

Overview of President Trump's Day One Executive Orders

President Donald Trump began his presidency with a slew of executive orders (EOs), reversing many Biden-era directives and setting administrative priorities. The EOs cover a range of issues including health care; immigration; diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA); climate change; and federal governance; among others.

Preview

In our note, we highlight key EOs likely to affect health policy. The EOs are organized into three categories: (1) an EO rescinding Biden-era EOs related to health care and policy approach (e.g., racial equity and other guiding principles for federal agencies); (2) several health-related EOs; and (3) multiple EOs on federal governance, including a regulatory freeze on all rulemaking. Actions include:

- **Medicaid and ACA.** President Trump rescinded Biden-era EOs to strengthen [Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act](#), which established the 2021 Special Enrollment Period in response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), and directives for federal agencies to identify ways to [improve access](#) to affordable, quality health coverage. The Biden Administration advanced these EOs through rulemaking, including (but not limited to) regulations addressing [Medicaid managed care](#), [Medicaid fee-for-service](#), and [eligibility and enrollment processes](#) for Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and the Basic Health Program (BHP).
- **Prescription Drug Costs.** President Trump rescinded a Biden-era EO to [lower prescription drug costs](#), which prompted a [report](#) from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on options for Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) to test innovation payment and service delivery models for prescription drugs and a [one-year update](#) on the EO. CMMI also launched the [Cell and Gene Therapy \(CGT\) Access Model](#) to test outcomes based arrangements and increase access to such treatments in Medicaid, and issued a [request for information \(RFI\)](#) for the [\\$2 Drug List Model](#) (under development), which tests whether low copayment for commonly prescribed generic drugs can improve medication adherence and outcomes.
- **Health Care Costs.** President Trump signed an [EO](#) directing all executive departments and agencies to take actions intended to lower the cost-of-living – including, specifically, “eliminate unnecessary administrative expenses and rent-seeking practices that increase healthcare costs.” The EO does not define “rent-seeking practices,” but the Administration may be referring to pharmacy benefit managers based on President Trump’s recent [comments](#) “to knock out the middleman.” Other possibilities include policies to address anticompetitive practices, high

prescription drug prices, and prior authorization. The directive regarding “unnecessary administrative expenses” could apply to a range of issues, such as program integrity, site-neutral payments, and greater flexibility for Medicare Advantage. As for next steps, the EO requires the [Assistant to the President for Economy Policy](#) to provide a status report to the President on implementation within 30 days (February 19).

- **Rulemaking.** President Trump issued a [memorandum](#) directing all executive departments and agencies to implement a regulatory freeze in which no rules may be issued or proposed until the agency head appointed or designated by the President after noon on January 20, 2025, reviews and approves the rule. The memorandum also directs federal agencies to consider postponing for 60 days the effective date of any rules that have been published in the *Federal Register*, or any rules that have been issued but have not taken effect. During this 60-day period, federal agencies could consider further delaying the rule beyond the initial 60 days. This memorandum creates uncertainty about the timing and applicability of rules.

Policy Implications

The EOs convey President Trump’s policy goals for his second administration. For the most part, they are statements of intent, generally based on campaign promises, which will inform the rulemaking and regulatory process. It may take months for these policies to take effect, and the public will likely have an opportunity to provide comments before they are finalized.

Some EOs are already facing legal challenges. Twenty-two states have sued to block the [birthright citizenship EO](#) in two separate lawsuits, filed in the [Federal District Court in Massachusetts](#) and the [Western District of Washington](#). Multiple groups, including the [American Public Health Association](#), have filed lawsuits against the “Department of Government Efficiency” [\(DOGE\) EO](#) to compel transparency about the new advisory committee’s operations. More lawsuits are likely to follow.

Next Steps

In the near term, a top priority for the Trump Administration is the confirmation process. Considering the delays in the confirmation hearing process, it could take some time before new rules implementing the EOs are proposed. President Trump also signed an [EO](#) directing a “regulatory freeze,” halting the rulemaking process until a department or agency head has been appointed or designated.

The [confirmation hearing](#) for Robert F. Kennedy Jr., President Trump’s pick to lead the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is on January 29. Whether Kennedy has the votes in the Senate

remains to be seen. Hearings for other health-related appointments, such as Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator (Dr. Mehmet Oz is the nominee), have not yet been scheduled.

Executive Order on “Initial Rescissions”

In his first [EO](#), President Trump rescinded 78 executive orders and actions implemented by the Biden Administration. The directive previews rulemaking and other regulatory actions to follow that will reverse or substantively revise Biden-era policies and programs, which may entail restoring policies promulgated by the first Trump Administration. The mention of “initial” in the EO’s title signals that other Biden-era EOs may be rescinded. Below, we highlight rescinded EOs on health care and related topics as well as rescinded EOs on policy approach (i.e., principles to guide the policymaking process).

Health Care Issues and Related Topics

- **Medicaid and ACA.** Actions to strengthen [Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act](#), which established the 2021 Special Enrollment Period in response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), and directives for federal agencies to identify ways to [improve access](#) to affordable, quality health coverage. The Biden Administration advanced these EOs through rulemaking, including (but not limited to) regulations addressing [Medicaid managed care](#), [Medicaid fee-for-service](#), and [eligibility and enrollment processes](#) for Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and the Basic Health Program (BHP).
- **Prescription Drug Costs.** Actions to [lower prescription drug costs](#), prompting a [report](#) from HHS on options for the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) to test innovation payment and service delivery models for prescription drugs and a [one-year update](#) on the EO. CMMI also launched the [Cell and Gene Therapy \(CGT\) Access Model](#) to test outcomes based arrangements and increase access to such treatments in Medicaid, and issued a [request for information \(RFI\)](#) for the [\\$2 Drug List Model](#) (under development), which tests whether low copayment for commonly prescribed generic drugs can improve medication adherence and outcomes.
- **Artificial Intelligence.** Actions to [secure the development and application of artificial intelligence](#) (AI) technology through rigorous testing protocols for high-risk AI systems – enforcing accountability measures, safeguarding civil rights, and promoting transparency across the AI lifecycle. In response to the EO, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued [guidance](#) on the management of AI systems and application used by federal agencies. The guidance outlined purposes for which AI is presumed to be safety-impacting and rights-impacting. HHS followed suit and issued guidance on how the OMB risk framework [applied to the responsible use of AI in public benefits delivery](#) by State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial

Governments. HHS also released an [AI Strategic Plan](#), as mandated by the EO, to establish a roadmap for responsibly leveraging AI in health care, human services, and public health.

- **COVID-19.** Actions to respond to the COVID-19 PHE, such as establishing the [COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force](#) and assigning a COVID-19 Response Coordinator; bolstering the [public health workforce](#); expanding access to [care and treatments](#) for COVID-19; protecting [worker health and safety](#); supporting the reopening of [schools and child care providers](#); providing [economic relief](#) to individuals, small businesses, and state and local governments; and updating [COVID-19 vaccination requirements](#) for federal workers.
- **Immigration.** Actions to [address the root causes of migration](#) and create an [Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families](#) to reconnect families separated by the first Trump Administration, and directives for federal agencies to [review actions](#) on public charge inadmissibility. The EO on family reunification directed the Task Force to provide recommendations regarding the provision of additional services and support to the children and their families, including trauma and mental health services. The Task Force [facilitated](#) the reunification of over 700 children with their families and made behavioral health services available to those families. In 2022, the Biden Administration [finalized](#) a new public charge rule, effectively reversing the stricter 2019 Trump-era policy and reinstating the 1999 guidance. The updated rule limits the public charge determination to reliance on cash assistance or long-term institutional care, aiming to reduce the chilling effects on immigrant families accessing public benefits, such as Medicaid and CHIP.
- **Climate Change.** Actions to address the [global climate crisis](#) and directives for federal agencies to take a [government-wide approach](#) to environmental justice. Former President Biden had issued several EOs to position the United States as a global leader on the issue. The Trump Administration is expected to dissolve the [HHS Office of Climate Change and Health Equity](#), established by former President Biden.
- **Infrastructure.** Actions to support implementation of the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(P.L. 117-58\)](#) and energy and infrastructure provisions of the [Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 \(P.L. 117-169\)](#) by setting implementation priorities (e.g., advancing environmental and climate justice) and establishing entities to coordinate implementation (e.g., Infrastructure Implementation Task Force, White House Office on Clean Energy Innovation and Implementation).

Policy Approach

- **Racial Equity.** A whole-of-government agenda to [advance racial equity](#), entailing “Equity Action Plans” across federal agencies. This approach shaped the Biden Administration’s focus on eliminating health disparities through a range of policies affecting coverage, reimbursement, quality measurement, and more.
- **Gender Equity and Protections.** Policies to [prevent and combat discrimination](#) on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation, and policies to [advance gender equity and equality](#) through policies and programs coordinated by the White House Gender Policy Council.
- **DEIA.** A government-wide [diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility \(DEIA\)](#) initiative. The head of each federal agency was required to implement a strategic plan to advance DEIA in their workforce.
- **Evidence-based Policy.** A directive for federal agencies to make [evidence-based decisions](#). The EO established the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology – an advisory committee composed of federal officials and appointees that provided perspectives and expertise in science, technology, and innovation.
- **Federal Governance.** An assortment of actions that shape how the federal government makes policies and operates, including efforts to [promote public participation](#), including those from underserved communities in the notice-and-comment process, and a requirement for appointees to [sign an ethics pledge](#), among others.

Executive Orders on Health-Related Issues

President Trump also signed multiple EOs on a range of health-related issues, including health care costs, gender-affirming care and protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, global health, and climate change. He also issued several EOs on immigration.

- **Health Care Costs.** An [EO](#) directing all executive departments and agencies to take actions intended to lower the cost-of-living – including, specifically, “eliminate unnecessary administrative expenses and rent-seeking practices that increase healthcare costs.” The EO does not define “rent-seeking practices,” but the Administration may be referring to pharmacy benefit managers based on President Trump’s recent [comments](#) “to knock out the middleman.” Other possibilities include policies to address anticompetitive practices, high prescription drug prices, and prior authorization. The directive regarding “unnecessary administrative expenses” could

apply to a range of issues, such as program integrity, site-neutral payments, and greater flexibility for Medicare Advantage. As for next steps, the EO requires the [Assistant to the President for Economy Policy](#) to provide a status report to the President on implementation within 30 days (February 19).

- **Gender-Affirming Care.** An [EO](#) asserting that the U.S. government recognizes only two sexes that are “not changeable.” It directs federal agencies to rescind policies that promote “gender ideology,” which the Trump Administration defines as “the idea that there is a vast spectrum of genders.” The EO dissolves the White House Gender Policy Council established by former President Biden. Most notably, it previews the new administration’s anticipated [plans](#) to limit access to gender-affirming care for youth, possibly by terminating providers and hospitals that offer such care from Medicare and Medicaid. The EO also signals the likely return of the first Trump Administration’s [Section 1557 regulations](#), which eliminated protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Regarding next steps, the EO requires the HHS to issue public guidance “expanding on sex-based definitions” in the EO within 30 days (February 19).
- **Global Health.** An [EO](#) that withdraws the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO). The withdrawal process takes one year and requires [congressional approval](#). [Public health experts](#) are concerned that the exit would undermine global health responses. For example, by leaving WHO, the U.S. would lose access to the [Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System](#), including recommendations for [influenza vaccine composition](#) used by pharmaceutical companies. The U.S. would have to figure out another way to obtain this information.
- **Climate Change.** An [EO](#) that withdraws the United States from the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, an international treaty to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in an effort to limit global warming. The withdrawal process takes one year. President Trump also signed EOs to roll back environmental protections and bolster the fossil fuel industry. For the health care sector, the Administration’s policy agenda may threaten IRA’s green energy tax credits for hospitals and health care systems.
- **Birthright Citizenship.** An [EO](#) restricting birthright citizenship for individuals born in the United States under certain circumstances. Specifically, it asserts that children born to parents who are unlawfully present in the U.S., or whose presence is temporary (e.g., on tourist or student visas), and children whose father is neither a U.S. citizen nor a lawful permanent resident, will not automatically acquire U.S. citizenship. This policy applies to births occurring 30 days after the order's issuance (February 19, 2025). The order directs federal agencies to align their regulations and practices with these criteria, emphasizing compliance with the Fourteenth Amendment's

jurisdictional limitations on citizenship while maintaining protections for lawful permanent residents and other eligible individuals. A recent KFF [report](#) states that ending birthright citizenship would limit access to health coverage and care for the children of immigrants given eligibility restrictions for undocumented immigrants.

