



## Health Policy Briefing

March 30, 2026

### President’s FY 2027 Budget Expected to be Released This Week

The White House is expected to send President Trump’s fiscal year (FY) 2027 budget request to Congress on April 3, which will outline the Administration’s spending and policy priorities for the fiscal year beginning October 1. The budget is being released several weeks after the statutory deadline in early February. The proposals are expected to include cuts to federal health programs, including a potential 20 percent reduction in funding for the National Institutes of Health, as well as requests to restructure or consolidate parts of the agency (similar proposals in the FY 2026 budget were rejected by Congress). While the President’s budget is not binding, and Congress is not required to adopt its proposals, lawmakers typically use it as a guide when setting funding levels and policy priorities for federal agencies.

### White House Misses Deadline to Nominate CDC Director

The Trump administration did not submit a nominee to lead the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by the March 25 deadline required under federal law for acting officials. As a result, Dr. Jay Bhattacharya will continue to oversee the agency without the formal “acting director” title, instead performing the delegable duties of the role. Under the *Federal Vacancies Reform Act*, acting officials may serve for a limited period, after which the administration must nominate a permanent replacement or adjust leadership responsibilities. Without a confirmed or acting director, certain non-delegable authorities—such as approving vaccine recommendations—may be limited or require action by senior leadership at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The White House has indicated it is continuing to evaluate candidates for the position, though no timeline has been announced for a formal nomination.

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## House Judiciary Committee Releases Report on Medical Residency Antitrust Exemption

On Friday, Republican leadership of the House Judiciary Committee released an interim staff report titled “[Medical Mis-Match: How a Residency Hiring Monopoly Harms Patients, Doctors, and the American Public](#),” concluding that the National Resident Matching Program’s monopolistic power would normally face scrutiny under Section 1 of the Sherman Act but has been shielded since Congress granted it an antitrust exemption in 2004. The Committee further notes that “Congress has the power to repeal it.” The report is the product of an investigation opened more than a year ago, and the Committee plans to continue its oversight work in this area. Earlier this Congress, the [Restoring Rights of Medical Residents Act \(H.R. 3018\)](#) was reintroduced and seeks to strike this antitrust exemption. Also, the Subcommittee on the Administrative State, Regulatory Reform, and Antitrust held a hearing last year titled “[The MATCH Monopoly: Evaluating the Medical Residency Antitrust Exemption](#).”

## Cassidy Expands Investigation into Gender Surgeries for Minors

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chairman Bill Cassidy, MD (R-La.) is continuing this investigative work into the promotion of puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and irreversible gender transition surgeries on minors. Sen. Cassidy sent letters to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and [The Endocrine Society](#) last week regarding their engagement with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health around age limitations on gender surgeries for children. “As a physician and Chairman of the Senate HELP Committee, I am deeply committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in matters related to public health,” Cassidy writes. “Americans have every right to know the scientific rigor supporting guidelines issued by your organization, particularly given that these guidelines are widely used and relied upon by physicians and health care providers, and patients, including minors.”

## Lawmakers Advance Fentanyl, Xylazine Legislation

Lawmakers advanced several bills last week aimed at addressing and mitigating illicit drug use across the nation. The Senate passed S. 921, *Tyler’s Law*, via unanimous consent on Monday. The bipartisan bill would require the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to study fentanyl-testing rates in hospital emergency departments, and to issue guidance on the incorporation of fentanyl exposure screening into ER drug testing. Companion legislation in the House of Representatives was considered during a legislative hearing before the Energy and Commerce Committee on Thursday.

The Senate Judiciary Committee advanced S. 545, the *Combating Illicit Xylazine Act*, on Thursday in a 19-3 vote. The bipartisan bill would classify the Food and Drug Administration-approved animal tranquilizer and non-opioid sedative xylazine – also known as “tranq” – as a Schedule III substance, while protecting the legal use of the drug in veterinary medicine and agriculture. The House version of the bill was also a focus of the Energy and Commerce Committee’s legislative hearing.

## GOP Lawmakers to Probe Compliance with Mifepristone REMS

A group of Republican senators are opening an [investigation](#) into whether mifepristone manufacturers are complying with the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) requirements. Sens. Bill Cassidy, MD (R-La.), Steve Daines (R-Mont.), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.), and James Lankford (R-Okla.) sent letters to three mifepristone manufacturers and the FDA, asserting that it is unclear how the manufacturers “ensure that prescribers and pharmacies comply with the few remaining REMS requirements, especially when pills are sold online and without the in-person oversight of a medical professional.” They urge the FDA to act within its existing authorities to immediately reinstate an in-person dispensing requirement and the requirement for manufacturers to report non-fatal adverse events to the FDA.

## Healthcare Advisory Committee Members Announced

On Thursday, HHS and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) [announced](#) the 18 members of the new [Healthcare Advisory Committee](#) intended to guide federal health policy under HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and CMS Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz. The Department chose the members following a review of over 400 nominations. The panel will advise HHS and CMS on improvements to financing and delivery across Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, and the Health Insurance Marketplace. The committee is empowered to make nonbinding policy recommendations to transition the system from reactive “sick care” toward preventive health management. Specific areas of focus include developing methods to prevent and manage chronic disease, advancing accountability for safety outcomes while reducing administrative burdens, and expanding real-time data usage to improve claims processing and quality measurement. The committee will also consider strategies to enhance care for vulnerable populations served by Medicaid and strengthen Medicare Advantage sustainability through modernized risk adjustment. Members of the committee will serve two-year terms with regular meetings open to the public consistent with federal transparency requirements.

### Healthcare Advisory Committee Members:

- **Robert Bessler, MD** – CEO of Honest Health, a value-based care enablement organization; Board member for Honest, Mangrove Management Partners, Lifestance Health and Upstream Physical Therapy; and Founder of Sound Physicians.
- **Sebastian Caliri** – 8VC Healthcare Team Lead; MS in Molecular Biophysics & Biochemistry
- **David Carmouche, MD** – Chief Medical & Commercial Officer at Lumeris, a physician-first AI-powered Primary Care as a Service platform; board-certified in Internal Medicine
- **Elizabeth M. Fago** – Healthcare Entrepreneur; nursing home owner; nominated by President Trump in 2020 to serve on the National Cancer Advisory Board
- **Clive K. Fields, MD** – Co-founder of VillageMD; board-certified Family Physician
- **William J. Gassen, JD** – President and CEO of Sanford Health; serves on boards for American Hospital Association, Oscar Health, Inc., Medical Alley, and Greater Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce; chair of Coalition to Strengthen America’s Healthcare
- **Jenni Gudapati, PhD, MBA, RN** – CEO of Amethyst Solutions and Director for Boise State University’s Value-Based Healthcare Program
- **Valerie D. Huhn** – Former Director, Missouri Department of Mental Health
- **Dennis Laraway, MBA** – Executive VP and CFO, Cleveland Clinic
- **Dan Liljenquist, JD** – Board Chair, Graphite Health; former Utah State Senator
- **Andrew Lynch, PhD** – Chief Strategy Officer at Acadia Healthcare; former VP, Home Solutions, Humana; PhD in Biomedical Engineering
- **Ursel J. McElroy** – Former Director of Ohio Department of Aging and Administrator of the Ohio State Plan on Aging
- **Kyu Rhee, MD** – President and CEO of the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC); former Senior Vice President & Aetna Chief Medical Officer at CVS Health; board-certified in internal medicine & pediatrics
- **Tony Robbins** – Author, life coach, and motivational speaker
- **Russ Thomas, JD** – CEO of Availity, a health information network; board member of the Florida Chamber of Commerce Healthcare Policy Council, Jacksonville University, and Iodine Software
- **Linda Thomas-Hemak, MD, FACP, FAAP** – President and CEO, The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education and The Wright Center for Community Health; board-certified in Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Addiction Medicine, Obesity Medicine, and Nutrition
- **Kimberly Brandt, JD** (ex officio) – CMS Deputy Administrator and Chief Operating Officer
- **Stephanie Carlton** (ex officio) – CMS Chief of Staff and Deputy Administrator

## Alan Armstrong Sworn in to Senate

On Tuesday, Sen. Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.) was sworn in as the Secretary of Homeland Security. Mullin was confirmed by the Senate on Monday in a bipartisan 54-45 vote. Democratic Senators voting in favor of the confirmation included John Fetteran (D-Pa.) and Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.). Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt (R) appointed energy executive Alan Armstrong to fill the vacancy for Mullin's Senate seat. Armstrong previously served as the Executive Chairman of Williams Companies, an energy infrastructure company where he worked for nearly 40 years. Armstrong was sworn in to the Senate on Tuesday and will serve on the Senate HELP and Indian Affairs Committees. Under Oklahoma law, an individual appointed by the governor to fill a vacancy in the U.S. Senate must pledge to not run for re-election at the conclusion of the current term. Rep. Kevin Hern (R-Okla.), a member of the House Ways & Means Committee, has joined a crowded field of candidates from both parties running to serve in the seat for the next full term that begins in January 2027.

## Congressional Retirements

Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.), who chairs the House Transportation Committee and serves on the House Armed Services Committee, announced Friday that he will retire from Congress. Graves was first elected to federal office in 2001. A growing number of members have announced their retirements or indicated plans to seek other offices; the House Press Gallery's [Casualty List](#) tracks those departures. Special elections to fill seats vacated by Marjorie Taylor Greene and Mikie Sherrill will take place in Georgia on April 7 and in New Jersey on April 16.

H.R.8129 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a full risk ACO program. Sponsor: Tenney, Claudia [Rep.-R-NY-24]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce

H.R.8124 — To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a grant program to support models for providing stabilization services to individuals with serious thoughts of suicide, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Raskin, Jamie [Rep.-D-MD-8]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8122 — To amend the Public Health Service Act to award grants to eligible crisis centers to provide follow-up services to individuals receiving suicide prevention and crisis intervention services, to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to improve the accessibility of 9-8-8, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Raskin, Jamie [Rep.-D-MD-8]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8119 — To ensure coverage for the treatment of infertility for certain conditions. Sponsor: Nunn, Zachary [Rep.-R-IA-3]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce

H.R.8115 — Precision Brain Health Research Act – To modify the Precision Medicine for Veterans Initiative of the Department of Veterans Affairs; Sponsor: Miller-Meeks, Mariannette [Rep.-R-IA-1]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs; Armed Services

H.R.8112 — To amend titles II and XVIII of the Social Security Act to limit Social Security and Medicare benefits to certain individuals, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Mace, Nancy [Rep.-R-SC-1]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce

H.R.8109 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to codify the Medicare low-wage index hospital policy. Sponsor: Kustoff, David [Rep.-R-TN-8]; Committees: House - Ways and Means

H.R.8100 — To amend titles XI, XVIII, and XIX of the Social Security Act with respect to minimum staffing levels in skilled nursing facilities and nursing facilities under the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Sponsor: Doggett, Lloyd [Rep.-D-TX-37]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce

H.R.8095 — Ensuring Medicaid Continuity for Children in Foster Care Act of 2026 Sponsor: Bilirakis, Gus M. [Rep.-R-FL-12]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8094 — To direct the Federal Trade Commission to establish requirements for making information available to the public about the training data and algorithms used in artificial intelligence foundation models, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Beyer, Donald S. [Rep.-D-VA-8] (Introduced 03/26/2026); Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

S.4257 — A bill to apply user fees with respect to tobacco products deemed subject to the requirements of chapter IX of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. Sponsor: Shaheen, Jeanne [Sen.-D-NH]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4255 — A bill to provide for phased-in payment of Social Security Disability Insurance payments during the waiting period for individuals with a terminal illness. Sponsor: Barrasso, John [Sen.-R-WY]; Committees: Senate - Finance

S.4254 — A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for a health care workforce innovation program. Sponsor: Wyden, Ron [Sen.-D-OR]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4242 — A bill to amend part A of title IV of the Social Security Act to clarify the authority of States to use funds for pregnancy centers, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Scott, Tim [Sen.-R-SC]; Committees: Senate - Finance

- S.4233 — A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to codify the Medicare low-wage index hospital policy. Sponsor: Warner, Mark R. [Sen.-D-VA]; Committees: Senate - Finance
- S.4229 — A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a comprehensive standard for timing between referrals and appointments for care from the Department of Veterans Affairs and to submit a report with respect to that standard, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Scott, Rick [Sen.-R-FL]; Committees: Senate - Veterans' Affairs
- S.4227 — A bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, to carry out a program under which the Secretary requires each covered distributor of a highly pathogenic agent to comply with certain logbook requirements, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Cortez Masto, Catherine [Sen.-D-NV]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
- S.4225 — A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to furnish doula services to veterans. Sponsor: Booker, Cory A. [Sen.-D-NJ]; Committees: Senate - Veterans' Affairs
- S.4220 — A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish within the Veterans Health Administration an Office of Novel Therapeutics, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Sheehy, Tim [Sen.-R-MT]; Committees: Senate - Veterans' Affairs
- S.4217 — A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate copayments by the Department of Veterans Affairs for preventive health services and medicines relating to preventive health services, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Duckworth, Tammy [Sen.-D-IL]; Committees: Senate - Veterans' Affairs
- S.4216 — A bill to repeal the Executive order entitled "Ensuring a National Policy Framework for Artificial Intelligence". Sponsor: Schatz, Brian [Sen.-D-HI]; Committees: Senate - Commerce, Science, and Transportation
- S.Con.Res.32 — A concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of International Transgender Day of Visibility. Sponsor: Schatz, Brian [Sen.-D-HI]; Committees: Senate - Judiciary
- H.R.8032 — Facilitating Access to Innovation in Cancer Care Act (FAIC Act) – To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure equitable payment for, and preserve Medicare beneficiary access to, cancer treatments under the Medicare hospital outpatient prospective payment system. Sponsor: Dunn, Neal P. [Rep.-R-FL-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means
- S.4176 — A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to direct State Medicaid fraud control units to investigate and prosecute instances of beneficiary fraud; Sponsor: Moody, Ashley [Sen.-R-FL]; Committees: Senate – Finance
- H.Res.1133 — Designating November 7 of each year as "Shwachman Diamond Syndrome Awareness Day"; Sponsor: Kean, Thomas H. [Rep.-R-NJ-7]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce
- H.R.8043 — To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the efficiency of the recovery and collection of revenue for the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Care Collections Fund, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Ciscomani, Juan [Rep.-R-AZ-6]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs
- H.R.8052 — To amend title 38, United States Code, to require that a sterile processing technician of the Veterans Health Administration holds an appropriate professional certification, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Kiggans, Jennifer A. [Rep.-R-VA-2]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs
- H.R.8057 — To amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the rate of pay for care or services provided under the Community Care Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on the location at which such care or services were provided, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Miller-Meeks, Mariannette [Rep.-R-IA-1]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs

H.R.8060 — To reauthorize funding for programs to prevent, investigate, and prosecute elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Neal, Richard E. [Rep.-D-MA-1]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce; Education and Workforce; Judiciary

H.R.8067 — To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out a program under which the Secretary will collect data with respect to sickle cell disease in the United States, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Vindman, Eugene Simon [Rep.-D-VA-7]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8091 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to modernize payments for ambulatory surgical centers under the Medicare program. Sponsor: Van Duyne, Beth [Rep.-R-TX-24]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.8089 — To amend the Public Health Service Act to grow and diversify the perinatal workforce, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Moore, Gwen [Rep.-D-WI-4]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8084 — To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a study and submit to Congress a report on contraceptive access at community health centers in health care deserts. Sponsor: Hinson, Ashley [Rep.-R-IA-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8083 — To allow women greater access to safe and effective oral contraceptive drugs intended for routine use, and to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on Federal funding of contraceptive methods. Sponsor: Hinson, Ashley [Rep.-R-IA-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means; Natural Resources; Armed Services

H.R.8082 — To ensure competition in health insurance markets. Sponsor: Grothman, Glenn [Rep.-R-WI-6]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8081 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to mental health services under the Medicare program. Sponsor: Fitzpatrick, Brian K. [Rep.-R-PA-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.8080 — To amend the Public Health Service Act to improve maternal health data collection processes and quality measures, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Davids, Sharice [Rep.-D-KS-3]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Natural Resources

H.R.8074 — To end preventable maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity in the United States and close disparities in maternal health outcomes, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Adams, Alma S. [Rep.-D-NC-12]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8070 — To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to establish or expand programs to implement evidence-aligned practices in health care settings for the purpose of reducing the suicide rates of covered individuals, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Underwood, Lauren [Rep.-D-IL-14]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Education and Workforce

H.Res.1136 — Supporting the goals and ideals of “Long COVID Awareness Month”. Sponsor: Foushee, Valerie P. [Rep.-D-NC-4]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

S.4210 — A bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to establish or expand programs to implement evidence-aligned practices in health care settings for the purpose of reducing the suicide rates of covered individuals, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Schatz, Brian [Sen.-D-HI]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor,

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S.4209 — A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to extend the limitations period for certain offenses resulting in death or serious bodily injury. Sponsor: Sullivan, Dan [Sen.-R-AK]; Committees: Senate - Judiciary

S.4208 — A bill to establish a demonstration program to provide payments on eligible loans for individuals who are eligible for the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program. Sponsor: Blackburn, Marsha [Sen.-R-TN]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4204 — A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a rural health center innovation awards program and a rural health department enhancement program, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Blackburn, Marsha [Sen.-R-TN]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4202 — A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to mental health services under the Medicare program. Sponsor: Barrasso, John [Sen.-R-WY]; Committees: Senate - Finance

S.4195 — A bill to prevent maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity among Black pregnant and postpartum individuals and other underserved populations, to provide training in respectful maternity care, to reduce and prevent bias, racism, and discrimination in maternity care settings, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Warnock, Raphael G. [Sen.-D-GA]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4189 — A bill to reduce the price of insulin and provide for patient protections with respect to the cost of insulin. Sponsor: Shaheen, Jeanne [Sen.-D-NH]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4187 — A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve maternal health data collection processes and quality measures, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Smith, Tina [Sen.-D-MN]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4186 — A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to grow and diversify the perinatal workforce, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Baldwin, Tammy [Sen.-D-WI]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions