



Health Policy Briefing

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Lawmakers Seek Monkeypox Funding, Response Details

The Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus is [urging](#) the Biden administration to formally request supplemental funding to respond to the spread of monkeypox. “We applaud your decision to declare monkeypox a public health emergency and believe Congress should provide additional resources to combat the spread of monkeypox,” the letter states. “We urge you to promptly provide House and Senate Appropriations Committees with a request for funding detailing the funds needed to address all aspects of the outbreak.”

Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) also spearheaded a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) asking health officials to monitor and address racial disparities in the nation’s response to the spread of monkeypox. “Lack of racially and ethnically disaggregated data on both diagnosis and treatment of [monkeypox] will exacerbate existing health disparities and result in the loss of lives in vulnerable communities,” the letter, which was co-signed by 11 other senators, states. The lawmakers note that Black and Latino men have been disproportionately impacted by the monkeypox outbreak but have had more limited access to the monkeypox vaccine compared to white men.

It was reported last week that the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee is working to schedule a hearing on monkeypox for mid-September. HELP Committee Chair Patty Murray (D-Wash.) has sent her own [letter](#) to U.S. health officials requesting a clear and comprehensive strategy to ensure supplies of the monkeypox vaccine. “The administration must do more to address existing, unacceptable shortages in vaccine supply, institute comprehensive distribution and communication strategies, and develop long-term procurement plans,” the letter to Administrator for Strategic Preparedness and Response Dawn O’Connell states.

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White House Directs Agencies to Make Research Available to Public

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy issued [guidance](#) last week directing federal health and science agencies to make federally-funded research available to the public immediately after publication. The move aims to end an optional 12-month embargo from public access on any publication stemming from federally-funded research. The publishing industry currently places many research papers behind a paywall for 12 months. Each agency must fully implement this updated guidance by December 31, 2025. The National Institutes of Health has already pledged to swiftly release plans to execute the new policy.

Finance Chair Probes MA and Part D Marketing

Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden has [written](#) to 15 state insurance commissioners requesting information about the marketing of Medicare Advantage (MA) and Part D plans by third-party marketing organizations. Wyden cites a report from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that beneficiary complaints about potentially deceptive marketing practices more than doubled from 2020 to 2021. He asks state insurance regulators to provide data about the number and type of complaints received and whether they involve mailings, robocalls, websites, or television ads. He also requests details about any differences in complaints between geographic regions, racial and ethnic groups, persons with disabilities, and the dual-eligible population. The letters were sent to officials in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

Coronavirus Panel Releases Second Staff Report

The House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis released its second installment of a series of staff reports investigating the federal public health response to the coronavirus pandemic during the Trump administration. The latest report asserts that senior Trump White House Adviser Peter Navarro exerted inappropriate pressure on the Food and Drug Administration to authorize hydroxychloroquine as a coronavirus treatment after it was shown to be ineffective and potentially dangerous. The staff report, entitled “A ‘Knife Fight’ with the FDA: The Trump White House’s Relentless Attacks on FDA’s Coronavirus Response,” is available in full [here](#).

Fauci to Step Down in December

President Joe Biden’s chief medical advisor and director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Anthony Fauci announced plans to step down in December after 50 years in government. He stated that he is leaving the federal government to pursue the next chapter of his career. Fauci has served as the director of NIAID since 1984 and has advised seven U.S. Presidents on every major infectious disease outbreak since the HIV crisis. President George W. Bush awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2008.

Nadler Defeats Maloney in NY Primary

Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.) beat fellow incumbent Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) in the state’s redistricted 12th Congressional District primary. Both members have served in Congress for more than three decades, with Rep. Nadler currently serving as chair of the House Judiciary Committee and Rep. Maloney as chair of the House Oversight Committee. Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-Va.), Stephen Lynch (D-Mass.), and Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) have all expressed interest in running to replace Maloney as the next top Democrat on the Oversight panel.

In other election news, a caucus of Indiana Republicans in the state’s 2nd Congressional District has elected Rudy Yakym III to replace the late Rep. Jackie Walorski on the ballot in November. Walorski and two of her staffers died in a car accident earlier this year. Yakym served as finance director for Walorski when she first won her seat in the House of Representatives in 2012. Rep. Michael Guest (R-Miss.) has replaced Walorski as the ranking member of the House Ethics Committee for the remainder of the year.

First Lady Tests Positive for COVID-19 in Rebound Case

First Lady Jill Biden tested positive for COVID-19 again last week in a rebound case of the virus. Her positive antigen test came a day after she had tested negative for the virus. The First Lady has not seen her symptoms reemerge after completing a course of the anti-viral drug Paxlovid. She is currently isolating in Delaware, where she had spent the last several days with the President. Consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance, President Joe Biden will wear a mask for 10 days when indoors and near others.

Recently Introduced Health Legislation

H.R.8735 — To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the Veterans Community Care Program to include health providers at certain institutions of higher learning. Sponsor: Kelly, Trent [Rep.-R-MS-1]; Committees: House - Veterans' Affairs

H.R.8731 — To amend chapter 110 of title 18, United States Code, to prohibit gender affirming care on minors, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Greene, Marjorie Taylor [Rep.-R-GA-14]; Committees: House - Judiciary; Ways and Means; Energy and Commerce; Education and Labor