



Health Policy Briefing

October 19, 2026

Wyden Issues RFI on Nation's Long-Term Care System

Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) released a request for information last week on a range of policy proposals aimed at improving long-term care for Americans, including the creation of an affordable home care guarantee. The three general areas for feedback include: making home care affordable and accessible, especially for Americans with disabilities and seniors; improving the quality of care in nursing homes; and strengthening the long-term care workforce. The full RFI can be found [here](#), with comments due by December 18. Sen. Wyden has issued several similar RFIs throughout this year on the subjects of drug pricing and health coverage. The requests are expected to help shape Democrats' legislative agenda for the next Congress.

Democrats Probe Increase to VA-Oracle Contract

Several congressional Democrats are asking the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for an explanation of why the government contract for health records technology with Oracle has been raised from \$10 billion to \$27 billion. The [letter](#) from Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Ct.) and Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.), ranking members of their respective Veterans' Affairs committees, questions why Oracle needs "\$17 billion more to get the job done when this program has already dragged on for eight years...We need answers and not excuses." The lawmakers demand that the VA produce the requested documents and written responses no later than October 30. The CEO of Oracle is expected to testify before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee in November to discuss the project and its delays.

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GAO Issues Report on NIH Management of Foreign Interference Risks

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has recommended that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) do more to strengthen foreign interference risk management. The new [report](#) highlights that efforts by foreign entities to misappropriate or gain unauthorized access to research at NIH could undermine U.S. national security and economic competitiveness. The NIH relies on disclosures from researchers and institutions to identify and manage foreign interference risks, but it does not generally verify such disclosures in the absence of an allegation of foreign interference. GAO recommends that NIH regularly conduct and document a fraud risk assessment tailored to NIH's extramural research program that considers foreign interference risks.

FDA Announces Rare Disease Framework Initiative

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the [Rare Disease Framework Initiative](#) this week, which reimagines the development of drugs and biologics for rare diseases. An accompanying [white paper](#) and press release describes how the FDA will develop an "optimized, fit-for-purpose framework that reflects the realities of rare disease drug development by considering the nuances of each disease, patient needs, product type and the evidence that can be realistically generated in small patient populations." The FDA plans to solicit feedback from patients, industry, and other stakeholders at an October 28 [meeting](#) led by the Reagan-Udall Foundation for the FDA.

U.S. Measles Cases Top 4,400

The number of measles [cases](#) across the country has reached 4,410, nearly double the total number of infections confirmed during the entirety of 2025. For kindergarteners in the 2025-2026 school year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported an MMR coverage rate of 92.4%. The ideal vaccination rate considered necessary to stop widespread outbreaks is 95%.

New KFF Data on Individual Market Enrollment

Enrollment in the individual health insurance market fell 18% between June 2025 and June 2026, according to [new data](#) from the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF). This is an increase from the 12% drop in enrollment estimated in February. In total, KFF estimates that individual market enrollment has fallen by over 4.6 million people, from 25.2 million in June 2025 to 20.5 million in June 2026. The reduced enrollment coincides with the expiration of the enhanced premium tax credits. Kaiser highlights that enrollment declines may continue through this year and in upcoming plan years as enrollees fall behind on their premiums, with premiums projected to continue rising in 2027.

H.Res.1623 — Expressing support for the recognition of October 2026, as “National Dyslexia Awareness Month;” Sponsor: Westerman, Bruce [Rep.-R-AR-4]; Committees: House - Education and Workforce

H.R.10788 — Lower Premiums, Faster Payments Act – To amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act, the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to make certain adjustments to the surprise medical billing requirements for private health insurance; Sponsor: Pallone, Frank [Rep.-D-NJ-6]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Education and Workforce; Ways and Means

H.R.10787 — Access to Medical Supplies Act – To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to exclude urological and ostomy supplies from competitive acquisition programs under the Medicare program for 5 years, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Murphy, Gregory F. [Rep.-R-NC-3]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Ways and Means

H.R.10778 — Low Emission Anesthetics Act – To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a credit to incentivize the use of certain low-emission anesthetic gases by health care facilities, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Foushee, Valerie P. [Rep.-D-NC-4]; Committees: House - Ways and Means

H.R.10770 — 340B Rebate Model Delay Act – To amend title III of the Public Health Service Act to temporarily limit the use of rebates under the 340B Program; Sponsor: Bresnahan, Robert P. [Rep.-R-PA-8]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.10797 — Aerial Transport and High Consequence Infectious Diseases Act – To direct the Secretary of the Air Force to carry out a program to provide for the safe, long-range aerial transport of individuals known to be infected, or suspected of infection, by high-consequence infectious diseases; Sponsor: Bacon, Don [Rep.-R-NE-2]; Committees: House - Armed Services

H.R.10798 — Silicosis Prevention and Treatment Act – To establish a grant program for funding silicosis treatment and education, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Correa, J. Luis [Rep.-D-CA-46]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce

H.R.10799 — Protecting American Workers Through H-1B Modernization Act – To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to modernize the wage required for exempt H-1B workers, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Grothman, Glenn [Rep.-R-WI-6]; Committees: House – Judiciary

H.R.10806 — Medicare Home Health Payment Integrity and Protection Act – To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to decrease fraud related to home health agencies in Medicare, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Tenney, Claudia [Rep.-R-NY-24]; Committees: House - Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce; Judiciary

H.R.10808 — Savings for Tomorrow’s Opportunities, Raising Kids (STORK) Act – To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow additional contributions to a health savings account in the case of the birth or adoption of a child, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Van Epps, Matt [Rep.-R-TN-7]; Committees: House - Ways and Means

H.R.10810 — National Patient Safety Board Act of 2026 –To establish the National Patient Safety Board, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Barragán, Nanette Diaz [Rep.-D-CA-44]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce; Veterans’ Affairs

H.R.10824 — Stroke Education and EMS Care Improvement Act of 2026 – To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a standardized stroke education program for emergency medical services clinicians, and for other purposes; Sponsor: Latimer, George [Rep.-D-NY-16]; Committees: House - Energy and Commerce