



Health Policy Briefing

May 11, 2026

Appropriators Urge State Department to Restore GAVI Funding

A bipartisan group of Senate appropriators is [urging](#) the Department of State to restore \$600 million in funding for GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance. GAVI is a global health partnership whose mission is to increase access to vaccines in developing countries. The lawmakers express concern about the Trump administration’s withholding of congressionally appropriated money representing approximately 15% of GAVI’s funding. The \$600 million will expire at the end of the fiscal year on September 30 if it is not released by the administration. “GAVI plays a critical role in averting the spread of preventable diseases around the globe and helps protect public health in our country by stopping outbreaks before they reach our borders,” the letter states. “Congressional support for GAVI endures because of its proven success as a public-private partnership, immunizing more than 1.1 billion children – and in turn preventing 20.6 million deaths – since its inception in 2000,” the lawmakers assert. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has criticized GAVI for using immunizations with ingredients like thimerosal, which Kennedy believes is likely to cause autism. GAVI has responded that the preservative is safe and necessary in countries that lack the refrigeration resources necessary to prevent bacterial contamination of the vaccines. The letter was signed by Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), Chair of the Appropriations Committee, Vice Chair Patty Murray (D-Wash.), and committee members Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), and Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.).

Republicans Ask Court to Reinstate Abortion Pill Restrictions

More than 100 Republican members of Congress are urging the Supreme Court to block mail order access to mifepristone. The Republican [amicus brief](#) was submitted in support of Louisiana’s case seeking reverse the Biden-era removal of in-person dispensing requirements for the abortion drug. “By expressly authorizing mail-order chemical abortion drugs, the Food and Drug Administration is endangering women’s health and safety by eliminating a medically necessary in-person examination to screen for contraindications,” the lawmakers argue in their filing. Louisiana sued the Trump administration late last year over the situation, asserting that it allows the drug to be mailed into the state, thus circumventing the state’s abortion restrictions.

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WSJ Reports on Possible Ousting of FDA Commissioner Makary

It was reported by the Wall Street Journal on Friday that President Donald Trump plans to fire Commissioner of Food and Drugs Marty Makary, MD. Makary's tenure at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been marked by high employee turnover, including the departure of many of the agency's division leaders. Conservatives on Capitol Hill have accused the commissioner of slow walking a review of mifepristone safety data, while he has also faced criticism from industry regarding the scientific drug review process perceived as being inconsistent and politicized. It remains unclear if or when Makary will officially depart the FDA. The White House is reportedly thinking of naming Deputy Commissioner for Food Kyle Diamantas to the position of acting FDA commissioner, while former FDA commissioner Stephen Hahn and former acting commissioner Brett Giroir are under consideration for the actual nomination.

USPSTF to Meet in July

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) will meet in July, according to remarks by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) chief counselor Chris Klomp last week. USPSTF is responsible for determining which preventive medical services are recommended and therefore must be fully covered by insurers, as established by the Affordable Care Act. HHS recently issued a request for nominations to serve on USPSTF, with a submission deadline of May 23. While USPSTF usually meets three times a year, HHS has cancelled three of its four scheduled meetings since the start of President Donald Trump's second term.

Democrats Push for Release of Complete PEPFAR Data

Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) and Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.) have sent a [letter](#) to Secretary of State Marco Rubio regarding the withholding of 2025 data on the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Sen. Shaheen and Rep. Meeks are the ranking members of their respective chamber's Foreign Affairs committees. The State Department typically releases quarterly updates about PEPFAR's performance, but since the start of President Donald Trump's second term in office the administration has only released PEPFAR data covering the last quarter of 2025. "The failure to maintain accurate data was an entirely avoidable outcome of the administration's chaotic decision to disrupt essential work without a plan to sustain basic oversight and accountability mechanisms," the letter argues. "These failures are not an excuse to avoid releasing available data to the public in accordance with the standing expectations for transparency of the PEPFAR program and existing statute, and we ask that data from the first three quarters of fiscal year 2025 be released publicly," the lawmakers request. In a response to POLITICO, the State Department said that future data releases "will reflect globally recognized best practices by strengthening country-owned surveillance and reporting, advancing self-reliance, establishing high-quality data, and ensuring U.S. resources are deployed effectively so that each dollar of foreign assistance can have the greatest possible impact."

Upcoming Congressional Hearings and Markups

Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearing “Whistleblower Testimony on the COVID Coverup;” 10:00 a.m.; May 13

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies hearing “A Review of the President’s Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request for the United States Food and Drug Administration;” 10:30 a.m.; May 13

Senate Special Committee on Aging hearing “Caught in the Middle: Supporting Families in the Sandwich Generation;” 3:30 p.m.; May 13

Senate Judiciary Committee executive business meeting to consider legislation including S. 825, Fighting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Act of 2025; 10:15 a.m.; May 14

House Veterans’ Affairs Committee markup including the Recognizing Community Organizations for Veteran Engagement and Recovery Act (H.R. 2283) and Veteran Opioid Emergency Treatment Act (H.R. 5999); 2:00 p.m.; May 14

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

H.Res.1256 — Expressing support for the designation of May 6, 2026, as “National Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day” and prioritizing the goals and ideals of raising awareness and understanding of maternal mental health conditions; Sponsor: Letlow, Julia [Rep.-R-LA-5]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1258 — Expressing support for the designation of May 2026 as “National Brain Tumor Awareness Month”; Sponsor: Quigley, Mike [Rep.-D-IL-5]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8650 — To amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to increase payments to States with respect to outreach and enrollment under the Medicaid program; Sponsor: Carter, Troy A. [Rep.-D-LA-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8651 — Advancing Safe Medications for Moms and Babies Act of 2026; Sponsor: Castor, Kathy [Rep.-D-FL-14]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8657 — To amend the Public Health Service Act to enhance programs for youth suicide prevention and intervention, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Houchin, Erin [Rep.-R-IN-9]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8658 — To amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to modify the notification requirement for emergency contract health services for certain beneficiaries, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Kennedy, Mike [Rep.-R-UT-3]; Committees: House - Natural Resources; Energy and Commerce

H.R.8659 — To amend the definition of a professional student in the Higher Education Act of 1965; Sponsor: Kiggans, Jennifer A. [Rep.-R-VA-2]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce

H.R.8662 — To provide assisted living assistance through Medicaid and low-income housing tax credit; Sponsor: Miller, Max L. [Rep.-R-OH-7]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1260 — Supporting the designation of May 10, 2026, as “National Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Mental Health Day”; Sponsor: Chu, Judy [Rep.-D-CA-28]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1264 — Supporting the goals and ideals of “National Nurses Week”, to be observed from May 6 through May 12, 2026; Sponsor: Joyce, David P. [Rep.-R-OH-14]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1265 — Expressing support for the designation of the week of May 3, 2026, through May 9, 2026, as “Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week”; Sponsor: Peters, Scott H. [Rep.-D-CA-50]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1268 — Recognizing the week of May 3, 2026, through May 9, 2026, as “National Postpartum Awareness Week for Communities of Color”; Sponsor: Tlaib, Rashida [Rep.-D-MI-12]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1270 — Expressing support for the designation of July 15, 2026, as “Glioblastoma Awareness Day”; Sponsor: Williams, Roger [Rep.-R-TX-25]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.8667 — To amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to set the maximum cost-sharing amount paid by an eligible covered beneficiary under the TRICARE program and a veteran for such selected drug, as established under the Social Security Act, and the maximum price of a selected drug procured by Federal agencies, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Vindman, Eugene Simon [Rep.-D-VA-7]; Committees: House - Veterans’ Affairs; Armed Services

H.R.8679 — To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to transmit a veteran’s history of opioid prescriptions to a Community Care health care provider; Sponsor: Collins, Mike [Rep.-R-GA-10]; Committees: House - Veterans’ Affairs

H.R.8684 — To amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to require group health plans and health insurance issuers offering group health insurance coverage to only pay claims submitted by hospitals that have in place policies and procedures to ensure accurate billing practices, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Foxx, Virginia [Rep.-R-NC-5]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce

H.R.8687 — To amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to provide for escalating civil penalties for fraudulent or negligent importation of unauthorized electronic nicotine delivery systems; Sponsor: Hinson, Ashley [Rep.-R-IA-2]; Committees: House - Ways and Means

H.R.8690 — To address the health needs of incarcerated women related to pregnancy and childbirth, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Kamlager-Dove, Sydney [Rep.-D-CA-37]; Committees: House - Judiciary; Budget; Homeland Security

H.R.8691 — To amend the definition of a professional student in the Higher Education Act of 1965; Sponsor: Kiggans, Jennifer A. [Rep.-R-VA-2]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce

H.R.8716 — To amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act, title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act, the Employee Retirement Security Act of 1974, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require coverage of self-measured blood pressure monitoring for pregnant and postpartum individuals; Sponsor: Williams, Nikema [Rep.-D-GA-5]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means; Education and Workforce