



Health Policy Briefing

January 19, 2026

Progress on FY 2026 Appropriations

Congressional progress on completing the fiscal year (FY) 2026 appropriations process continued last week. The House of Representatives passed the Financial Services and General Government and National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Act (H.R. 7006) in a 341-79 bipartisan vote on Wednesday. The package contains \$9.4 billion in global health funding, rejecting the deeper cuts to global health proposed by the President’s budget. The bill includes \$524 million in appropriations for family planning and reproductive health, nearly \$109 million for neglective tropical disease, \$300 million for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and \$4.6 billion for the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. The bill now moves to the Senate where consideration is expected the week of January 26. On Thursday, the Senate passed the Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act (H.R.6938) in an 82-15 bipartisan vote. That package now heads to the President’s desk to be signed into law.

Congress has four remaining spending bills to finalize for the current fiscal year. An agreement on the next funding package, including Labor-Health and Human Services, Defense, and Transportation-Housing and Urban Development is anticipated soon. Recent negotiations have focused on language to restrict the White House from providing multi-year research grants for the National Institutes of Health as a single lump sum, as well as to restrict funding for gender-affirming care for minors. A path forward on the Homeland Security spending bill remains unclear; Democrats are demanding changes to Immigration and Customs Enforcement in light of recent events in Minneapolis. Lawmakers face a January 30 deadline to address health extenders, avert another government shutdown, and fund federal agencies for fiscal year 2026.

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President Releases “Great Healthcare Plan” as Progress on Bipartisan Compromise Stalls

President Donald Trump is asking Congress to act without delay on the “[Great Healthcare Plan](#)” released by the White House last week. The plan consists of a framework of policies that support the President’s vision for lowering the nation’s health care costs. It addresses several issue areas, including lowering drug prices and insurance premiums, holding big insurance companies accountable, and maximizing price transparency. The plan would not extend the now expired advance premium tax credits (APTC), with the President having threatened to veto any APTC extension that reaches his desk.

The release of the President’s plan followed reports that the legislative text of a bipartisan Senate plan to extend the expired Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies will not be ready until the end of the month. Negotiators have already coalesced around several APTC policy modifications, including a shorter, two-year extension, an across-the-board minimum \$5 premium, a 700% federal poverty level income cap on eligibility, and the extension of open enrollment until March 1. While Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Bernie Moreno (R-Ohio) – the lead negotiators – had previously indicated that the text could be released last week, disagreements reportedly remain related to abortion funding restrictions.

The ACA open enrollment period ended on January 15. Approximately 1.4 million fewer people have enrolled in coverage compared to last year. This figure is less than the 2.2 million decrease [projected](#) by the Congressional Budget Office in the case of an APTC expiration, though experts caution that further attrition is likely in the coming months as enrollees face premiums that are more than doubling on average.

Senate HELP Committee Advances Four Health Bills

The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee voted unanimously to advance the following health-care bills on Thursday:

- The Protect Infant Formula from Contamination Act (S. 272), which aims to improve the safety of infant formula through testing of infant formula for microorganisms and toxic elements;
- Tyler’s Law (S. 921), which would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to issue guidance on whether hospital emergency departments should implement fentanyl testing as a routine procedure for patients experiencing an overdose;
- The Women and Lung Cancer Research and Preventive Services Act (S. 1157), which would direct the Secretary to review the status of research on lung cancer in women and underserved populations; and
- The Rural Hospital Cybersecurity Enhancement Act (S. 2169), which would require the development of a comprehensive rural hospital cybersecurity workforce development strategy.

The bills now await consideration by the full Senate.

Grassley Report Details “Gaming” of Medicare Advantage by UHG

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) has released a [report](#) detailing the findings from his investigation into UnitedHealth Group’s (UHG) Medicare Advantage (MA) billing practices. ***How UnitedHealth Group Puts the Risk in Medicare Advantage Risk Adjustment*** asserts that UHG uses its advanced data assets and data analytics capabilities to maximize its workforce’s ability to capture diagnoses. According to the report, the company has also identified opportunities and strategies to increase its capture of untapped risk score garnering diagnoses and uses its provider workforce to implement those strategies. The report notes that other MA organizations also contract with UHG for such diagnosis capture and coding opportunity insights.

Republican Study Committee Releases Reconciliation 2.0 Framework

The Republican Study Committee has released a [framework](#) for a second reconciliation bill proposing \$1.6 trillion in tax and spending cuts. The framework promises to “deliver health care freedom and lower drug prices by redirecting subsidies away from big insurance companies and into the hands of the American people, eliminating regulatory barriers that increase the price of drugs, and promoting choice and competition.” The framework was developed using an AI tool dubbed the “Byrd Bot,” which was developed to generate legislation compliant with the Senate’s Byrd Rule. GOP leadership in both the Senate and House of Representatives have cautioned that there is no consensus on the path forward for a second reconciliation bill.

Wyden, Pallone Question Child Immunization Data Measurement Change

Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and House Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-N.J.) have [written](#) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) urging the agency to reverse its decision to drop child immunization measures from the Core Set of Children’s Health Care Quality Measures for Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The lawmakers characterize the decision as “a dangerous abdication of the agency’s responsibility to monitor the quality of care provided to nearly half of our nation’s children.” They ask CMS about what evidence it used to determine that vaccination rates are no longer a core measure of child health quality, whether legal reasons exist for modifying these preventative care standards, and whether CMS intends to measure or monitor childhood immunization rates among children with Medicaid and CHIP coverage.

Florida Rep. Neal Dunn, MD to Retire

Rep. Neal Dunn, MD (R-Fla.) announced his plans to retire last week, withdrawing his re-election bid to the House of Representatives. Rep. Dunn, a urologist, has represented Florida’s second congressional district since 2017. He currently serves on the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health.

Upcoming Congressional Hearings and Markups

House Budget Committee hearing “Reverse the Curse: Skyrocketing Health Care Costs and America’s Fiscal Future;” 10:15 a.m.; January 21

House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity legislative hearing; 2:30 p.m.; January 21

House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health hearing “Lowering Health Care Costs for All Americans: An Examination of Health Insurance Affordability;” 9:45 a.m.; January 22

House Veterans’ Affairs Committee oversight hearing “Community Care Network Next Generation: One Trillion Dollars of Oversight;” 10:15 a.m.; January 22

House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment hearing “Chemicals in Commerce: Legislative Proposal to Modernize America’s Chemical Safety Law, Strengthen Critical Supply Chains, and Grow Domestic Manufacturing;” 2:00 p.m.; January 22

House Committee on Ways and Means Hearing with Health Insurance CEOs; 2:30 p.m.; January 22

H.R.6993 — To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out programs to award grants to eligible entities to conduct research with respect to treatments for traumatic brain injury prospective randomized control trials for neurorehabilitation treatments, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Bergman, Jack [Rep.-R-MI-1]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs

H.R.6994 — To amend the Controlled Substances Act to modify requirements relating to the prescription of controlled substances by means of the Internet, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Dunn, Neal P. [Rep.-R-FL-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Judiciary

H.R.7006 — Financial Services and General Government and National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2026; Sponsor: Cole, Tom [Rep.-R-OK-4]; Committees: House - Appropriations; Budget

H.R.7010 — To amend the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agency Appropriations Act, 2026, to delay the implementation of amendments made by such Act to the hemp production provisions of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946; Sponsor: Baird, James R. [Rep.-R-IN-4]; Committees: House - Agriculture

H.R.7023 — To amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to establish a public health insurance option, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Schakowsky, Janice D. [Rep.-D-IL-9]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.7024 — To amend the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agency Appropriations Act, 2026, to delay the implementation of amendments made by such Act to the hemp production provisions of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946; Sponsor: Baird, James R. [Rep.-R-IN-4]; Committees: House - Agriculture

S.3642 — A bill to direct the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate certain payment increases under State programs funded by the Department of Health and Human Services; Sponsor: Marshall, Roger [Sen.-R-KS]; Committees: Senate - Finance

H.R.7050 — To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to homeopathic drug products, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Sessions, Pete [Rep.-R-TX-17]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.7064 — To require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a study on strategies for the application of artificial intelligence technologies that can be used in the health care industry to improve administrative and clerical work and preserve the privacy and security of patient data, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Hernández, Pablo Jose [Resident Commissioner-D-PR-At Large]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.7071 — To repeal certain funding increases provided under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act to Immigrations and Custom Enforcement, and to reallocate those funds to extend certain healthcare tax credits; Sponsor: Moulton, Seth [Rep.-D-MA-6]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Judiciary; Homeland Security

S.Res.583 — A resolution recognizing 2026 as “The Year of The Power of Nurses” in Celebration of the 130th Anniversary of the American Nurses Association; Sponsor: Merkley, Jeff [Sen.-D-OR]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.3647 — A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a program to address bowel and bladder care needs for veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Moran, Jerry [Sen.-R-KS]; Committees: Senate - Veterans' Affairs

S.3653 — A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out efforts to inform veterans of their rights with regards to the receipt of health care, benefits, and services furnished under provisions of law administered by the Secretary,

and for other purposes; Sponsor: Blackburn, Marsha [Sen.-R-TN]; Committees: Senate - Veterans' Affairs

S.3677 — A bill to improve transparency and the availability of information regarding dietary supplements by amending the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require manufacturers of dietary supplements to list dietary supplements with the Food and Drug Administration; Sponsor: Durbin, Richard J. [Sen.-D-IL]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.3688 — A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase the floor for the practice expense and work geographic indices for certain areas; Sponsor: Sullivan, Dan [Sen.-R-AK]; Committees: Senate - Finance

H.Res.1002 — Recognizing the value of the Older Americans Act of 1965 nutrition program in addressing hunger, malnutrition, and isolation, and improving the health and quality of life for millions of our Nations seniors each year; Sponsor: Bonamici, Suzanne [Rep.-D-OR-1]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce

H.R.7091 — To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish an investigational research and extended access treatment program utilizing innovative treatments and emerging therapies to address conditions with unmet medical needs, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Bergman, Jack [Rep.-R-MI-1]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs

H.R.7092 — To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to require local educational agencies to include mental health and suicide prevention information on student identification cards, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Carter, Troy A. [Rep.-D-LA-2]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce

H.R.7096 — To amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act ensure appropriate approval for certain skilled nursing facility and nursing facility nursing aide training and competency evaluation programs under the Medicare and Medicaid program; Sponsor: Estes, Ron [Rep.-R-KS-4]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce

H.R.7106 — Enhancing Skilled Nursing Facilities Act; Sponsor: Kiggans, Jennifer A. [Rep.-R-VA-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.7112 — To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out efforts to inform veterans of their rights with regards to the receipt of health care, benefits, and services furnished under provisions of law administered by the Secretary, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Miller-Meeks, Mariannette [Rep.-R-IA-1]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs; Armed Services

H.R.7116 — Securing Enhanced Programs, Systems and Initiatives for Sepsis (SEPSIS) Act – To establish programs to reduce rates of sepsis; Sponsor: Norcross, Donald [Rep.-D-NJ-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.7118 — To amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to clarify that whole genome and whole exome sequencing for children with certain medical needs is covered under the Medicaid program; Sponsor: Peters, Scott H. [Rep.-D-CA-50]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce