



Health Policy Briefing

September 28, 2026

White House Drops Plan to Issue Executive Order on NIH Research

On Wednesday, Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins (R-Maine) announced that the White House has agreed to abandon plans to issue an executive order to establish a board of political appointees to oversee the awarding of grants by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The announcement followed bipartisan congressional pushback to the plan, including a [letter](#) sent by Sen. Collins to Russell Vought, Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, Director of the NIH, arguing that political control over NIH grants would undermine the peer review process credited with breakthrough medical research and contributing to 174 scientists becoming recipients of the Nobel Prize. Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), Appropriations Committee Vice Chair, also issued a [statement](#), asserting that “only one question should decide which research gets funded: is this good science that could save lives?” Earlier this month, Congress passed legislation that paused a similar OMB-proposed rule on federal grantmaking through December 11.

White House Moves to Block Funding Via Pocket Recissions

With less than one week remaining in fiscal year 2026, President Donald Trump informed congressional leadership that he has canceled nearly \$1 billion in spending without congressional consent – a budgetary maneuver known as a pocket recission. The money being clawed back includes appropriations for immigration services, support for foreign countries, education programs, health research efforts, and assistance for businesses owned by minorities. Many have questioned the legality of the maneuver. While the President is allowed to request that Congress rescind federal funding – and withhold that funding for a 45-day period in which lawmakers approve, reject, or ignore the request – the administration argues that it can cancel funding without congressional action as there are less than 45 days left in the fiscal year, when unspent funds automatically get cancelled. Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Susan Collins (R-Maine) criticized the announcement, characterizing it as a “clear violation of the law.”

In related news, Sen. Collins sent a [letter](#) to Secretary of State Marco Rubio and other administration officials earlier last week, calling on the White House to spend more than one billion dollars of

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congressionally appropriated global health funds. She urges that the \$1.3 billion be spent as Congress intended – to protect maternal and child health and counter infectious diseases – and not to pay for “unknown closeout costs” associated with last year’s elimination of the U.S. Agency for International Development. Similarly, Senate Appropriations Committee Vice Chair Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Labor-Health and Human Services Subcommittee Ranking Member Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) [wrote](#) to the administration asking how it plans to spend down funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). “Research funded by AHRQ grants has saved tens of thousands of lives and billions of dollars in health care costs, but once again, instead of getting these funds provided by Congress out the door as is required by law, this administration is on track to impound these resources and kill lifesaving research,” write Murray and Baldwin.

Finance Committee Advances HHS Nominees

The Senate Finance Committee favorably reported out the nominations of Chris Klomp to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services and Ge Bai to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services on Thursday. Klomp’s nomination was advanced in a 15-12 vote, with Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) joining Republicans in support of the nominee. Bai’s nomination was advanced in a 14-13 vote.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee postponed its scheduled votes on several other health nominees due to attendance issues. The panel had planned to vote on Thursday to advance the nominations of Nicole Saphier, MD to be Surgeon General/Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, Timothy Westlake, MD to be Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, and Mary Lazare to be Assistant Secretary for Aging. The votes have been rescheduled for September 30.

Senators Request Reconsideration of RPM Policy

Senators Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) and Mark Warner (D-Va.) have [written](#) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to share their concerns about a policy that would cut provider reimbursement for remote patient monitoring (RPM). The proposal would require doctors and hospitals to use their own staff to monitor patients via RPM, eliminating reimbursement for providers who use the RPM vendors’ clinical staff for such monitoring. They specifically express concern about the impact of the proposal on rural communities. “Remote monitoring services are especially important in rural communities, where patients often face long travel distances, transportation barriers, clinician shortages, hospital closures, and limited access to timely follow-up care,” they stated in the letter. Blackburn and Warner introduced the Rural Patient Monitoring Access Act (S. 1535) together earlier this year to improve Medicare coverage for RPM in rural areas.

HSGAC Rejects Push to Compel Fauci Aide’s Testimony

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) rejected a vote last week to compel testimony under immunity from a former special assistant to Anthony Fauci. The committee recently subpoenaed the unnamed assistant, who worked for Fauci from 2007 to 2022; the assistant subsequently pleaded the 5th and did not answer questions during a closed-door meeting. Wednesday’s vote would have required the support of two-thirds of the panel; the committee voted 8-7 on party lines to compel testimony under immunity from the aide, falling short of the necessary margin. The effort is a part of Chair Rand Paul’s (R-Ky.) longstanding investigation into the origins of COVID-19.

Upcoming Congressional Hearings and Markups

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee executive session to vote on nominations, including Nicole Saphier to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service; Timothy Westlake to be Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, Department of Health and Human Services; and Mary Lazare to be Assistant Secretary for Aging, Department of Health and Human Services; 9:45 a.m.; September 30

H.Res.1567 — Expressing support for the designation of September 22, 2026, as “National Hispanic Nurses Day” and recognizing the National Association of Hispanic Nurses as the leading organization representing and advocating for Hispanic nurses; Sponsor: Barragán, Nanette Diaz [Rep.-D-CA-44]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1569 — Recognizing the importance of protecting continuous Medicaid coverage for individuals undergoing active cancer treatment; Sponsor: Dingell, Debbie [Rep.-D-MI-6]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.10520 — To provide for research and improvement of cardiovascular health among the South Asian population of the United States, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Jayapal, Pramila [Rep.-D-WA-7]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.10521 — To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to revise the regulations implementing the 5-star rating system under Medicare Advantage; Sponsor: Kelly, Mike [Rep.-R-PA-16]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce

H.R.10522 — To prohibit the obligation or expenditure of Department of Health and Human Services funds for the use of live dogs and live cats in biomedical research, to strengthen accountability for Federal research expenditures, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Langworthy, Nicholas A. [Rep.-R-NY-23]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.10523 — To amend the Animal Welfare Act to prohibit breeding of dogs for research purposes, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Mace, Nancy [Rep.-R-SC-1]; Committees: House - Agriculture

S.5449 — A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve maternal health and promote safe motherhood; Sponsor: Kaine, Tim [Sen.-D-VA]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.Res.892 — A resolution supporting the designation of September 18, 2026, as “National Concussion Awareness Day”; Sponsor: Hassan, Margaret Wood [Sen.-D-NH]; Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.

S.Res.894 — A resolution designating September 25, 2026, as “National Ataxia Awareness Day”, and raising awareness of ataxia, ataxia research, and the search for a cure; Sponsor: Hyde-Smith, Cindy [Sen.-R-MS]; Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.

S.5462 — A bill to extend the Frontier Community Health Integration Project Demonstration; Sponsor: Hoeven, John [Sen.-R-ND]; Committees: Senate - Finance

S.5464 — A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the report on the health of women veterans, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Boozman, John [Sen.-R-AR]; Committees: Senate - Veterans' Affairs

S.5471 — A bill to require disclosure of certain information relating to artificial intelligence systems, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Coons, Christopher A. [Sen.-D-DE]; Committees: Senate - Commerce, Science, and Transportation

S.5475 — A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure timely review of local coverage determination requests under the Medicare program; Sponsor: Luján, Ben Ray [Sen.-D-NM]; Committees: Senate - Finance

S.5488 — A bill to establish a program to address sickle cell disease and other heritable hemoglobinopathies; Sponsor: Van Hollen, Chris [Sen.-D-MD]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.5489 — A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize a scholarship and loan repayment program to incentivize physicians to enter into the field of sickle cell disease research, treatment, and patient care, and for other

purposes; Sponsor: Van Hollen, Chris [Sen.-D-MD]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.5493 — A bill to establish the Department of Artificial Intelligence and to provide for the regulation of advanced artificial intelligence systems, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Sanders, Bernard [Sen.-I-VT]; Committees: Senate - Commerce, Science, and Transportation

S.Res.899 — A resolution recognizing suicide as a serious public health problem and expressing support for the designation of September as “National Suicide Prevention Month”; Sponsor: Murphy, Christopher [Sen.-D-CT]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.Res.902 — A resolution supporting the designation of the week of September 20 through September 26, 2026, as “Telehealth Awareness Week”; Sponsor: Schatz, Brian [Sen.-D-HI]; Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.

