

Impact Health Policy Weekly

Framing the Week

The Senate is in session this week, while the House is in recess, with Republicans convening for its annual policy retreat. The caucus is likely to discuss its policy approach leading up to the midterm elections, including affordability for American families, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding, the SAVE America Act, and the ongoing conflict in Iran.

Some Republicans believe that the need for additional funding for Iran could jumpstart a second reconciliation effort. House Republican leadership has expressed interest in a fast-track second package that is completely offset by spending cuts, but consensus for the offsets will likely be difficult to achieve amongst the caucus. Other policies included could feature those outlined by [Republican Study Committee](#) or the [House Budget Committee](#), both of which include lowering health care costs. While House members build interest, President Trump has indicated that there is no need for a second reconciliation package and the effort could be a non-starter in the Senate.

MAHA Update

Last week, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Robert F. Kennedy Jr. [announced](#) that HHS, in conjunction with the Department of Education, received commitments from 53 medical schools to require meaningful nutrition training for future doctors. The schools will provide at least 40 hours of education or a competency equivalent, as part of the Secretary's goal to reduce chronic diseases.

Additionally, the Department of Agriculture [announced](#) new Dietary Guidelines for Americans Strategic Partnerships, which will engage the private sector to help educate Americans about the Guidelines and better eating. As part of the announcement, USDA previewed that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Stacking Standards final rule is forthcoming.

Finally, USDA announced four new [waivers](#) restricting SNAP purchases in Kansas, Nevada, Ohio, and Wyoming. 22 states now have some version of a waiver prohibiting purchase of sodas, candy, and other "junk" foods.

Regulatory Update

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

- **Immigration Status.** A Department of Labor [proposed rule](#) titled, "Improving Wage Protections for H-1B and PERM Employment in the United States."

OMB is also reviewing:

- **Coverage and Payment:**
 - **Medicaid:**

- **State Directed Payments.** A [proposed rule](#) titled, “Medicaid Managed Care State Directed Payments and Medicaid Fee-For-Service Targeted Medicaid Practitioner 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.” On February 27, the title of the proposed rule was revised to include Medicaid FFS targeted Medicaid practitioner payments.
- **Medicaid Tax Waivers.** A [proposed rule](#) titled, “Amending the Indirect Hold Harmless Threshold of Health Care-Related Taxes.”
 - **Medicare.** FY 2027 payment proposed rules for [hospitals and long-term care hospitals](#), [inpatient psychiatric facilities](#), [hospice facilities](#), and [skilled nursing facilities](#).
 - **Medicare Advantage.** The Contract Year 2027 Policy and Technical Changes to Medicare Advantage, Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit, Medicare Cost Plan, and Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly Programs [final rule](#).
 - **No Surprises Act.** A [final rule](#) titled, “Independent Dispute Resolution Operations.” This 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.
 - **Price Negotiation.** A [proposed rule](#) titled, “Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program.”
- **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. (3/9)

- **1:00pm – NIH Meeting: Drug Abuse** – The National Institutes of Health (NIH) holds a meeting of the National Advisory Council on Drug Abuse for presentations and other business of the Council. [Details.](#)

Tue. (3/10)

- **10:00am – Hearing: Sanctuary Cities Economic Costs** – The Senate Budget Committee holds a hearing to examine sanctuary cities, focusing on law and order. [Details.](#)
- **2:00pm – Justice in Aging Discussion: H.R.1 Impact on Medicaid Disability Programs** – Justice in Aging holds a discussion on what the H.R. 1 Medicaid funding cuts mean for the program's older adults and people with disabilities rely on to meet their basic needs, and provide strategies for how advocates can engage with their states to protect them. [Details.](#)
- **2:30pm – Hearing: Birthright Citizenship** – The Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitution holds a hearing to examine protecting American citizenship, focusing on birthright citizenship for illegal aliens and tourists. [Details.](#)

Wed. (3/11)

