



Health Policy Briefing

July 13, 2026

South Carolina Republican Lindsey Graham Dies at 71

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) passed away unexpectedly on Saturday after a “brief and sudden illness,” according to a statement from his office. Sen. Graham had served in the Senate since 2002. He was the chairman of the Budget Committee and the Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. Given these leadership roles, his death will impact Republican efforts to move Reconciliation 3.0 and the fiscal year 2027 appropriations process. Graham was also a senior member of the Judiciary and Environment and Public Works committees. It is not yet clear how his passing will affect the Senate schedule this week. No funeral plans have been announced, and Majority Leader John Thune (R-S.D.) has not announced any changes to the Senate floor schedule.

South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster (R) will appoint someone to serve out the remainder of Graham’s term, which ends on January 3, 2027. The special Republican primary to fill Graham’s seat must be held by August 11, and candidates can formally file to run between July 21 to July 28. The Republican nominee will face against Annie Andrews, MD a pediatrician and professor at the University of South Carolina, who won the Democratic primary in June.

McConnell Issues Statement on Fall, Hospitalization

After weeks of speculation, Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) released a statement on Sunday explaining that he suffered a fall last month and is also recovering from a mild case of pneumonia. He expects to be out at least a little while longer while he recovers. In McConnell’s absence, Senate Republicans have been limited in their ability to advance appropriations bills.

Inside

Lawmakers Weigh In on OMB Grantmaking Rule.....	2
Grassley Requests Probe into Children’s Transplant Waiting List.....	2
HHS Delays USPSTF Meeting Again.....	2
Upcoming Congressional Hearings and Markups.....	3
Recently Introduced Health Legislation.....	3

Lawmakers Weigh In on OMB Grantmaking Rule

Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee has sent a [letter](#) asking the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to withdraw certain provisions of its ***Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance*** proposed rule. She specifically expresses concern about portions of the regulation that would potentially harm small and rural communities and scientific and biomedical research. Collins argues that authorizing mid-award termination of federal awards, with limited ability to appeal, would inject uncertainty into the award process and make these awards more costly. She also asserts that adding an additional review for awards “that have already been selected through a scientific, merit-based peer review process would undermine the objective that the federal government fund scientific and biomedical research projects based on scientific merit and value, rather than political ideology.” The letter further outlines how the proposed rule would add additional administrative burdens on recipients and sub-recipients of federal financial assistance awards, and highlights how the proposed rule “fails to address how OMB and agencies would ensure that consideration of the President’s policy priorities does not supersede congressional intent for the administration of these awards.” In the letter, Sen. Collins asks OMB to extend the comment period for the proposed rule by no less than 90 days.

Democrats have also weighed in on the regulation, with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.), Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), and Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) leading the entire Senate Democratic caucus in [demanding](#) that the rule be immediately rescinded. Their letter warns that the proposal exceeds OMB’s statutory authority, undermines Congress’s constitutional power of the purse, and would allow the President to weaponize federal grants for political purposes. “OMB’s proposal unlawfully seeks to substitute Congress’s role in directing federal spending with the President’s preferred priorities, and in doing so, makes it harder for every community and organization in the United States to fairly access federal funding,” the letter argues.

More than 275,000 comments have been submitted on the proposed rule to date. Comments are due on or before July 13, 2026.

Grassley Requests Probe into Children’s Transplant Waiting List

Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) is [requesting](#) that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigate organ transplant wait times for pediatric patients. Sen. Grassley’s letter outlines the specific challenges related to organ allocation and transplantation for children, highlighting that 2,000 patients under the age of 18 remain on the national waiting list for organ transplants. He asks that GAO also review the mortality rate for children on the waitlist awaiting organ transplants and any actions the Health Resources and Services Administration and the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network have taken to increase the supply of organs available for pediatric patients .

HHS Delays USPSTF Meeting Again

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has again delayed a scheduled meeting of the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). 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. The panel, which typically meets three times a year, has not met in person since March 2025. An HHS spokesperson clarified that the decision to postpone the latest meeting until late August was in response to an “unprecedented” number of nominations to serve on the task force. USPSTF currently has just eight out of 16 sitting members; HHS has not appointed replacements for the five members who saw their terms expire at the beginning of this year. A solicitation for nominations to serve on USPSTF was issued in April with a deadline for submissions of May 23.

Upcoming Congressional Hearings and Markups

House Education and Workforce Committee hearing “Training Activists, Not Physicians: The Impact of DEI on Medical Schools;” 10:15 a.m.; July 14

Senate Judiciary Committee hearing “From Genes to Machines: the Patent Eligibility Debate;” 10:15 a.m.; July 14

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee hearing to consider the nominations of Sean Kaufman to be Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response for the Department of Health and Human Services and Erica Schwartz to be Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 10:00 a.m.; July 15

House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health hearing “Maintaining America’s Leadership in Biomedical Innovation: FDA’s Role in Advancing U.S. Drug Development;” 10:15 a.m.; July 15

Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel hearing to receive testimony on the Tricare Pharmacy Program; 2:30 p.m.; July 15

Senate Aging Committee hearing “Behind the Label: Foreign Ownership and Control in America’s Drug Supply Chain;” 3:30 p.m.; July 15

Recently Introduced Health Legislation

H.R.9578 — To require AI-generated content is labeled as AI-generated with the metadata of the output or by other technological means, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Gottheimer, Josh [Rep.-D-NJ-5]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.9599 – To strengthen the 340B drug discount program; Sponsor: Peters, Scott H. [Rep.-D-CA-50]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means; Education and Workforce

H.R.9605 — To ensure the Department of Health and Human Services will manage accreditation for foreign medical schools, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Grothman, Glenn [Rep.-R-WI-6]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce

H.R.9623 — To repeal the Medicaid-related portions of An Act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of H. Con. Res. 14; Sponsor: Boyle, Brendan F. [Rep.-D-PA-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.9629 — To require an assessment of the environmental and public health effects of data centers, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Landsman, Greg [Rep.-D-OH-1]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.9632 — To better coordinate Federal efforts to utilize advance technologies, such as AI, to improve diagnoses, treatments, cures, and prevention strategies for pediatric cancer, and for other purposes; Sponsor: McCaul, Michael T. [Rep.-R-TX-10]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.9635 — To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to establish special rules to provide for continued review of human drug and device submissions during a lapse of appropriations, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Mullin, Kevin [Rep.-D-CA-15]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce