



## Health Policy Briefing

May 4, 2026

### President Withdraws Casey Means Surgeon General Nomination

President Donald Trump has withdrawn the nomination of Casey Means, MD for surgeon general. Means' nomination had stalled in the Senate, with Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Chair Bill Cassidy, MD (R-La.) and Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) declining to commit to supporting the nominee. The President's first nominee for the position of surgeon general, Janette Nesheiwat, MD, was also withdrawn early during his second term in office.

President Trump has now tapped Nicole Saphier, MD for the position. Saphier is a radiologist and the director of breast imaging at Memorial Sloan Kettering Monmouth in New Jersey. She is also a former medical contributor for Fox News.

### Congress Funds Most of DHS as Budget Reconciliation Process Continues

Congress passed legislation (H.R. 7147) on Thursday to fund most agencies within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The House of Representatives approved the bill, which was passed by the Senate several weeks ago, via voice vote. DHS has gone unfunded since February 14. The partial spending bill fully funds the Coast Guard, Transportation Security Administration, Secret Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, along with other DHS offices aside from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol, through the end of the fiscal year. Republicans now aim to advance a budget reconciliation bill focusing on spending for ICE and Border Patrol along party-lines. Both chambers have adopted a budget resolution in recent days to jumpstart the budget reconciliation process.

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## Appropriations Update

The House Appropriations Committee advanced two fiscal year 2027 appropriations bills last week. The National Security-Department of State [measure](#) was approved in a 35-27 party line vote, and the Agriculture-Rural Development-Food and Drug Administration [measure](#) was approved in a 35-25 vote. Lawmakers also made progress on the Commerce-Justice-Science and Legislative Branch appropriations measures, with both spending bills advancing out of subcommittee last week. Markups will continue the week of May 10 when the House of Representatives returns from recess.

### Lawmakers Ask Senate Appropriators to Sustain NIH Funding in FY 2027

Fifty-two senators have signed a [letter](#) asking Appropriations Committee leadership to maintain a strong commitment to funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in fiscal year (FY) 2027. The letter, led by Sens. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) and Alex Padilla (D-Calif.), emphasizes the importance of NIH funding to biomedical innovation, the current scientific workforce, and U.S. national security and economic competitiveness. “We recognize today’s challenging fiscal environment, but these challenges must not jeopardize the important health and scientific research that NIH supports,” the letter states. “We therefore respectfully urge the Committee to provide strong and sustained funding for the NIH in FY 2027, including the bill’s parameters for NIH’s use of forward funding of multi- year awards and other key provisions.” More than 180 members of the House of Representatives sent a similar letter to the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies earlier in the month.

### National Provider Directory Exposes Provider Social Security Numbers

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) accidentally exposed the Social Security data of at least 100 health care providers, as uncovered by The Washington Post via the National Provider Directory last week. CMS has since taken down the publicly accessible Medicare directory, which was launched last year, and officials say they are addressing the problem. The purpose of the webpage is to connect seniors with healthcare professionals; it includes data about more than 7 million providers. A spokesperson at CMS stated that the issue is the result of providers inputting their Social Security data in the incorrect place on the form.

### Dept. of Education Finalizes Professional Degree Definition, New Loan Caps

The Department of Education issued a [final rule](#) last week capping federal borrowing limits for graduate students, including healthcare professionals. The regulation, which will go into effect July 1, implements the lower graduate school borrowing limits established by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The law sets a cap of \$50,000 annually, or \$200,000 total, for professional degree programs, and \$20,500 annually, or \$100,000 total, for graduate degree programs. The Education Department’s final rule excludes certain graduate level clinical programs – such as nursing, physician assistant, occupational therapy, and physical therapy – from the definition of professional degree. Eleven degree programs – including medicine, pharmacy, podiatry, chiropractic, clinical psychology, optometry, osteopathic medicine, and dentistry – qualify for the higher professional degree loan amounts.

## Upcoming Congressional Hearings and Markups

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Committee field hearing “Making Health Care Affordable Again Part 2: Perspectives from Employers, Patients, and Providers;” 9 a.m. CDT; May 5

Senate HELP Committee field hearing “From Crisis to Care: Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment Across the Continuum of Care;” 9 a.m. CDT; May 6

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies markup of FY27 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill; 8:00 a.m.; June 5

House Appropriations Committee markup of FY27 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill; 11:00 a.m.; June 9

## Recently Introduced Health Legislation

S.J.Res.187 — A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to “Modification to the Start of the Submission Period for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Reporting and Recordkeeping Under TSCA 8(a)(7)”; Sponsor: Whitehouse, Sheldon [Sen.-D-RI]; Committees: Senate - Environment and Public Works

S.4384 — A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for certain reforms under the Medicare Advantage program, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Marshall, Roger [Sen.-R-KS]; Committees: Senate – Finance

S.4385 — A bill to amend the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 to reauthorize the Community Connect Grant Program, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Smith, Tina [Sen.-D-MN]; Committees: Senate - Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

S.4387 — A bill to study the extent to which individuals are more at risk of maternal morbidity or mortality as a result of being a victim of intimate partner violence; Sponsor: Shaheen, Jeanne [Sen.-D-NH]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4396 — A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to credit individuals serving as caregivers of dependent relatives with deemed wages for up to five years of such service; Sponsor: Murphy, Christopher [Sen.-D-CT]; Committees: Senate – Finance

S.4397 — A bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to improve transparency of the regulatory process and coordination of science among Federal agencies, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Ricketts, Pete [Sen.-R-NE]; Committees: Senate - Environment and Public Works

H.R.8499 — To require that opioid overdose rescue kits be located at public institutions of higher education, and for other purposes; Sponsor: De La Cruz, Monica [Rep.-R-TX-15]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce; Energy and Commerce

H.R.8500 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure timely review of local coverage determination requests under the Medicare program; Sponsor: Dunn, Neal P. [Rep.-R-FL-2]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce

H.R.8504 — To authorize affordable financing assistance for rural health centers facing financial distress, and to protect access to essential health services in rural communities; Sponsor: Figures, Shomari [Rep.-D-AL-2]; Committees: House – Agriculture

H.R.8516 — To make certain improvements relating to artificial intelligence, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Lieu, Ted [Rep.-D-CA-36]; Committees: House - Science, Space, and Technology; Energy and Commerce; Agriculture; Oversight and Government Reform; Education and Workforce; Judiciary; Ways and Means

H.R.8520 — To facilitate nationwide accessibility and coordination of 211 services in order to provide information and referral to all individuals in the United States for health and human services needs, and for other purposes; Sponsor: McGarvey, Morgan [Rep.-D-KY-3]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8526 — To amend the Public Health Service Act to update quality standards for mammography facilities for the use of AI systems, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Schweikert, David [Rep.-R-AZ-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8528 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to skilled nursing facilities for primary immunodeficiency patients; Sponsor: Smith, Adrian [Rep.-R-NE-3]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce

H.R.8530 — To amend the National Quantum Initiative Act relating to certain health and workforce matters, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Sykes, Emilia Strong [Rep.-D-OH-13]; Committees: House - Science, Space, and Technology

S.Res.696 — A resolution expressing support for the designation of the month of April 2026 as “Parkinson’s Awareness Month”; Sponsor: Scott, Rick [Sen.-R-FL]; Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.

S.4416 — A bill to establish procedures for the detailing of Public Health Service Officers for purposes of advancing care in underserved communities; Sponsor: Murkowski, Lisa [Sen.-R-AK]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4420 — A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the participation of physical therapists in the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment program, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand Medicare Rural Health Clinic Services and Federally Qualified Health Center Services to include physical therapy services, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Heinrich, Martin [Sen.-D-NM]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

H.Res.1223 — Expressing support for the designation of Undiagnosed Awareness Month; Sponsor: Pocan, Mark [Rep.-D-WI-2]; Committees: House - Oversight and Government Reform

H.R.8540 — To amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to require coverage of, and expand access to, home and community-based services under the Medicaid program; to award grants for the creation, recruitment, training and education, retention, and advancement of the direct care workforce and to award grants to support family caregivers; and for other purposes; Sponsor: Dingell, Debbie [Rep.-D-MI-6]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Education and Workforce; Oversight and Government Reform; Ways and Means

H.R.8541 — To support the direct care professional workforce, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Dingell, Debbie [Rep.-D-MI-6]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Education and Workforce; Ways and Means; Judiciary; House Administration; Oversight and Government Reform

H.R.8545 — To protect and expand access to pasteurized, donor human milk, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Houlihan, Chrissy [Rep.-D-PA-6]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Education and Workforce

H.R.8551 — To amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act and title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act

to provide no-cost coverage for annual screening mammography beginning at 30 years of age; Sponsor: Lawler, Michael [Rep.-R-NY-17]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.8553 — To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a precision oncology program for cancer of the prostate, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Murphy, Gregory F. [Rep.-R-NC-3]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs

S.4426 — A bill to prohibit gender transition procedures on minors, to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to impose civil penalties on persons who perform gender transition procedures on minors, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Marshall, Roger [Sen.-R-KS]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4427 — A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Labor from finalizing, implementing, or enforcing a proposed standard with respect to heat injury and illness prevention, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Cassidy, Bill [Sen.-R-LA]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4440 — A bill to modernize clinical trials and remove barriers for participation in clinical trials, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Scott, Tim [Sen.-R-SC]; Committees: Senate - Finance

S.4441 — A bill to establish the National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Young, Todd [Sen.-R-IN]; Committees: Senate - Commerce, Science, and Transportation

H.Res.1234 — Supporting the mission and goals of National Fentanyl Awareness Day in 2026, including increasing individual and public awareness of the impact of fake or counterfeit fentanyl pills on families and young people; Sponsor: Pettersen, Brittany [Rep.-D-CO-7]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Judiciary

H.R.8573 — To prohibit gender transition procedures on minors, to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to impose civil penalties on persons who perform gender transition procedures on minors, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Harshbarger, Diana [Rep.-R-TN-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Judiciary

H.R.8578 — To amend the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990 to codify the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030, issued jointly by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Letlow, Julia [Rep.-R-LA-5]; Committees: House - Agriculture

H.R.8585 — To require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to support community-based coverage entities to carry out a comprehensive coverage program that provides qualifying individuals and small businesses health coverage and integrated health related social need services to small business workers that promote improved health, long-term economic self-sufficiency, employment and retention, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Moolenaar, John R. [Rep.-R-MI-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Education and Workforce

S.Res.709 — A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Nurses Week, to be observed from May 6 through May 12, 2026; Sponsor: Merkley, Jeff [Sen.-D-OR]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.Res.710 — A resolution recognizing Maternal Mental Health Day to raise awareness about maternal mental health; Sponsor: Marshall, Roger [Sen.-R-KS]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.Res.714 — A resolution supporting the designation of May 10, 2026, as “National Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Mental Health Day”; Sponsor: Hirono, Mazie K. [Sen.-D-HI]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4460 — A bill to provide for an extension of the rural community hospital demonstration program; Sponsor: Grassley, Chuck [Sen.-R-IA]; Committees: Senate - Finance

S.4467 — A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act with respect to nursing facility requirements, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Warner, Mark R. [Sen.-D-VA]; Committees: Senate – Finance

S.4472 — A bill to amend the Accelerating Access to Critical Therapies for ALS Act to reauthorize the provisions of such Act through fiscal year 2031, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Murkowski, Lisa [Sen.-R-AK]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4479 — A bill to provide assisted living assistance through Medicaid and low-income housing tax credit; Sponsor: Marshall, Roger [Sen.-R-KS]; Committees: Senate – Finance

H.Res.1245 — Recognizing the importance of the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program to protect the United States’ scientific integrity, public health, environment, and economic growth; Sponsor: Rivas, Luz M. [Rep.-D-CA-29]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1249 — Expressing that the United States is obligated to permanently end the unhoused crisis by 2029 and uphold, protect, and enforce the civil and human rights of unhoused individuals, including the human rights to housing, universal health care, livable wages, education, employment opportunities, access to public facilities, free movement in public spaces, privacy, confidentiality, internet access, vote, freedom from harassment by law enforcement, private businesses, property owners, and housed residents, and equal rights to health care, legal representation, and social services without discrimination based on housing status; Sponsor: Tlaib, Rashida [Rep.-D-MI-12]; Committees: House - Financial Services; Education and Workforce; Judiciary; Agriculture; Ways and Means

H.J.Res.167 — Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to the withdrawal of the rule relating to “Debt Collection Practices (Regulation F); Deceptive and Unfair Collection of Medical Debt”; Sponsor: Pressley, Ayanna [Rep.-D-MA-7]; Committees: House - Financial Services

H.J.Res.168 — Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to the withdrawal of the rule relating to “Bulletin 2022-01: Medical Debt Collection and Consumer Reporting Requirements in Connection with the No Surprises Act”; Sponsor: Tlaib, Rashida [Rep.-D-MI-12]; Committees: House - Financial Services

H.R.8622 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to transform the Merit-based Incentive Payment System into the Data-driven Performance Payment System under the Medicare physician fee schedule, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Miller-Meeke, Mariannette [Rep.-R-IA-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.8629 — To strengthen recruitment, training, and retention of the health center workforce to improve access to care and health outcomes in rural and underserved communities, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Ruiz, Raul [Rep.-D-CA-25]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.8630 — To amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit treatment of a biologic as a biological product based solely on the presence of a protein that is a clinically inactive component in such biologic, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Rulli, Michael A. [Rep.-R-OH-6]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce