraw agency guidance permitting pharmacy distribution of the drug. The letter was signed by all Senate Republicans except for Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and Susan Collins (Maine).

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Recently Introduced Health Legislation

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H.R.5691 — To prohibit the provision of Federal funds to a local educational agency that imposes or enforces a COVID-19 vaccine mandate on students at the schools served by such agency; Sponsor: Van Drew, Jefferson [Rep.-R-NJ-2]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce

H.R.5685 — To amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to increase under the Medicaid program the minimum monthly personal needs allowance for institutionalized individuals and couples, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Moore, Gwen [Rep.-D-WI-4]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5684 — To provide for the coverage of medical food and vitamins and individual amino acids for digestive and inherited metabolic disorders under Federal health programs, to ensure State and Federal protection for existing coverage, and for other purposes; Sponsor: McGovern, James P. [Rep.-D-MA-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means; Oversight and Government Reform

S.Res.436 — A resolution expressing support for the designation of September 2025 as “National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month”; Sponsor: Crapo, Mike [Sen.-R-ID]; Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.

H.Con.Res.55 — Designating September 2025 as “Gynecologic Cancers Awareness Month”; Sponsor: Dingell, Debbie [Rep.-D-MI-6]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5702 — To amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to ensure that healthcare providers can assist survivors of domestic violence, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Sykes, Emilia Strong [Rep.-D-OH-13]; Committees: House – Judiciary

S.Res.440 — A resolution designating September 2025 as “National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month”; Sponsor: Baldwin, Tammy [Sen.-D-WI]; Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.

S.2981 — A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of prosthetic and rehabilitative items and services by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Moran, Jerry [Sen.-R-KS]; Committees: Senate - Veterans’ Affairs

S.2989 — A bill to prohibit certain sales or leases of real property for a health care entity if the terms of such a sale or lease would lead to long-term weakened financial status of the health care entity or place the public health at risk, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Markey, Edward J. [Sen.-D-MA]; Committees: Senate – Finance

S.2986 — A bill to establish certain conditions on employment and other work arrangements at the Food and Drug Administration to ensure the safety and security of drugs and devices; Sponsor: Cotton, Tom [Sen.-R-AR]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

H.Res.796 — Expressing support for the designation of October 9 through October 16, 2025, as “National Dyspraxia/ Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) Awareness Week” and a commitment to raise awareness of dyspraxia/DCD in the United States; Sponsor: Lawler, Michael [Rep.-R-NY-17]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.792 — Declaring a need for increased investments in youth mental health, recognizing May 31, 2026, as “Youth Mental Health Day”, recognizing September 9, 2026, annually as “Youth Suicide Prevention Day”, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Ansari, Yassamin [Rep.-D-AZ-3]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.5725 — To direct the Attorney General to establish a grant to support communities transitioning to health-centered responses for mental health-related emergencies; Sponsor: Watson Coleman, Bonnie [Rep.-D-NJ-12]; Committees: House

- Energy and Commerce; Judiciary

H.R.5706 — To establish a grant program to assist eligible entities in developing or expanding behavioral health crisis response programs that do not rely primarily on law enforcement, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Ansari, Yassamin [Rep.-D-AZ-3]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

S.Res.447 — A resolution designating September 25, 2025, as “National Ataxia Awareness Day”, and raising awareness of ataxia, ataxia research, and the search for a cure; 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.2997 — A bill to protect the independent judgment of health care professionals acting in the scope of their practice in overriding AI/CDSS outputs, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Markey, Edward J. [Sen.-D-MA]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions