

---

**From:** Sara Federman <Sfederman@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 3/3/2022 5:50:31 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Automatic reply: Automatic reply: External Meeting: The Commonwealth Fund  
I'm unexpectedly out of the office as of Wednesday, 3/2, and will respond to your message when I return.

---

**From:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 1/14/2022 6:12:30 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Health Affairs blog on Medicare vision

Meena,

Thank you for alerting us to the article. It is very interesting and I appreciate you sharing it. Please don't hesitate to reach out in the future.

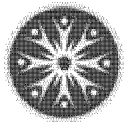
Best,

Gretchen

**Gretchen Jacobson, Ph.D.**  
*Vice President, Medicare*

Washington, DC

C (b)(6)



**The  
Commonwealth  
Fund**

*Affordable, quality health care. For everyone.*

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 13, 2022 9:19 PM  
**To:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Cc:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>; DSR <DSR@cmwf.org>; EMT <emt@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Health Affairs blog on Medicare vision

Thank you David and team.

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 13, 2022 3:19 PM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>; DSR <DSR@cmwf.org>; EMT <emt@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Health Affairs blog on Medicare vision

HI, Meena:

Thanks for alerting me to this, and for your service. Interesting times for Medicare. Right decision in my view on Aduhelm.

Very best for the not so new year.

David

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 13, 2022 12:49 PM  
**To:** David Blumenthal <[DB@CMWF.org](mailto:DB@CMWF.org)>  
**Subject:** Health Affairs blog on Medicare vision

Hi David,

Happy new year, and I hope you are well.

You may have seen already, but I wanted to reach out personally on the [blog in Health Affairs](#) we just published, outlining Medicare's strategy and plans in the Biden-Harris administration. At a high level, the blog articulates a vision for leaning into Medicare's role as a leader in the health system – driving towards equitable, patient-centered care in everything we do. I am excited to share the vision as a starting point to conversations with our partners.

We welcome your thoughts, questions, and feedback as we look to transform our health system to improve outcomes for all Americans. Feel free to amplify and share with other stakeholders you think may be interested in the vision or working with Medicare to achieve our goals. Looking forward to continued collaboration!

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** Morenike Ayo-Vaughan <mav@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 3/3/2022 12:26:54 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; Laurie Zephyrin <lz@cmwf.org>; Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>; Sara Federman <Sfederman@cmwf.org>; Christina Ramsay <cr@cmwf.org>; Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>; Aimee Cicchiello <avc@cmwf.org>; Melinda K. Abrams <MKA@CMWF.org>; "Rice, Cheri M. (CMS/CM)" <Cheri.Rice@cms.hhs.gov>; "Ahern, Robert J. (CMS/CM)" <Robert.Ahern@cms.hhs.gov>; "Richter, Elizabeth (CMS/CM)" <elizabeth.richter@cms.hhs.gov>; "Mays, Beth A. (CMS/CM)" <Beth.Mays@cms.hhs.gov>; "Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM)" <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>; Noel Manu <nm@cmwf.org>; "Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM)" <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Re: External Meeting: The Commonwealth Fund

Good morning all,

We are looking forward to connecting with you and learning about Medicare's priorities in 2022 and how health equity fits within that. Please find agenda items for discussion below and let us know if you'd like to add anything else.

- Introduction of CMS and CMWF teams
- Discuss CMWF Advancing Health Equity program focus areas and current portfolio
- Discuss CMS Medicare priorities and current/upcoming efforts
- Explore opportunities for CMWF/CMS collaborations and potential synergies across projects

Please let us know if you have any questions ahead of the call.

Best regards,

Morenike

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 22, 2022 2:21:41 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; Rice, Cheri M. (CMS/CM) <Cheri.Rice@cms.hhs.gov>; Ahern, Robert J. (CMS/CM) <Robert.Ahern@cms.hhs.gov>; Richter, Elizabeth (CMS/CM) <elizabeth.richter@cms.hhs.gov>; Mays, Beth A. (CMS/CM) <Beth.Mays@cms.hhs.gov>; Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>; Noel Manu <nm@cmwf.org>; Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM) <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** External Meeting: The Commonwealth Fund

**Where:** <https://cms.zoomgov.com> b6 ?pwd= b6

- Carie Spangler is inviting you to a scheduled ZoomGov meeting.

<https://cms.zoomgov.com/j> b6 pwd= b6

Meeting ID: (b)(6)

Password: 3

+16692545252,	b6	US (San Jose)
+16468287666,		US (New York)

833 568 8864 US Toll-free

Find your local number: <https://cms.zoomgov.com> b6

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---

**From:** Laurie Zephyrin <lz@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 3/3/2022 5:47:48 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Call today

Hi Meena,

Apologies- will have to reschedule today. Covid is running through my house this week and in the ED (all fine). Look forward to connecting another time.

Thanks so much

Laurie

Laurie Zephyrin MD, MPH, MBA  
Vice President  
The Commonwealth Fund

---

**From:** Joseph R. Betancourt <jbetancourt@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 6/6/2023 1:48:36 AM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** Lorraine Morales <lmorales@cmwf.org>; Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>;  
"Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM)" <Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Re: setting up time to connect  
Meena,

Thanks for reaching out, really appreciate it.

Look forward to connecting, would prefer in-person, should be in DC in August but can meet via zoom as well sooner.

My colleague Lorraine can assist.

Best  
Joe

On Jun 2, 2023, at 11:49 AM, Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)  
<Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov> wrote:

Hi Joe,

I am sorry that I wasn't able to attend your reception recently, but wanted to have a chance to connect with you and say hello and hear about how you are settling in, what you are thinking about moving forward for the Commonwealth Fund, and how we can continue the good work together.

Adding Lorraine and Carie to help find some time for us. I don't know if/when you are in DC, happy to try to do a coffee etc – or else good old fashioned zoom...

My best,  
Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)  
Director, Center for Medicare  
(b)(6) ell)  
[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** "Pressley, Erin (CMS/OC)" <Erin.Pressley@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** 11/18/2022 6:44:24 PM +0000  
**To:** "Wallace, Mary (CMS/OC)" <Mary.Wallace@cms.hhs.gov>; "Harmatuk, Frances (CMS/OC)" <Frances.Harmatuk@cms.hhs.gov>; "Booth, Jon (CMS/OC)" <Jon.Booth@cms.hhs.gov>; "Koepke, Christopher (CMS/OC)" <Christopher.Koepke@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: FW: Medicare Watch: New Analyses Show Limits of Beneficiary Shopping for Coverage

Sharing for the first article, which includes this paragraph:

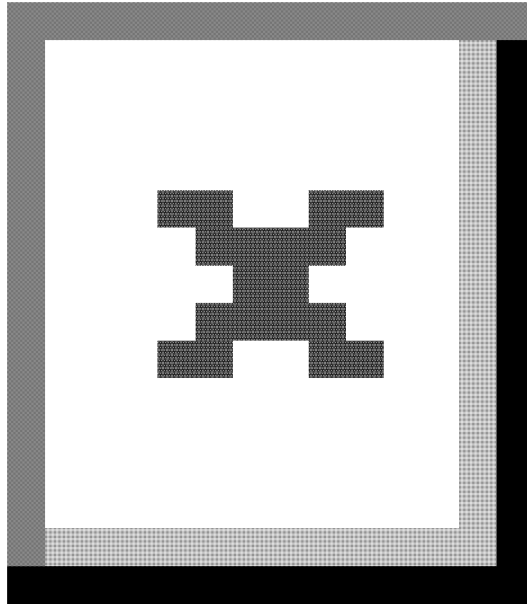
"Additionally, the analysis reveals that relatively few people consult official Medicare communications for information. Only about 29% of people with Medicare have ever used the 1-800-MEDICARE helpline. That number increases to 44% who have used the Medicare website and 49% who have read some or all of the "Medicare & You" handbook. As with reviewing and comparing coverage options, these numbers change with the demographics of enrollees."

Chris – do you know if the OE survey or MCBS asks these questions too, and how the #s compare?

---

**From:** Medicare Rights Center <medicarewatch@medicarerights.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 17, 2022 4:01 PM  
**To:** Pressley, Erin (CMS/OC) <Erin.Pressley@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Medicare Watch: New Analyses Show Limits of Beneficiary Shopping for Coverage

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November 17, 2022 | Volume 13, Issue 43

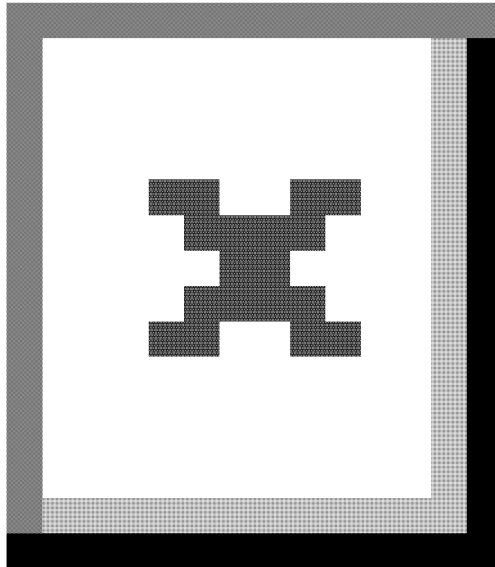
### **Top Story**

**New Analyses Show Limits of Beneficiary Shopping for Coverage**

Two new analyses from the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) show that limited numbers of people with Medicare review their current coverage, compare various coverage options, or switch plans each year. This pattern exposes beneficiaries to higher costs and the risk of having the wrong coverage for their circumstances.



**READ ARTICLE**



## **Social Security Administration Announces New Start Dates for Part B in 2023**

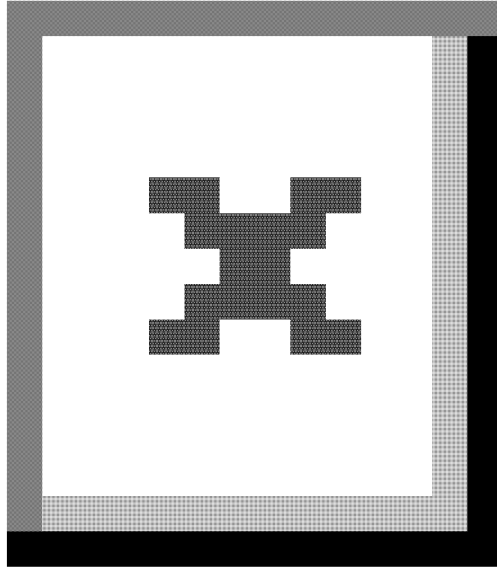
Continuing the implementation of the Medicare Enrollment reforms included in the Beneficiary Enrollment Notification and Eligibility Simplification (BENES)

Act—which was [signed into law](#) as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (CAA)—the Social Security Administration (SSA) released updated consumer-facing information about when people can access their Part B benefits in 2023. Starting in January, people who enroll in the later months of their Initial Enrollment Period will have coverage the first day of the month after they sign up. People who use the general enrollment period, which runs from January 1-March 31, will also have coverage that starts the first day of the month after they sign up.

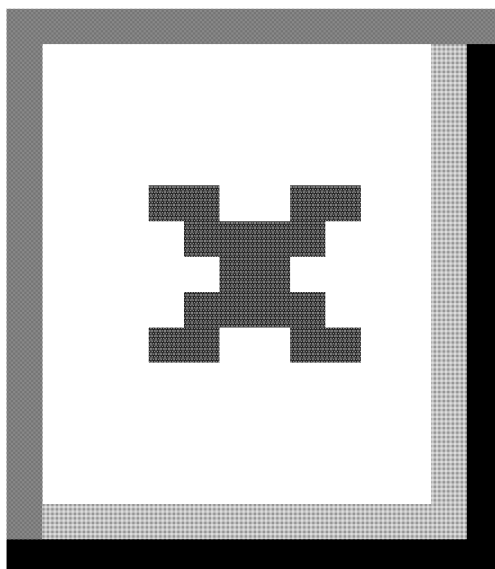


[READ ARTICLE](#)



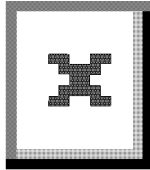


**Spotlight**



As the holidays approach, we would like to take a moment to THANK YOU for being a Medicare Watch subscriber. From all of us at the Medicare Rights Center, we wish you a happy and healthy Thanksgiving.

Medicare Watch will be off next Thursday. We will return with a new issue on December 1.



## **Medicare Reminder**

### **Part D late enrollment penalties**

For each month you delay enrollment in Medicare Part D, you will have to pay a 1% Part D late enrollment penalty (LEP), unless you:

- Have creditable drug coverage
- Qualify for the Extra Help program
- Prove that you received inadequate information about whether your drug coverage was creditable

In most cases, you will have to pay that penalty every month for as long as you have Medicare. If you are enrolled in Medicare because of a disability and currently pay a premium penalty, once you turn 65 you will no longer have to pay the penalty.

## How do you calculate your premium penalty?

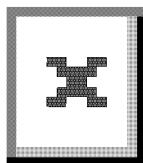
Let's say you delayed enrollment in Part D for seven months (and you do not meet any of the exceptions listed above). Your monthly premium would be 7% higher for as long as you have Part D (7 months x 1%). The national base beneficiary premium in 2022 is \$33.37 a month. Your monthly premium penalty would therefore be \$2.34 ( $\$33.37 \times 1\% = \$0.3337 \times 7 = \$2.34$ ) per month, which you would pay in addition to your plan's premium.

Note: The Part D penalty is always calculated using the national base beneficiary premium. Your penalty will not decrease if you enroll in a Part D plan with a lower premium.



LEARN MORE

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Developed by the Medicare Rights Center, Medicare Watch is a weekly newsletter providing Medicare news and policy developments, as well as useful Medicare reminders. Our work is made possible by your continued support. Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution today.



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**From:** Morenike Ayo-Vaughan <mav@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 3/3/2022 5:47:08 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; Laurie Zephyrin <lz@cmwf.org>; Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>; Sara Federman <Sfederman@cmwf.org>; Christina Ramsay <cr@cmwf.org>; Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>; Aimee Cicchiello <avc@cmwf.org>; Melinda K. Abrams <MKA@CMWF.org>; "Rice, Cheri M. (CMS/CM)" <Cheri.Rice@cms.hhs.gov>; "Ahern, Robert J. (CMS/CM)" <Robert.Ahern@cms.hhs.gov>; "Richter, Elizabeth (CMS/CM)" <elizabeth.richter@cms.hhs.gov>; "Mays, Beth A. (CMS/CM)" <Beth.Mays@cms.hhs.gov>; "Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM)" <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>; Noel Manu <nm@cmwf.org>; "Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM)" <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Re: External Meeting: The Commonwealth Fund

Good afternoon,

Apologies for the late notice. We have to cancel this call and reschedule due to an unexpected conflict. My colleague, Noel Manu, will coordinate rescheduling. Thanks in advance for understanding.

We look forward to connecting soon.

Best regards,

Morenike

---

**From:** Morenike Ayo-Vaughan <mav@cmwf.org>  
**Date:** Thursday, March 3, 2022 at 1:26 PM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>, Laurie Zephyrin <lz@cmwf.org>, Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>, Sara Federman <Sfederman@cmwf.org>, Christina Ramsay <cr@cmwf.org>, Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>, Aimee Cicchiello <avc@cmwf.org>, Melinda K. Abrams <MKA@CMWF.org>, Rice, Cheri M. (CMS/CM) <Cheri.Rice@cms.hhs.gov>, Ahern, Robert J. (CMS/CM) <Robert.Ahern@cms.hhs.gov>, Richter, Elizabeth (CMS/CM) <elizabeth.richter@cms.hhs.gov>, Mays, Beth A. (CMS/CM) <Beth.Mays@cms.hhs.gov>, Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>, Noel Manu <nm@cmwf.org>, Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM) <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>  
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- Introduction of CMS and CMWF teams
- Discuss CMWF Advancing Health Equity program focus areas and current portfolio
- Discuss CMS Medicare priorities and current/upcoming efforts
- Explore opportunities for CMWF/CMS collaborations and potential synergies across projects

Please let us know if you have any questions ahead of the call.

Best regards,

Morenike

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 22, 2022 2:21:41 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; Rice, Cheri M. (CMS/CM) <Cheri.Rice@cms.hhs.gov>; Ahern, Robert J. (CMS/CM) <Robert.Ahern@cms.hhs.gov>; Richter, Elizabeth (CMS/CM) <elizabeth.richter@cms.hhs.gov>; Mays, Beth A. (CMS/CM) <Beth.Mays@cms.hhs.gov>; Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>; Noel Manu <nm@cmwf.org>; Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM) <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>

**Subject:** External Meeting: The Commonwealth Fund

**When:** Thursday, March 3, 2022 1:00 PM-1:30 PM.

**Where:** <https://cms.zoomgov.com/j/1611611503?pwd=c3NsVWp5MngvMHE4SW43cVpJaU9Ddz09>

1. Hearing about equity work in Medicare
2. Exploring synergies
3. Discussing workforce and equity opportunities

Carie Spangler is inviting you to a scheduled ZoomGov meeting.

Join ZoomGov Meeting

<https://cms.zoomgov.com>

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---

**From:** Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 2/16/2022 2:58:58 PM +0000  
**To:** "Blum, Jonathan (CMS/OA)" <Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** Molly Fitzgerald <mf@cmwf.org>; Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>;  
"Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Thank Jon, really appreciate it. Would love to catch up at the appropriate time==best to the family.

Meena, nice to be connected to you again. We welcome your participation in the Harkness Washington Policy Seminar. Our Fellows are eager to learn about Medicare priorities and share their analogous international experiences.

Happy to supply you with any additional information to make the time with us productive.

Thanks again,

Reggie

---

**From:** Blum, Jonathan (CMS/OA) <Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 7:16 AM  
**To:** Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>  
**Cc:** Molly Fitzgerald <mf@cmwf.org>; Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>; Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Hi Reggie--it's great to hear from you and I hope you and your family are well.

I'm copying Dr. Meena Seshamani, who as I'm sure you know, is our Dep. Administrator and Director for the Center for Medicare. Given the topic and her expertise, I recommend that Meena present on behalf of CMS.

I look forward to connecting soon,

Jon

---

**From:** Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 15, 2022 11:41 AM  
**To:** Blum, Jonathan (CMS/OA) <[Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Molly Fitzgerald <[mf@cmwf.org](mailto:mf@cmwf.org)>; Gretchen Jacobson <[gj@cmwf.org](mailto:gj@cmwf.org)>  
**Subject:** Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Hi Jon,

Hope you are well. Taryn told me she recently saw you â€œvirtuallyâ€.

Recognizing that many things have changed for you since last April when you met with the Harkness Fellows virtually, we are hoping you may be able to meet with the current Fellows in Washington, D.C.

We are happy to have eight Fellows with us this year from France, New Zealand, Norway, and the United Kingdom. We plan to be in D.C. as a group the week of March 14 and are currently arranging a meeting space.

**I am hoping you can join us on Thursday, March 17 from 10:00-11:00 am ET to speak about the future of Medicare.** As was the case last year, we will ask Gretchen Jacobson to do a brief introduction to the Fundâ€™s Medicare Program and then turn it over to you.

An overview of the seminar and our learning objectives are attached here. If this is something you are open to doing but the proposed time does not work, we are happy to adjust to fit your availability. Molly, copied here, will handle scheduling and other logistics.

Thank you,

Reggie

---

**From:** Laurie Zephyrin <lz@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 4/21/2022 5:12:52 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Automatic reply: Automatic reply: JAMA viewpoint on leveraging Medicare to advance health equity

I am offline with limited access to email until through 4/24/2022. Please email Noel Manu at nm@cmwf.org with any programmatic or scheduling requests. Have a wonderful day.

Stay well,

Laurie

Laurie Zephyrin MD  
Vice President, Health Systems Equity  
The Commonwealth Fund

---

**From:** Judy Stein <JStein@medicareadvocacy.org>  
**Sent:** 7/8/2022 6:00:51 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; "Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM)" <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Fwd: Public Statement on Medicare Coverage of Medically Necessary Oral and Dental Health Therapies

Thank you again!

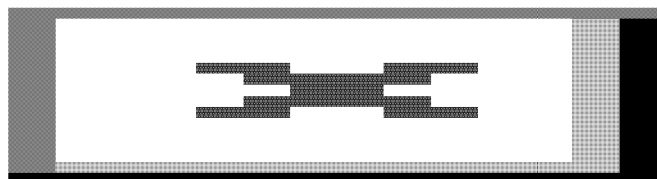
Judith Stein  
Executive Director/Attorney  
Center for Medicare Advocacy  
[www.MedicareAdvocacy.org](http://www.MedicareAdvocacy.org)

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Center for Medicare Advocacy <Communications@medicareadvocacy.org>  
**Date:** July 8, 2022 at 1:52:15 PM EDT  
**To:** Judy Stein <JStein@medicareadvocacy.org>  
**Subject: Public Statement on Medicare Coverage of Medically Necessary Oral and Dental Health Therapies**  
**Reply-To:** Communications@medicareadvocacy.org

**External Sender**



## **Public Statement on Medicare Coverage of Medically Necessary Oral and Dental Health Therapies**

**July 8, 2022**

Beginning in 2016, a consortium was formed among the undersigned dental and medical specialists, patient and consumer advocates, and care delivery providers to support and advocate for Medicare coverage of medically necessary oral and dental care. Today, the Consortium applauds the Biden Administration and Congressional champions for taking action that will have a direct and meaningful impact in the lives of tens of millions of Medicare beneficiaries.

It is well established that chronic diseases disproportionately impact Medicare beneficiaries and impose a substantial cost on the federal government. It is also well established that untreated oral microbial infections are closely linked to a wide range of costly chronic conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, dementia, and stroke. In addition, oral diseases have been documented by researchers and medical specialty societies as precluding, delaying, and even jeopardizing medical treatments such as organ and stem cell transplantation, heart valve repair or replacement, cancer chemotherapies, placement of orthopedic prostheses, and management of autoimmune diseases.

Despite these factors, most Medicare beneficiaries have been unable to receive oral/dental care even when medically necessary for the treatment of Medicare-covered diseases. Historically, Medicare coverage has extended to the treatment of all microbial infections except for those relating to the teeth and periodontium. Believing there is no medical justification for this exclusion, the Consortium formed to express broad consensus among health care providers that such care is integral to the medical management of numerous diseases and medical conditions and that the lack of medically necessary oral/dental care heightens the risk of costly medical complications, increasing the financial burden on Medicare, beneficiaries, and taxpayers.

In recognition of these facts, the Biden Administration has proposed transformative action to extend Medicare coverage to dental services that are integral to the delivery of covered medical services. Specifically, the Physician Fee Schedule for Fiscal Year 2023 issued yesterday by HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra and CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure proposes to meaningfully broaden reimbursement for medically necessary dental services. The proposed rule also opens an exciting opportunity for stakeholders to provide “comments on other types of clinical scenarios where dental services may be inextricably linked to, and substantially related and integral to the clinical success of, other covered medical services” as well as on a process for public submission of recommendations for identifying the circumstances when the policy may apply and the payment models that will support it.

“This important announcement marks a new day in the health of Medicare beneficiaries,” said Dr. Michael Alfano, D.M.D., Ph.D., cofounder of the Santa Fe Group and the Consortium. “Thanks to the tireless work of literally hundreds of organizations and thousands of dedicated advocates, Americans will no longer lack access to medically necessary oral and dental treatment within the traditional Medicare program.”

Dr. Cheryl Lee, President of the National Dental Association said, “We support this policy change as it represents significant progress towards a more equitable healthcare delivery system. Most importantly, it will expand access and improve outcomes while also reducing hospitalizations and Medicare program costs.”

Due to their conviction that the Medicare program and its beneficiaries should not be without the vital clinical and fiscal benefits of medically necessary oral/dental health therapies, more than 230 leading organizations joined as signatories of the Consortium's Community Statement to urge Congress and the Administration to explore options for extending such evidence-based coverage for all Medicare beneficiaries.

"For too long Medicare beneficiaries have suffered due to a lack of coverage for medically necessary dental care crucial to treating other conditions," said Center for Medicare Advocacy Executive Director Judith Stein. "Now, thanks to the determined efforts of this broad group of organizations, and the recognition of the administration, we look forward to a future of better health and quality of life, and greater program equity."

In light of yesterday's historic announcement, the Consortium will now turn to the important process of securing implementation of medically necessary coverage. Formal comments will be submitted, and community leaders will lend their expertise as the Administration works to formalize this policy in the manner best suited to meet the needs of Medicare beneficiaries.

The signatories of the Consortium's Community Statement are listed below:

AARP	John A. Hartford Foundation
ABLE NH (Advocates Building Lasting Equality in NH)	Jon C Burr Foundation
ACA Consumer Advocacy	Justice in Aging
Acuity Specialists	Kentucky Oral Health Coalition
Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma Research Foundation	Klamath Basin Oral Health Coalition
AIDS Foundation of Chicago	Lakeshore Foundation
Alliance for Retired Americans	Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
Allies for Independence	Louisiana Primary Care Association
ALS Association	Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
American Academy of Nursing	Lupus Foundation of America
American Academy of Periodontology	Maryland Dental Action Coalition
American Association for Community Dental Programs	Massachusetts ME/CFS and FM Assoc
American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research	Medicaid Medicare CHIP Services Dental Association
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists	Medicare Rights Center
American Association of Colleges of Nursing	Mended Hearts
American Association of Diabetes Educators	Mental Health America
American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons	Metro New York Health Care for All
American Association of Kidney Patients	Michigan Primary Care Association
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons	Minnesota Dental Therapy Association
American Association of Nurse Practitioners	myNEXUS
American Association of Public Health Dentistry	National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors
American Association on Health and Disability	National Alliance on Mental Illness
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association	National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
American College of Cardiology	National Association of Chronic Disease Directors
American College of Emergency Physicians	National Association of Community Health Centers
American College of Gastroenterology	National Association of Dental Plans

American College of Physicians  
American College of Rheumatology  
American Dental Assistants Association  
American Dental Education Association  
American Dental Hygienists' Association  
American Diabetes Association  
American Geriatrics Society  
American Head and Neck Society  
American Heart Association  
American Institute of Dental Public Health  
American Kidney Fund  
American Liver Foundation  
American Medical Association  
American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP)  
American Nephrology Nurses' Association  
American Network of Oral Health Coalitions  
American Nurses Association  
American Parkinson Disease Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society for Radiation Oncology  
American Society of Clinical Oncology  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Society of Transplant Surgeons  
American Society of Transplantation  
American Thoracic Society  
Arcora Foundation  
Arizona Oral Health Coalition  
Arthritis Foundation  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)  
Association of Community Cancer Centers  
Association of Oncology Social Work  
Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Be a Hero  
Brain Injury Association of America  
California Dental Association  
California Medical Association  
CareQuest Institute for Oral Health  
Carlson Foley Enterprises  
Catholic Health Association of the United States

National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities  
National Coalition of Dentists for Health Equity  
National Comprehensive Cancer Network  
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare  
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care  
National Consumers League  
National Council for Behavioral Health  
National Dental Association  
National Forum for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Health Law Program  
National Interprofessional Initiative on Oral Health  
National Kidney Foundation  
National League for Nursing  
National Medical Association  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
National Network for Oral Health Access  
National Osteoporosis Foundation  
National Rural Health Association  
National Stroke Association  
North American Transplant Coordinators Organization  
Northwest Harvest  
Nurses for America  
Nursing Interventions for Health System Elders  
NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing  
Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans Educational Fund  
Oklahoma Policy Institute  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Oral Cancer Foundation  
Oral Health Kansas  
Oral Health Nursing Education and Practice Program  
Oral Health Ohio  
Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN)  
Our Mother's Voice  
PA Coalition for Oral Health  
Pacific Dental Services Foundation  
Parkinson's Foundation  
Patient-Centered Primary Care Collaborative  
Pennsylvania Health Access Network  
PEW Dental Campaign  
Piedmont Regional Dental Clinic

Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (CARIE)  
Center for Elder Law & Justice  
Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation  
Center for Medicare Advocacy  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Champaign County Health Care Consumers  
Children's Dental Health Project  
Coalition for Oral Health for the Aging  
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities  
Colgate Palmolive Company  
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative  
Community Catalyst  
Community Dental Health NPO  
Connecticut Oral Health Initiative  
Cornerstone Dental Specialties  
Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America  
Culpeper Wellness Foundation  
Davis Phinney Foundation for Parkinson's  
Delaware Dental Hygienists' Association  
Dental Lifeline Network  
Dental Trade Alliance  
Dentsply Sirona  
Dialysis Patient Citizens  
Dientes Community Dental Care  
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund  
Eating Disorders Coalition  
Elderly Housing Development & Operations Corporation  
Epilepsy Foundation  
EXCELth, Inc.  
Families USA  
504HealthNet  
Florida Health Justice Project  
Georgia AIDS Coalition  
Georgians for a Healthy Future  
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association  
GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare  
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality  
Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing  
Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition  
Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!  
Head and Neck Cancer Alliance  
Health Care For All (MA)

PRC  
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association  
Pride At Work - WA North, Mt. Kulshan Chapter  
Procter & Gamble  
ProHEALTH Dental  
Project Accessible Oral Health  
Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA)  
Renal Healthcare Association  
Renal Physicians Association  
Research!America  
Santa Fe Group  
School-Based Health Alliance  
Scleroderma Foundation  
Senior Charity Care Foundation  
Senior Mobile Dental  
Sepsis Alliance  
Sjögren's Foundation  
Smiles To Go, LLC  
Social Security Works  
Society for Transplant Social Workers  
Statewide Poverty Action Network  
Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancer  
Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc  
Texas Parent to Parent  
The AIDS Institute  
The Arc of the United States  
The Bingham Program  
The CornerStone Community Development Center  
The Gerontological Society of America  
The Michael J. Fox Foundation  
The National Forum of ESRD Networks  
The Society for Thoracic Surgeons  
The TMJ Association  
Third Way  
Tri-Area Community Health  
Trust for America's Health  
United Health Organization  
United Network for Organ Sharing  
UUFHCT  
Virginia Community Healthcare Association  
Virginia Health Catalyst  
Virginia Organizing  
Virginia Rural Health Association



Health Care Is a Human Right WA  
Health Care Voices  
Healthy Living and Learning Center  
Heartland Alliance  
Henry Schein Cares Foundation  
HIV Medicine Association  
Hispanic Dental Association  
International Pemphigus and Pemphigoid Foundation  
Island Liaison, Inc.

Washington Healthcare Access Alliance  
Wayne County Oral Health Organization  
Wesley Living Woodland Homes  
West Central Initiative  
Western Center on Law and Poverty  
Winters Elder Day Council  
WomenHeart, The National Coalition for Women with Heart  
Disease

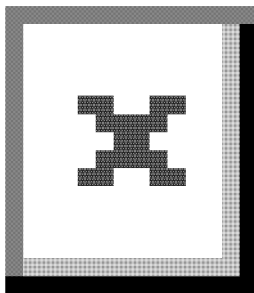
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**The Center for Medicare Advocacy** (<http://www.medicareadvocacy.org>) is a national, non-profit, law organization that works to advance access to comprehensive Medicare coverage, health equity, and quality health care for older people and people with disabilities. Founded in 1986, the Center focuses on the needs of people with longer-term and chronic conditions. The organization's work includes legal assistance, advocacy, education, analysis, policy initiatives, and litigation of importance to Medicare beneficiaries nationwide. Our systemic advocacy is based on the experiences of the real people who contact the Center every day. Headquartered in Connecticut and Washington, DC, the Center also has attorneys in CA, MA, and NJ.

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**From:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 4/29/2022 7:59:25 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** "Fowler, Liz (CMS/CMMI)" <Liz.Fowler@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: pieces on ACO vision and 10th anniversary of MSSP

Congrats Meena and Liz. What a team. And great use of the medical literature for communicating with a key audience.

David

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**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 29, 2022 3:28 PM  
**To:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Cc:** Fowler, Liz (CMS/CMMI) <Liz.Fowler@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** pieces on ACO vision and 10th anniversary of MSSP

Hi David,

I'm excited to share that CM and CMMI co-authored a [NEJM perspective piece](#) on the collective ACO vision. It details how we hope to drive growth of the models and advance health equity by using MSSP as a chassis for innovation, supporting organizations new to value-based care, and expanding the reach of ACOs into underserved communities.

Also, yesterday I released a [blog](#) on cms.gov celebrating the 10 year anniversary of MSSP and looking forward to the next phases of the program to advance our goals.

As always, we appreciate your feedback and collaboration.

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) )  
(b)(6)

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**From:** Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 6/16/2022 7:30:01 PM +0000  
**To:** Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>  
**CC:** Rebecca Onie <onie.rebecca@healthinitiativeusa.org>; Rocco Perla <perla.roccoj@healthinitiativeusa.org>; Corinne Lewis <cl@cmwf.org>; Celli E. Horstman <ceh@cmwf.org>; Christina Ramsay <cr@cmwf.org>; Sara Federman <Sfederman@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** Early look at forthcoming Fund brief on CMMI models and Drivers of Health  
**Attachments:** Commonwealth Fund\_CMMI and Drivers of Health\_Brief.docx; Commonwealth Fund\_CMMI and Drivers of Health\_Table.docx

Dear Colleagues -

We are writing to share an early look at a forthcoming Commonwealth Fund issue brief on how CMMI models address the drivers of health (DOH). The pre-release version of the brief and appendix table are attached for your review. The brief was written by Commonwealth Fund staff with the goal of informing CMMI model development in light of your recently released strategic refresh emphasizing advancing health equity and addressing the social needs of patients. The brief is slated for release in August but through conversations with Rocco Perla and Rebecca Onie, reviewers of the report, we understand this could be useful for your teams to have sooner rather than later. ***Please consider this pre-release draft embargoed and refrain from citing or wide-spread distribution until it is finalized and published later this summer.***

Background:

Through a review of evaluation reports, model requirements, and applications for 40 CMMI models, the brief seeks to summarize the extent to which the social needs of patients were addressed. We found that in over half of the models (23), participants sought to address DOH needs either voluntarily or because CMMI required they do so. In models where we found no evidence of participants screening for or addressing DOH needs of patients (17), participants reported lack of support or incentives as a barrier to their success in the model.

The brief provides insight into common approaches employed by CMMI participants to screen beneficiaries for DOH needs and navigate them to needed social services. The brief also summarizes barriers and facilitators to doing so, and identified 4 key lessons for CMMI's consideration as you develop new and refine existing models:

1. Standardize DoH screening and measures
2. Build DoH into model evaluations
3. Strengthen incentives and financial support
4. Provide technical assistance

We welcome feedback on the brief and would be happy to discuss further with your teams if useful.

