



Health Policy Briefing

March 2, 2026

President Delivers State of the Union Address

President Donald Trump delivered his State of the Union address on Tuesday. While health care issues were not a primary focus of the record-length speech, the President highlighted his administration's efforts on eliminating health care fraud and improving affordability. He reiterated his desire for direct payments to Americans for the purchase of health insurance coverage, and called on Congress to codify his most-favored nation proposal to link domestic pharmaceutical prices to lower prices available in other countries. President Trump also discussed efforts to target Medicaid fraud in Democratic states like Minnesota, and called for further restrictions on gender-affirming care for youths. Virginia Governor Abigail Spanberger gave the Democratic rebuttal and spoke about the impact of Republicans' One Big Beautiful Bill Act, particularly on the Medicaid program and rural health care providers.

HELP Advances Two Health Bills

The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee advanced two health care related bills last week. The Living Donor Protection Act (S. 1552) would prohibit life insurance, disability insurance, and long-term care insurance carriers from denying or otherwise restricting coverage for living organ donors. It would also qualify donors for 12 weeks of medical leave. The Health Care Cybersecurity and Resiliency Act (S. 3315) would provide grants to health entities to improve cyberattack prevention and response, and require the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to develop a cybersecurity incident response plan. Each bill was approved in a 22-1 vote, with Sen. Rand Paul, MD (R-Ky.) voting in opposition.

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Collins, Murkowski Remain Undecided on Surgeon General Nominee

Surgeon General nominee Casey Means appeared before the Senate HELP Committee for her confirmation hearing on Wednesday. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle questioned the nominee about her position on vaccines; Means repeatedly stated that “vaccines save lives” while also underscoring the importance of a “true” informed consent process between an individual and their health care provider. Means still lacks the votes needed to advance her nomination, with Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) remaining undecided on how they will vote.

Marshall, Booker Request Testing of Medically Tailored Meal Model

Sens. Roger Marshall, MD (R-Kan.) and Cory Booker (D-N.J.) have sent a [letter](#) to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) recommending the development of a model to evaluate the impact of medically tailored meals for Medicare beneficiaries with acute and chronic diet-related illnesses. “Congress established CMMI to test innovative payment and service-delivery models that improve care quality while reducing expenditures for the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Medically tailored meals are an ideal candidate therapy for achieving this mission,” the lawmakers argue. The letter highlights evidence that medically tailored meals can reduce hospital stays, improve health outcomes, and lower overall health care costs in Medicaid and other payer settings.

House Appropriations Leadership Release FY 2027 Guidance

The House Appropriations Committee has released [guidance](#) for fiscal year (FY) 2027 programmatic, language, and community project funding requests. Members of Congress have until March 13 to submit requests for the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration Subcommittee and March 20 to submit requests to the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS) Subcommittee. Lawmakers will be allowed to request funding for up to 20 projects, an increase to the current limit of 15, with LHHS project funding limited to the Health Resources and Services Administration account.

E&C Plans Next Hearing in Health Care Affordability Series

The House Energy and Commerce Committee will reportedly hear from health care providers and hospitals during the panel’s next hearing in its series on affordability. The Committee has already received testimony from health insurance CEOs and representatives of groups along the pharmaceutical supply chain. Chair Brett Guthrie (R-Ky.) recently told reporters that the details of the next hearing are still being determined.

Updated Projections of the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund’s Solvency

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has released an updated [projection](#) of the Medicare Hospital Insurance Trust Fund’s solvency over the next 25 years. CBO estimates that the fund will be exhausted in 2040, 12 years earlier than previously anticipated. The agency attributes the earlier insolvency date largely to changes put in place by the 2025 reconciliation bill, which lowered tax rates and created a temporary deduction for taxpayers aged 65 or older – thereby reducing total revenues from the taxation of Social Security benefits. Increased demand for Medicare Part A services was also a factor in the updated projection. If the balance of the fund were to be exhausted, Medicare would need to reduce total benefits by 8% in 2040 and up to 10% in 2056.

CDC Second in Command to Depart

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) principal deputy director Ralph Abraham, MD has departed the Agency, citing “unforeseen family obligations” which local press reported was due to the “failing health of a close relative in his 80s.” Dr. Abraham, the former surgeon general of Louisiana, assumed his post as the second highest ranking CDC official less than two months ago. His announcement follows other recent health personnel changes in the administration, including the naming of National Institutes of Health Director Jay Bhattacharya, MD as acting CDC director on February 18. The CDC has been without a permanent director since the firing of Susan Monarez in August 2025.

Upcoming Congressional Hearings and Markups

Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Science, Manufacturing, and Competitiveness hearing “Less Hype, More Help: AI That Improves Safety, Productivity, and Care;” 10:15 a.m.; March 3

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing to examine a discussion draft, S.____, the Toxic Substances Control Act Fee Reauthorization and Improvement Act; 10:00 a.m.; March 4

House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Oversight hearing Delivering for Veterans and Caregivers: Year One of the Dole Act;” 2:15 p.m.; March 4

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee hearing “Transforming Health Care with Data: Improving Patient Outcomes Through Next-Generation Care;” 10:00 a.m.; March 5

House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Health oversight hearing Hidden Wounds: Effectively Supporting Veterans with TBI; 10:15 a.m.; March 5

House Appropriations Committee Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Member Day hearing; 10:30 a.m.; March 5

Recently Introduced Health Legislation

H.R.7602 — To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to study and report on the state of men’s health in the United States and to establish an Office of Men’s Health within the Department of Health and Human Services. Sponsor: Carter, Troy A. [Rep.-D-LA-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.7651 —To provide a private right of action for children and the parents of children whose healthy body parts have been damaged by medical professionals practicing or participating in certain interventions; Sponsor: Onder, Robert F. [Rep.-R-MO-3]; Committees: House – Judiciary

H.R.7653 — To enhance diplomatic engagement on international biotechnology and biosecurity matters; Sponsor: Self, Keith [Rep.-R-TX-3]; Committees: House - Foreign Affairs

S.3898 — A bill to amend the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act to extend burial benefits for certain veterans who die at home while in receipt of hospice care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs; Sponsor: Boozman, John [Sen.-R-AR]; Committees: Senate - Veterans’ Affairs

H.R.7654 — Advance Global Health Act; Sponsor: Lawler, Michael [Rep.-R-NY-17]; Committees: House - Foreign Affairs

H.R.7666 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow payments under the Medicare program for certain items and services furnished by off-campus outpatient departments of a provider to be determined under the prospective

payment system for hospital outpatient department services, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Smith, Adrian [Rep.-R-NE-3]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

S.Res.614 — A resolution designating February 2026 as “American Heart Month”; Sponsor: Durbin, Richard J. [Sen.-D-IL]; Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.

S.3908 — A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow payments under the Medicare program for certain items and services furnished by off-campus outpatient departments of a provider to be determined under the prospective payment system for hospital outpatient department services, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Hoeven, John [Sen.-R-ND]; Committees: Senate – Finance

S.3922 — A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to clarify the Food and Drug Administration’s jurisdiction over certain tobacco products, and to protect jobs and small businesses involved in the sale, manufacturing, and distribution of traditional and premium cigars; Sponsor: Moody, Ashley [Sen.-R-FL]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

H.Res.1079 — Recognizing the significance of Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease and the need for robust funding of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke at the National Institutes of Health; Sponsor: Gottheimer, Josh [Rep.-D-NJ-5]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1081 — Raising awareness for the sarcoma cancer chordoma; Sponsor: Johnson, Henry C. “Hank” [Rep.-D-GA-4]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1084 — Support for the designation of February 28 as “HIV is Not a Crime Awareness Day” and affirming that people living with HIV should not be criminalized based on their HIV status; Sponsor: Pocan, Mark [Rep.-D-WI-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.7677 — Closing the Provider Fraud Gap Act; Sponsor: Owens, Burgess [Rep.-R-UT-4]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce

H.R.7681 — To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand eligibility for health savings accounts, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Bean, Aaron [Rep.-R-FL-4]; Committees: House - Ways and Means

H.R.7685 — To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to specify that hair straightening or smoothing products containing formaldehyde or formaldehyde releasing substances will be considered adulterated, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Brown, Shontel M. [Rep.-D-OH-11]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.7686 — To recognize the importance of clinical roles of locum tenens physicians, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Carter, Earl L. “Buddy” [Rep.-R-GA-1]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce; Energy and Commerce; Oversight and Government Reform; House Administration

H.R.7693 — To mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on incentives under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act for the development of orphan drugs, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Gottheimer, Josh [Rep.-D-NJ-5]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.7694 — To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out a public awareness campaign to increase participation by women in clinical trials that are conducted or supported by the National Institutes of Health, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Gottheimer, Josh [Rep.-D-NJ-5]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.7713 — To amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to ensure the appropriate availability of personal care services under the Medicaid program; Sponsor: Schweikert, David [Rep.-R-AZ-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.7717 — To establish a pilot program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to support local jurisdictions in developing neighborhood-level, publicly accessible health data platforms, to establish a National Neighborhood Health Data Repository, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Torres, Ritchie [Rep.-D-NY-15]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

S.Res.620 — A resolution designating February 28, 2026, as “Rare Disease Day”; Sponsor: Barrasso, John [Sen.-R-WY]; Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.

S.3934 — A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand the availability of medical nutrition therapy services under the Medicare program; Sponsor: Collins, Susan M. [Sen.-R-ME]; Committees: Senate – Finance

S.3944 — A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the WISEWOMAN program; Sponsor: Alsobrooks, Angela D. [Sen.-D-MD]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

H.Res.1087 — Recognizing community water fluoridation as a safe, effective public health intervention to prevent tooth decay and promote oral and physical health; Sponsor: Frankel, Lois [Rep.-D-FL-22]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1090 — Expressing support for the designation of February 2026 as “Low Vision and Vision Impairment Awareness Month”; Sponsor: Veasey, Marc A. [Rep.-D-TX-33]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.7727 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure the continued designation of certain critical access hospitals under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Alford, Mark [Rep.-R-MO-4]; Committees: House - Ways and Means

H.R.7733 — To amend title 18, United States Code, to ensure access to obstetrician-gynecologists for female prisoners, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Foushee, Valerie P. [Rep.-D-NC-4]; Committees: House – Judiciary

H.R.7735 — To require the Department of Veterans Affairs-Department of Defense Joint Executive Committee to assess the effectiveness of certain mental health activities of the Departments, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Golden, Jared F. [Rep.-D-ME-2]; Committees: House - Veterans’ Affairs; Armed Services

H.R.7739 — To amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide overtime compensation exceptions to employers of emergency medical technicians and paramedics in rural areas; Sponsor: Maloy, Celeste [Rep.-R-UT-2]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce