



Health Policy Briefing

June 22, 2026

HELP Advances Seven Health Bills

The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee advanced seven healthcare bills during a markup last Wednesday. The legislation approved by the panel include:

- The Charlotte Woodward Organ Transplant Discrimination Protection Act;
- The Healthy Start Reauthorization Act of 2026;
- The Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act;
- The EARLY Act Reauthorization of 2025;
- The Accelerating Access to Critical Therapies for ALS Act of 2026;
- The Medication Affordability and Patent Integrity Act; and
- The Biosimilar Red Tape Elimination Act.

During the markup, committee members also debated the Ensuring Timely Access to Generics Act, ultimately punting on voting on the bill. The legislation aims to increase access to generic pharmaceuticals by preventing brand manufacturers from using citizen petitions to delay competition. The vote on the bill was postponed following Ranking Member Bernie Sander’s (I-Vt.) attempt to offer amendments to the bill, some of which Chair Bill Cassidy, MD (R-La.) characterized as poison pills and “more about messaging.”

E&C Leaders Request Information on Case Involving Importation of Biological Materials

Republican leadership of the House Energy and Commerce Committee have sent a [letter](#) to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) regarding two NIH researchers who allegedly transported biological materials into the U.S. illegally. The correspondence concerns the case of laboratory scientists Vincent Munster and Claude Kwe, who have been charged by the Justice Department with conspiring to smuggle mpox and other biological material into the country in an incident that took place on January 25 at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. The researchers were returning to the country from the Republic of Congo; Munster and Kwe have plead not guilty. The committee leaders ask NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya, MD to provide information about “the circumstances surrounding the alleged importation of biological materials, the research activities involving those materials, the adequacy of NIH biosafety oversight, and any corrective actions the agency has taken or plans to take.” A response is requested by June 30.

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Wyden Releases RFI on Drug Pricing Policy

Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) is [requesting](#) information about potential drug pricing policy proposals, focusing specifically on lowering the price manufacturers charge for prescription drugs, lowering out-of-pocket costs for patients, and fostering biopharmaceutical innovation in areas of unmet need, bolstering domestic clinical trials, and recruiting and maintaining scientific talent. The policies outlined in the 42-page document could inform the Democratic agenda should the party regain control of one or both chambers of Congress next year. Comments on the request for information (RFI) should be submitted to drugs@finance.senate.gov no later than August 17, 2026.

CBO Calls for More Research on No Surprises Act

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) published a [blog post](#) last week calling for further research about the effectiveness of the No Surprises Act (NSA). CBO notes that the NSA has protected patients from surprise bills, but that emerging evidence suggests the law “might not have the effects that CBO anticipated.” While prices for some services that had high rates of surprise billing before the law’s enactment have declined, CBO cites reports which “indicate providers are winning more than 8 in 10 independent dispute resolution cases and are being awarded payments that are much higher than expected, particularly in certain geographic areas.” The agency calls for new research that evaluates the law’s effects on healthcare prices and network participation. Comments can be submitted to communications@cbo.gov.

MedPAC Releases June Report to Congress

The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) has released its June report to Congress. The six chapters of the report cover the following topics: improving payment incentives in Medicare; the complexity of Medicare enrollment decisions for beneficiaries; Medicare payment operations and their role in identifying improper payments; estimated association between MA enrollment and hospitals’ and post-acute care providers’ finances; access to hospice and certain complex palliative services for beneficiaries with end-stage renal disease or cancer; and an assessment of the Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection System. The full report can be found [here](#).

NIH Launches Animal Testing Alternatives Office

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced the formation of a new office focused on the development, validation, and scaling of the use of animal testing alternatives. The Office of Research Innovation, Validation, and Application will be located in the Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives. “Complex computational models, 3D human tissue models, and other emerging technologies have improved by leaps and bounds in recent years and may hold the key to a more effective research enterprise,” NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya, MD said in a statement. “By strategically capitalizing on these tools and encouraging further innovation, NIH aims to steer biomedical research in this direction.”

Upcoming Congressional Hearings and Markups

Senate Indian Affairs Committee nomination hearing to consider Mark Cruz to be Director of the Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services; 10:00 a.m.; June 24

Joint Economic Committee hearing “Protecting Patients and Taxpayers: Combating Healthcare Fraud and Leakage to Strengthen Program Integrity;” 2:00 p.m.; June 24

Senate Appropriations Committee markup of Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA; Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act; Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Act; Legislative Branch Appropriations Act; 10:00 a.m.; June 25

House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations hearing “State Medicaid Program Integrity: Examining Fraud Risks and Oversight Deficiencies;” 10:15 a.m.; June 25

House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Work & Welfare hearing on the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program: Early Support, Lifelong Impact; 2:00 p.m.; June 25

Recently Introduced Health Legislation

H.R.9285 — To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out a Heat Illness AI Surveillance and Response Program, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Lawler, Michael [Rep.-R-NY-17]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.9274 — To direct the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to establish a gun violence prevention and public safety database. Sponsor: Foushee, Valerie P. [Rep.-D-NC-4]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.9273 — To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to require public institutions of higher education that receive grants under the Medical Student Education program to include training for medical students relating to menopause in the curriculums of such institutions, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Foushee, Valerie P. [Rep.-D-NC-4]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.9260 — Making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2027, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Aderholt, Robert B. [Rep.-R-AL-4]; Committees: House - Appropriations

H.R.9257 — To amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require group health plans and health insurance issuers offering group or individual health insurance coverage to provide for 3 primary care visits and 3 behavioral health care visits without application of any cost-sharing requirement. Sponsor: Underwood, Lauren [Rep.-D-IL-14]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Education and Workforce; Ways and Means

H.Res.1365 — Recognizing Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) as a serious feeding and eating disorder and acknowledging the urgent need to advance awareness, early identification, research, and equitable access to care. Sponsor: Velázquez, Nydia M. [Rep.-D-NY-7]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Education and Workforce

S.4776 — A bill to repeal certain impediments to the administration of the firearms laws. Sponsor: Kim, Andy [Sen.-D-NJ]; Committees: Senate - Judiciary

S.4775 — A bill to amend the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act to clarify liability protections for firearms and

associated manufacturers and retailers, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Cornyn, John [Sen.-R-TX]; Committees: Senate - Judiciary

S.4754 — A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require group health plans and health insurance issuers offering group or individual health insurance coverage to provide for 3 primary care visits and 3 behavioral health care visits without application of any cost-sharing requirement. Sponsor: King, Angus S., Jr. [Sen.-I-ME]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.4751 — A bill to prevent, treat, and cure tuberculosis globally. Sponsor: Young, Todd [Sen.-R-IN]; Committees: Senate - Foreign Relations

H.R.9326 — To promote United States leadership in technical standards by directing the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Department of State to take certain actions to encourage and enable United States participation in developing standards and specifications for artificial intelligence and other critical and emerging technologies, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Webster, Daniel [Rep.-R-FL-11]; Committees: House - Science, Space, and Technology

H.R.9323 — To establish the Department of Advanced Technology and Artificial Intelligence, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Rivas, Luz M. [Rep.-D-CA-29]; Committees: House - Oversight and Government Reform