

Appropriations and Budget Updates

Lawmakers have until September 30th to pass a short-term funding measure before the government shuts down, starting October 1. Speaker Kevin McCarthy announced [plans](#) to individually pass all 12 appropriations bills by the end of the month. However, two of the twelve bills, Ag-FDA and Defense, were already postponed due to intraparty conflict and procedural hurdles between Speaker McCarthy and the House Freedom Caucus. With just fifteen days left before the deadline a government shutdown seems more likely than not at this point.

Hill Updates

- On Thursday, September 14th, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Chairman of the Senate HELP Committee, and Senator Roger Marshall (R-KS), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Primary Health and Retirement Security, came to a bipartisan agreement on [legislation](#) expanding primary care health services. Notably, this legislation would be paid for by a \$980 million cut to the Prevention and Public Health Fund.
- The House announced on Wednesday, September 13th [plans to vote](#) on The Lower Costs, More Transparency Act, according to the Congressional Budget Office. The tri-committee legislation on pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) reforms providers price transparency, hospital drug administration site-neutral pay, and PBM extenders
- The House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Cathy McMorris-Rodgers (R-WA) and Subcommittee on Health Chair Brett Guthrie (R-KY) [held a hearing](#) on Thursday, September 14th for “Legislative Proposals to Prevent and Respond to Generic Drug Shortages.” The committee debated five bills to support the supply of medicines, including one to exclude certain generic drugs from the 340B program.
- On Wednesday, September 13th, the House Republicans were [unable to pass](#) an Ag-FDA bill due to intraparty disagreements over abortion policy. Additionally, the House Republicans’ Financial Services draft funding bill would prevent Washington, D.C. from using its own money to support abortion services and ban insurance coverage of abortion services and gender-affirming care for federal employees.

Administration Updates

- On Monday, September 11th, the FDA [approved](#) a new round of Covid boosters that are set to arrive alongside the seasonal flu vaccine shots to provide better protection against currently circulating variants. On Tuesday, September 12th, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the CDC voted [to recommend](#) COVID-19 booster shots for all 6 months and older. The adoption of this recommendation by the CDC would require insurers to cover the vaccines on a broad basis.
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will [host a series](#) of patient-focused Listening Sessions this fall for the Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program. The Listening Sessions will give an opportunity for patients, caregivers, beneficiaries, and other interested parties to provide their input on relevant drugs selected for the first round of price negotiations.
- On Tuesday, September 12th, the federal judge presiding over Medicare’s drug pricing negotiation program [ruled](#) on the HHS motion to dismiss a suit brought by PhRMA. The HHS attorneys demonstrated “good cause” when they argued that the court should modify the existing drug scheduling order and rule first on whether the groups behind the suit lacked standing.

Health Policy Updates

- On Wednesday, September 13th, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) [announced](#) the list of thirty-four prescription drugs for which Part B beneficiary coinsurances may be lower between October 1-December 31, 2023. The Medicare Prescription Drug Inflation Rebate Program is a part of the Inflation Reduction Act's plan to lower out-of-pocket costs for drugs with price increased above inflation rates.

Federal IT Updates

- The federal government is set to [release](#) new policy guidance to help agencies comply with the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) as the cloud landscape evolves. The guidance will be based on feedback from thirty agencies and will be released for public comment. The FedRAMP Authorization Act has also strengthened its effectiveness.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs has [completed](#) its first wave of fixes to its new Electronic Health Record (EHR), following an indefinite freeze on new launches of the Oracle-Cerner EHR. The current "reset" period will not end until it addresses persistent outages and improves performance at VA sites already using the EHR.

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