S.Res.906 — A resolution supporting the designation of the week of August 24 through August 28, 2026, as the fourth annual “National Community Health Worker Awareness Week”; Sponsor: Wyden, Ron [Sen.-D-OR]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.Res.907 — A resolution supporting the designation of September 2026 as “National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month”; Sponsor: Slotkin, Elissa [Sen.-D-MI]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.Res.910 — A resolution expressing support for the designation of October 2026 as “Lewy Body Dementia Awareness Month”; Sponsor: Booker, Cory A. [Sen.-D-NJ]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.5496 — A bill to expand access to and lower the cost of health care; Sponsor: Warner, Mark R. [Sen.-D-VA]; Committees: Senate - Finance

S.5497 — A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to reimburse State homes for the cost of, or to furnish to State homes, certain costly medications provided to veterans who receive nursing home care in such State homes, and for other purposes; Sponsor: King, Angus S., Jr. [Sen.-I-ME]; Committees: Senate - Veterans' Affairs

S.5498 — A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to add alpha-gal to the definition of “major food allergen”; Sponsor: Warner, Mark R. [Sen.-D-VA]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.5499 — A bill to amend the 21st Century Cures Act to reauthorize the Tick-Borne Disease Working Group, to reauthorize the Kay Hagan Tick Act, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Warner, Mark R. [Sen.-D-VA]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.5502 — A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for the protection of biotechnology and biomanufacturing infrastructure by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Hassan, Margaret Wood [Sen.-D-NH]; Committees: Senate - Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

S.5513 — A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Program to establish a pilot program to incentivize certain hospitals to purchase personal protective equipment and medical consumables that are domestic products, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Cassidy, Bill [Sen.-R-LA]; Committees: Senate - Finance

S.5515 — A bill to improve Federal efforts with respect to the prevention of maternal mortality, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Durbin, Richard J. [Sen.-D-IL]; Committees: Senate - Finance

S.5520 — A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to require the National Coordinator for Health Information

Technology to establish a national computable-guideline framework for cancer screening recommendations, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Grassley, Chuck [Sen.-R-IA]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.5522 — A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security to protect genetic and other sensitive biometric data, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Young, Todd [Sen.-R-IN]; Committees: Senate - Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

S.5536 — A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide flexibility in the treatment of nonpayment of Medicare prescription drug plan premiums; Sponsor: Blunt Rochester, Lisa [Sen.-D-DE]; Committees: Senate - Finance

S.5539 — A bill to require group health plans and group or individual health insurance coverage to provide coverage for over-the-counter contraceptives; Sponsor: Murray, Patty [Sen.-D-WA]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.5543 — A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to reauthorize the residential substance use disorder treatment program, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Cornyn, John [Sen.-R-TX]; Committees: Senate - Judiciary

S.5546 — A bill to provide women with increased access to preventive and life-saving cancer screening; Sponsor: Murray, Patty [Sen.-D-WA]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.5554 — A bill to modernize and strengthen Federal efforts to improve ovarian cancer awareness, hereditary cancer risk assessment, access to genetic counseling and testing, and access to specialty care, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Slotkin, Elissa [Sen.-D-MI]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.5564 — A bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out activities relating to neglected diseases of poverty; Sponsor: Booker, Cory A. [Sen.-D-NJ]; Committees: Senate - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

S.5565 — A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to authorize the use of Federal foreign assistance funds for comprehensive reproductive health care services, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Booker, Cory A. [Sen.-D-NJ]; Committees: Senate - Foreign Relations

H.Con.Res.120 — Supporting the designation of the week of September 21 through September 25, 2026, as “National Falls Prevention Awareness Week” to raise awareness and encourage the prevention of falls among older adults; Sponsor: Frankel, Lois [Rep.-D-FL-22]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Con.Res.121 — Expressing the sense of the Congress that assisted suicide (sometimes referred to using other terms) puts everyone, including those most vulnerable, at risk of deadly harm; Sponsor: Murphy, Gregory F. [Rep.-R-NC-3]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.Res.1577 — Expressing support for the designation of September 2026 as “Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month” in order to educate communities across the United States about sickle cell disease and the need for research, early detection methods, effective treatments, and preventative care programs with respect to complications from sickle cell disease and conditions related to sickle cell disease; Sponsor: Davis, Danny K. [Rep.-D-IL-7]; Committees: House - Oversight and Government Reform

H.Res.1578 — Supporting the designation of September 2026 as “National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month”; Sponsor: DeLauro, Rosa L. [Rep.-D-CT-3]; Committees: House - Oversight and Government Reform

H.R.10531 — To establish a program to address sickle cell disease and other heritable hemoglobinopathies; Sponsor: Adams, Alma S. [Rep.-D-NC-12]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.10538 — To establish the Department of Artificial Intelligence and to provide for the regulation of advanced artificial intelligence systems, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Casar, Greg [Rep.-D-TX-35]; Committees: House - Oversight and Government Reform

H.R.10541 — To authorize the Secretary of Defense to establish joint education and training programs on military trauma care and research with military forces of foreign countries; Sponsor: Crow, Jason [Rep.-D-CO-6]; Committees: House - Armed Services

H.R.10544 — To modernize and strengthen Federal efforts to improve ovarian cancer awareness, hereditary cancer risk assessment, access to genetic counseling and testing, and access to specialty care, and for other purposes; Sponsor: DeLauro, Rosa L. [Rep.-D-CT-3]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.10547 — To amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to improve access to the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), to reduce regulatory burdens on PACE providers, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Dingell, Debbie [Rep.-D-MI-6]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.10549 — To amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to prohibit certain group health plans and health insurance issuers from limiting choice in specialty pharmacies; Sponsor: Dunn, Neal P. [Rep.-R-FL-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.10555 — To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide care, treatment, and rehabilitative services to veterans suffering from serious mental illness and veterans who are homeless, regardless of whether such veteran is eligible for hospital, nursing home, and domiciliary care, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Golden, Jared F. [Rep.-D-ME-2]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs

H.R.10559 — To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize grants to eligible health centers to provide patient access to long-acting reversible contraception, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Hinson, Ashley [Rep.-R-IA-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.10568 — To amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security to protect genetic and other sensitive biometric data, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Khanna, Ro [Rep.-D-CA-17]; Committees: House - Homeland Security

H.R.10569 — To amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for the protection of biotechnology and biomanufacturing infrastructure by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Khanna, Ro [Rep.-D-CA-17]; Committees: House - Homeland Security

H.R.10571 — To amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to State support for newborn screening, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Langworthy, Nicholas A. [Rep.-R-NY-23]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.10597 — To require group health plans and group or individual health insurance coverage to provide coverage for over-the-counter contraceptives; Sponsor: Pressley, Ayanna [Rep.-D-MA-7]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Education and Workforce; Ways and Means

H.R.10599 — To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide flexibility in the treatment of nonpayment of Medicare prescription drug plan premiums; Sponsor: Ross, Deborah K. [Rep.-D-NC-2]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.10600 — To amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to authorize the use of Federal foreign assistance funds for comprehensive reproductive health care services, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Schakowsky, Janice D. [Rep.-D-IL-9]; Committees: House - Foreign Affairs