

Impact Health Policy Weekly

Framing the week

The House and Senate return this evening, with the primary focus being Department of Homeland Security funding, which expires on February 13th. As it stands now, Senate Republicans are preparing a second continuing resolution (CR) to allow additional time to negotiate a compromise between Republicans and Democrats. On the House side, Republican leadership is planning a vote on the SAVE America Act on Wednesday, which would require voters to present proof of citizenship to register, eliminate mail-only registrations and require photo ID in every state for the first time.

Additionally, the House Energy & Commerce Health Subcommittee will continue its [hearing series](#) on health care affordability on Wednesday, with this week's focus on the prescription drug supply chain. Chairmen Guthrie and Griffith stated that "after hearing big insurance companies pledge to do more for American patients, we are continuing our commitment to the American people by calling in representatives across the entire prescription drug supply chain—pharmaceutical manufacturers, distributors, and providers—to examine the root drivers of prescription drug costs and ways to keep them both accessible and affordable."

BARDA SMART Antiviral Prize Competition

The Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), within HHS's Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), [launched](#) the SMART Antiviral Prize, a \$100 million prize competition aimed at accelerating the development of novel, broad-spectrum small-molecule antiviral therapies targeting viruses in the Togaviridae and Flaviviridae families, such as dengue, Zika, West Nile, and Chikungunya. The multi-stage competition begins with a Concept Stage solicitation and is expected to advance promising candidates through hit-to-lead, lead optimization, and Investigational New Drug (IND)-enabling stages to strengthen the nation's antiviral pipeline and pandemic preparedness. Submissions are open through May 11, 2026.

Behavioral Health IT

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy/Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ASTP/ONC) partnered with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to [announce](#) nine pilot programs to test health IT standards and strengthen behavioral and physical health integration through improved data exchange. The pilots have \$20 million in total funding from the [Behavioral Health Information Technology Initiative](#) and will represent 45 exchange partners across the nine states of Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, and DC.

The pilot will test the United States Core Data for Interoperability Plus Behavioral Health (USCDI+BH) dataset and Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) Behavioral Health Profiles Implementation Guide (BH IG) throughout 2026 in real-world settings. After 2026, the pilot will be used to inform future standards, technical specifications, and policies.

Reg Update

The Office of Management and Budget completed its review of the following:

- **Emergency Medical Services and Controlled Substances.** A [final rule](#) modifying the regulations related to the registration requirements of DEA registrants to allow emergency medical services (EMS) registrants to transport controlled substances for the purpose of dispensing under certain circumstances.

OMB is also reviewing the following.

- **Coverage and Payment:**
 - **ACA Marketplace.** The HHS Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2027 [proposed rule](#).
 - **Medicaid:**
 - **State Directed Payments.** A [proposed rule](#) titled, “Medicaid Managed Care-State Directed Payments.” The proposed rule appears intended to advance a [presidential memorandum](#) released on June 6, which directs HHS to “eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicaid, including by ensuring Medicaid payments rates are not higher than Medicare, to the extent permitted by applicable law.”
 - **Medicaid Tax Waivers.** A [proposed rule](#) titled, “Amending the Indirect Hold Harmless Threshold of Health Care-Related Taxes.”
 - **Medicare.** The FY 2027 Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment System and Long-Term Care Hospital Prospective Payment System [proposed rule](#).
 - **No Surprises Act.** A [final rule](#) titled, “Independent Dispute Resolution Operations.” Thing long-awaited rule was [proposed](#) in November 2023 by the Biden Administration.
- **Prescription Drugs**
 - **Prior Authorization.** A [proposed rule](#) on interoperability standards and prior authorization for drugs.
 - ***NEW* 340B.** A [prerule](#) titled, “340B Drug Pricing Program Manufacturer Rebate Models.” Federal courts paused implementation of the [340B Rebate Model Pilot Program](#). As a result, HRSA is considering pursuing the program through the administrative process.
- **Oversight and Integrity**
 - **Fraud and Abuse.** A [proposed rule](#) titled, “Comprehensive Regulations to Uncover Suspicious Healthcare (CRUSH).”
 - **Accrediting Organizations.** A [final rule](#) titled, “Strengthening Oversight of Accrediting Organizations (AO), Burden Reduction, and Related Provisions.”
- **Other Topics:**
 - **Health Technology.** A [final rule](#) titled, “Administrative Simplification: Adoption of Standards for Health Care Attachment Transactions and Electronic Signatures.”

- **Immigration.** An [interim final rule](#) titled, “Unaccompanied Children Program Foundational Rule; Update to Include Proof of Identity and Income Verification Standards.”
- **Nutrition Assistance.** A [proposed rule](#) titled, “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Reforming Categorical Eligibility.”
- **Medication-Assisted Treatment.** A [final rule](#) titled, “Implementation of the SUPPORT Act: Dispensing and Administering Controlled Substances for Medication-Assisted Treatment.”

This Week in Health Policy

Mon. (2/9)

- **10:00am – ASPE Meeting: Alzheimer’s Disease Interventions** – The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) holds a meeting of the Advisory Council on Alzheimer’s Research, Care, and Services (Advisory Council) to introduce and swear in a [new slate of Advisory Council members](#) and provide an overview of their work under the National Alzheimer’s Project Act. [Details.](#)
- **11:00am – Heritage Discussion: MAHA Strategy** – The Heritage Foundation holds a discussion with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. on key actions from the Making America Health Again (MAHA) agenda. [Details.](#)

Tue. (2/10)

- **9:30am – Hearing: Broadband Funding** – The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies holds a hearing to examine a review of broadband deployment funding at the Department of Commerce. [Details.](#)
- **10:00am – Markup: Foreign Influence in American Non-Profits** – The House Ways and Means Committee holds a hearing to examine foreign actor influence on tax-exempt organizations to create, support, and fuel disruption and illegal activity across the country. [Details.](#)
- **10:00am – Hearing: DHS Oversight** – The House Homeland Security Committee holds an oversight hearing of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with agency officials from U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). [Details.](#)
- **10:00am – Hearing: Transparency in Public Housing Agencies** – The House Financial Services Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee holds a hearing titled “Building a Solid Foundation: Restoring Trust and Transparency in Public Housing Agencies.” [Details.](#)
- **2:30pm – Hearing: Fraud in State/Federal Programs** – The Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration holds a hearing to examine fraud in state and federal programs, focused in Minnesota. [Details.](#)
- **2:30pm – Hearing: Fraud in State/Federal Programs** – The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Disaster Management, District of Columbia, and Census holds a hearing to examine fraud and foreign influence in state and federal programs. [Details.](#)

Wed. (2/11)

- **10:00am – Hearing: DOJ Oversight** – The House Judiciary Committee holds an oversight hearing of the Department of Justice (DOJ) with Attorney General Pamela Bondi. [Details.](#)
- **10:00am – Hearing: Potential DHS Shutdown Implications** – The House Appropriations Committee holds an oversight hearing to examine the potential impacts from a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shutdown. Agency officials from the U.S. Coast Guard, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Transportation Security Administration, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be testifying. [Details.](#)
- **10:00am – Hearing: Duplicative Federal Programs** – The House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency holds a hearing to examine duplication and overlap across federal programs, including welfare programs, and discuss their susceptibility to waste, fraud, and abuse, and how to reduce Americans' dependency on welfare systems. Orice Williams Browen, Acting Comptroller for the Government Accountability Office (GAO) will be testifying. [Details.](#)
- **10:15am – Hearing: Health Care Affordability / Prescription Drug Supply Chain** – The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health holds a hearing with representatives across the entire prescription drug supply chain, including pharmaceutical manufacturers and providers, to examine the root drivers of prescription drug costs and ways to keep them both accessible and affordable. [Details.](#)
- **2:00pm – CMS Meeting: Hospital Price Transparency** – The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) holds a webinar to discuss updated hospital price transparency requirements that were finalized in the hospital outpatient prospective payment system final rule for calendar year 2026. [Details.](#)
- **2:00pm – NTIA Meeting: BEAD Funds** – The National Telecommunications and Information Administration holds a meeting to discuss the use of Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) funds saved through the Trump administration's benefit of the bargain reforms. [Details.](#)
- **3:30pm – Hearing: Physician Workforce Decline** – The Senate Aging Committee holds a hearing to examine how Washington's rules drove physicians out of medicine. [Details.](#)
- **4:00pm – Hearing: VA Health Care System Reform** – The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee holds a hearing to examine building a 21st century VA health care system, focusing on assessing the next generation of VA's community care network. [Details.](#)

Thurs. (2/12)

- **9:00am – Hearing: DHS Oversight** – The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee holds an oversight hearing of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with agency officials from U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). [Details.](#)
- **10:00am – Hearing: Fraud in Child Care Programs** – The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee holds a hearing to examine preventing fraud in childcare assistance programs. [Details.](#)

Featured Analysis

- **ACA Subsidy Update: 2026 Marketplace Enrollment Down, Program Integrity Savings, and Sen. Moreno's Proposed One-Year Extension** – In Policy Hub [here](#).
- **Innovation Center Model Portfolio Overview** – In Policy Hub [here](#).
- **Impact Health AI and Cyber Policy Roundup** – In Policy Hub [here](#).
- **Digital Health Roundup: Interoperability, CMS Health Tech Ecosystem, and Congressional Work** – In Policy Hub [here](#).
- **Updates on EPTC Extension: New Bipartisan Framework and a GAO Report on Fraud** – In Policy Hub [here](#).
- **Impact Health Vaccine Policy Tracker** – In Policy Hub [here](#).

Congressional Lookback

Tues. (2/3)

- **The Senate HELP Committee** held a wide-ranging oversight [hearing](#) to examine the first ten months of the NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya's tenure. [Details](#).
- **The House E&C Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations** [convened](#) a hearing to examine fraud in Medicare and Medicaid. [Details](#).
- **Reps. Dunn (R-FL) and Trahan (D-MA)** issued an [RFI](#) regarding the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA) reauthorization. Comments are due February 17. [Details](#).

Regulatory Lookback

Fri. (2/6)

- **President Trump** announced the official launch of [TrumpRX.gov](#). [Details](#).
- **The ACL** announced the [launch of Phase 1](#) of the ACL Caregiver AI Prize Competition. Applications are due July 31. [Details](#).

Mon. (2/2)

- **CMS** issued [new guidance](#) for states regarding the implementation of the "Working Families Tax Cuts (WFTC)" legislation (H.R. 1) federal payment limits on State Directed Payments (SDPs) in Medicaid Managed Care. [Details](#).
- **HHS** announced a [\\$100 million investment](#) to help address homelessness, public safety, and opioid addiction. [Details](#).

Comment & Application Deadlines

- **February 17:** CMS released a [proposed rule](#) that would prohibit Federal Financial Participation (FFP) in Medicaid for "sex-rejecting procedures" for children under the age of 18 and prohibit the use of federal CHIP funds for such care for children under the age of 19. [Details](#).

- **February 17:** Reps. Dunn (R-FL) and Trahan (D-MA) issued an [RFI](#) regarding the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA) reauthorization. [Details.](#)
- **February 21:** CMS issued an [NPRM](#) for the Global Benchmark for Efficient Drug Pricing (GLOBE) Model. [Details.](#)
- **February 21:** CMS issued an [NPRM](#) for the Guarding Against U.S. Medicare Against Drug Costs (GUARD) Model. [Details.](#)
- **February 21:** HHS, DOL, and the Department of the Treasury released a Transparency in Coverage (TiC) proposed rule to amend health plan price transparency reporting requirements. [Details.](#)
- **February 21:** HHS released a [Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) seeking broad public input on how the Department can accelerate the adoption and use of artificial intelligence (AI) as part of clinical care. [Details.](#)
- **February 25:** CMS released the [Advance Notice](#) of Methodological Changes for CY 2027 for MA Capitation Rates and Part C and Part D Payment Policies. [Details.](#)
- **February 27:** ASTP/ONC released the Health Data, Technology, and Interoperability: ASTP/ONC Deregulatory Actions to Unleash Prosperity (HTI-5) [Proposed Rule.](#) [Details](#)
- **March 2:** The DOE released an ANPRM to implement sweeping statutory changes to the federal student loan system enacted in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBB). [Details.](#)
- **March 30:** CMS issued an [ANPRM](#) to solicit public comment on potential options for Medicare participating hospitals to foster more resilient supply chains for American-made PPE and essential medicines. [Details.](#)
- **March 31:** EBSA issued a [proposed rule](#) that would require providers of PBM services and affiliated providers of brokerage and consulting services to disclose information about their compensation. [Details.](#)
- **March 31:** CMMI announced [GENEROUS \(GENErating cost Reductions fOr U.S. Medicaid\) Model.](#) [Details.](#)
- **June 3:** CMMI released a [NOFO](#) for the second cohort of the Innovation in Behavioral Health Model. [Details.](#)
- **July 31:** The ACL announced the [launch of Phase 1](#) of the ACL Caregiver AI Prize Competition. [Details.](#)