

Administration Updates

- The Biden-Harris Administration [announced](#) more than \$103 million to enhance maternal health accessibility as part of the HHS' Maternal Health Day of Action. This effort includes the establishment of a new task force designed to tackle maternal mental health issues and concurrent substance use disorders. Additionally, a nationwide public awareness campaign, *Talking Postpartum Depression*, has been launched to disseminate information and counteract the stigma surrounding the issue.
- The White House [announced](#) on Tuesday, October 3, that all ten pharmaceutical companies whose medications were selected for the initial cycle of Medicare price negotiations have voluntarily entered these discussions. Notably, many of these companies had previously initiated legal action against the Inflation Reduction Act's drug pricing provision. Among the drugs subject to negotiation are critical ones such as NovoLog insulin and Eliquis, a drug used to reduce the risk of stroke, both renowned for their significant cost and widespread prescribed use. CMS is now [seeking patient input](#) through a series of listening sessions this fall.

Appropriations and Budget Updates

- On Saturday, September 30, Congress enacted a continuing resolution (CR) to extend federal funding at existing fiscal year 2023 levels until Friday, November 17th, averting a government shutdown at the 11th hour. You can read the CR text [here](#). However, this decision exposed the deep divisions among House Republicans, leading to the removal of Representative Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) as Speaker of the House on Tuesday. The race for a new Speaker is now heating up with contenders such as Representative Jim Jordan (R-OH) and Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-LA) vying for the role. With no Speaker and a highly contentious legislature, there is concern over Congress' ability to pass FY24 spending bills with just 42 days left before government funding expires. The House GOP has now put funding bills on the backburner due to the upcoming Speaker election on October 11, with eight out of twelve appropriations bills still pending. On the Senate side, progress is being made on a significant minibus funding bill, combining Ag-FDA, MilCon-VA, and Transportation-HUD, though the final outcome remains contingent on obtaining unanimous consent to expedite legislative votes. As November 17 nears, the potential for another high-stakes showdown over a possible shutdown is palpable.

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