- **1:00pm – BPC Discussion: Bipartisan Solutions to Workforce Challenges** – The Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) holds a discussion to examine education and workforce challenges and share recommendations to strengthen America's talent pipeline. [Details.](#)
- **3:00pm – Hearing: Fiscal Outlook** – The Senate Finance Subcommittee on Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Growth holds a hearing to examine the fiscal outlook, 2027-2036, with the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) Director Phillip Swagel. [Details.](#)
- **3:30pm – Hearing: Foreign Dependence of Prescription Drug Supply** – The Senate Aging Committee holds a hearing to examine foreign dependence, focusing on China and America's drug supply. [Details.](#)

Thurs. (3/12)

- **9:00am – FDA Meeting: Influenza Vaccine Strain Composition** – The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) holds a meeting of the Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee to discuss and make recommendations on the strain composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in United States during the 2026-2027 influenza season. [Details.](#)

Additional Multi-Day Events

- **March 11-March 13 – HHS Meeting: Women's Health** – The Health and Human Services Department (HHS) holds its Inaugural National Conference on Women's Health, focusing on breakthroughs in research, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of health conditions that affect women across the lifespan. [Details.](#)

Featured Analysis

- **AI and Cyber Policy Roundup** – In Policy Hub [here.](#)

- **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 Vaccine Policy Tracker** – In Policy Hub [here](#).

Congressional Lookback

Fri. (3/6)

- **MACPAC** convened virtually for day two of its [March 2026 public meeting](#) and held sessions on provider enrollment and mandatory and optional enrollees and services. All Impact session summaries are available on Policy Hub [here](#).

Thurs. (3/5)

- **MACPAC** convened virtually for day one of its [March 2026 public meeting](#) and held sessions on prior authorization, Medicaid managed care, children and youth with special health needs, and PACE. All Impact session summaries are available on Policy Hub [here](#).
- **The Senate HELP Committee** held a [hearing](#) to examine the role of federal health IT policy at the ONC in improving care delivery through data exchange, interoperability, and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence. [Details](#).
- **The E&C Committee** [advanced eight bills](#) to the full House during a markup focused largely on children's online safety and privacy. [Details](#).

Wed. (3/4)

- **The House Agriculture Committee** convened a [markup](#) of the Farm, Food, and National Security Act. [Details](#).

Tues (3/3)

- **MedPAC** held day two of its [March 2026 meeting](#) at which it held a session on enrollment decisions. All Impact session summaries are available on Policy Hub [here](#).

Mon. (3/2)

- **MedPAC** held day one of its [March 2026 meeting](#) at which it held sessions on palliative services for ESRD beneficiaries and Medicare Advantage networks and risk adjustment. All Impact session summaries are available on Policy Hub [here](#).

Regulatory Lookback

Fri. (3/6)

- **CMS** issued a [State Medicaid Director letter](#) further explaining the implementation of Section 711107 of H.R. 1. [Details](#).

Tues (3/3)

- **CMS** released FAQs for the Medicare GLP-1 Bridge. [Details](#).

Mon. (3/2)

- CMS [extended](#) the application deadline of the GENEROUS Model to April 30. [Details.](#)

Comment & Application Deadlines

- **March 11:** CMS issued the [proposed Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for the 2027 plan year.](#) [Details.](#)
- **March 26:** CMS issued an [RFI](#) related to a potential upcoming “Comprehensive Regulations to Uncover Suspicious Healthcare (CRUSH)” proposed rule. [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.](#)
- **March 31:** CMS released an RFI seeking information from vendors with active, production-ready AI and ML solutions capable of improving how Medicare beneficiaries navigate coverage options and receive support across digital and voice channels. [Details.](#)
- **April 20:** HRSA issued an [RFI](#) to gather information from stakeholders on the potential use of rebates to effectuate the ceiling price under the 340B Program. [Details.](#)
- **April 20:** 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.](#)