- **Refugee Admissions Program.** An [EO](#) suspending the entry of refugees under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) to address concerns about resource allocation, public safety, national security, and refugee assimilation for a minimum of 90 days. Effective January 27, 2025, this suspension remains in place until it is determined that refugee admissions align with U.S. interests. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis if deemed a national interest. The EO directs federal agencies to explore greater involvement of state and local jurisdictions in refugee placement decisions and mandates periodic reviews to assess whether resuming the program serves U.S. policy goals. Additionally, it revokes a Biden-era [EO](#) to strengthen the refugee resettlement program and climate migration. President Trump's EO will likely result in a weakened refugee resettlement system.
- **Immigration.** An [EO](#) directing strict enforcement of immigration laws to boost detention capacity in the U.S. to house migrants. The EO mandates the revocation of Biden-era EOs, including orders that [directed](#) the government to address the "root causes of migration" and that [created](#) a family reunification task force to reconnect families separated by the first Trump Administration. President Trump's EO directs federal agencies to implement comprehensive measures, including enhanced detention facilities, expedited removal processes, and increased penalties for unauthorized entry. The directive also aims to withhold federal funds from sanctuary jurisdictions and seeks to ensure compliance with laws restricting public benefits for undocumented immigrants. According to [news coverage](#), the Department of Justice (DOJ) has begun targeting sanctuary cities, ordering its prosecutors to open investigations into state and local officials who try to thwart enforcement of immigration laws.

Executive Orders on Federal Governance

Lastly, President Trump signed EOs intended to reshape various facets of the federal government. These directives seek to reduce the federal budget, shrink the federal workforce, dismantle DEIA initiatives, and limit the federal government's role in combating misinformation. Additionally, he signed an EO to halt the regulatory process.

- **Rulemaking.** A [memorandum](#) directing all executive departments and agencies to implement a regulatory freeze in which no rules may be issued or proposed until the agency head appointed or designated by the President after noon on January 20, 2025, reviews and approves the rule.

The memorandum also directs federal agencies to consider postponing for 60 days the effective date of any rules that have been published in the *Federal Register*, or any rules that have been issued but have not taken effect. During this 60-day period, federal agencies could consider further delaying the rule beyond the initial 60 days. This memorandum creates uncertainty about the timing and applicability of rules.

- **Government Efficiency.** An [EO](#) to establish and implement the “Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)” to modernize federal technology and software to maximize governmental efficiency and productivity. DOGE is directed to be a temporary organization set to terminate on July 4, 2026. Elon Musk, a co-lead of DOGE, has said he wants to cut the federal budget by [\\$1 trillion](#), backtracking from an earlier goal of \$2 trillion. Congressional Republicans’ budget reconciliation package, currently in development, is one of the primary tools that could be used to reduce federal spending.
- **Federal Workforce.** Several EOs aimed at overhauling the federal workforce, with a focus on reducing its size, inserting political loyalists, and making it easier to terminate career federal employees. They include: (1) an [EO](#) to establish a hiring freeze of federal civilian employees; (2) an [EO](#) requiring federal employees to return to work in-person on a full-time basis; (3) an [EO](#) to reform the federal hiring process and restore merit to government service; (4) [EO](#) authorizing the removal of Senior Executive Service (SES) that fail to “faithfully implement administration policies”; and (5) an [EO](#) authorizing the removal of civil service employees with policy-influencing positions from the federal workforce (Schedule F) that resist and undermine the policies and directives of executive leadership.
- **DEIA.** An [EO](#) directing the termination of all policies, programs, offices, and positions that promote “diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.” The U.S. Office of Personnel Management [ordered](#) employees in any DEIA offices to be placed on administrative leave by Wednesday, January 22.
- **Freedom of Speech.** An [EO](#) limiting the federal government’s ability and use of federal resources to censor free speech, including on online platforms. The EO also directs the Attorney General, in consultation with other department and agency heads, to investigate whether the Biden Administration suppressed free speech. This EO could hinder federal agencies from combatting misinformation (e.g., false claims about vaccines).