Many thanks,

Rachel

**Rachel Nuzum, MPH** (she/her/hers)  
*Senior Vice President, Policy*

Call: (b)(6) Tweet: @raenuzum Web: [commonwealthfund.org](http://commonwealthfund.org)



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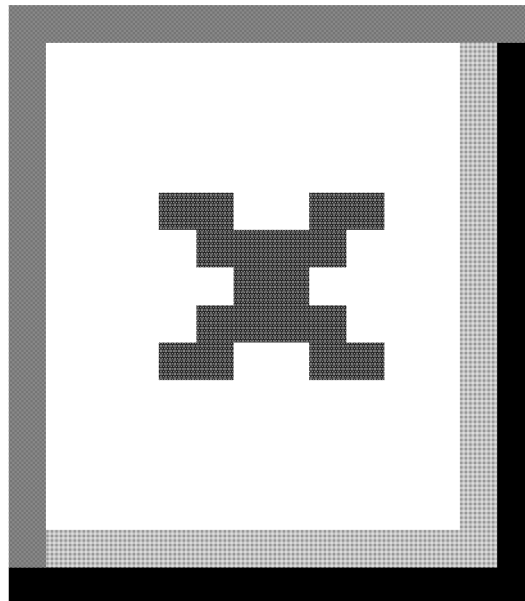
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**From:** Medicare Rights Center <medicarewatch@medicarerights.org>  
**Sent:** 1/4/2024 9:11:39 PM +0000  
**To:** "Pressley, Erin (CMS/OC)" <Erin.Pressley@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Medicare Watch: Few Beneficiaries Know Part D Out-of-Pocket Cap Now in Effect

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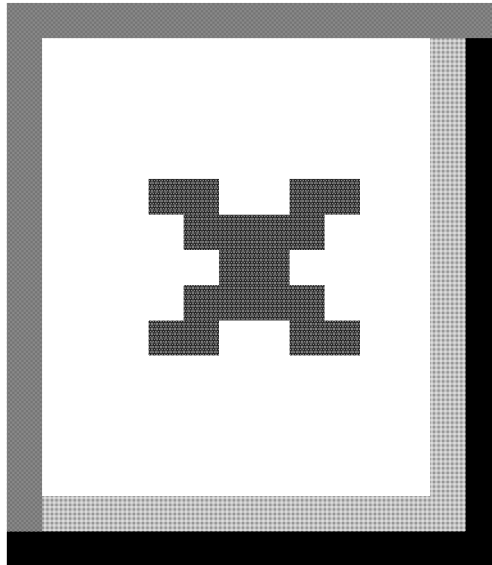
# Few Beneficiaries Know Part D Out-of-Pocket Cap Now in Effect

A newly effective Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provision is improving prescription drug affordability for many people with Medicare Part D — but too few know about it, potentially limiting its efficacy.

As of January 1, 2024, Part D enrollees are no longer required to pay 5% coinsurance after they reach the catastrophic threshold. According to a new **KFF report**, this means that in 2024, Part D enrollees will pay no more than about \$3,300 for all brand-name drugs they take.

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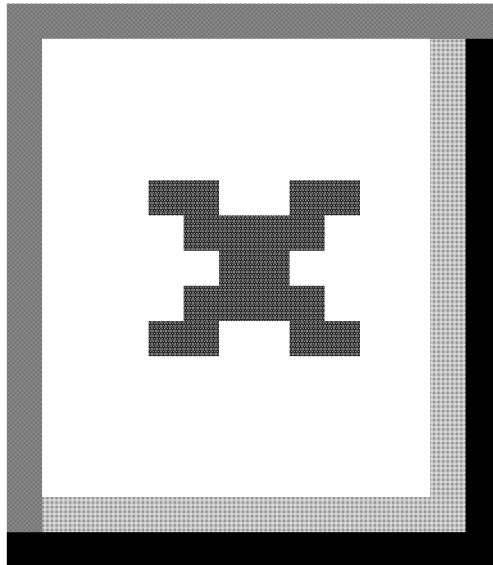


## **Administration Provides More Data on First 10 Drugs Subject to Price Negotiation**

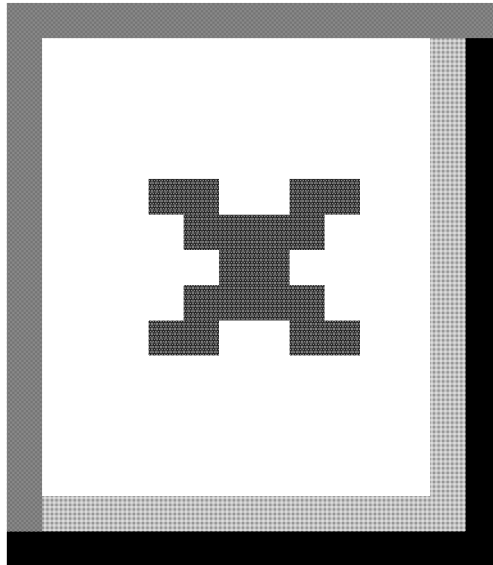
Last month, the office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), a research arm of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), **released a report** on the background, use, and costs of the **10 drugs** selected for the first-ever Medicare price negotiation process.



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**Spotlight**



### **New Resource**

## **Your Guide to Medicare Costs in 2024**

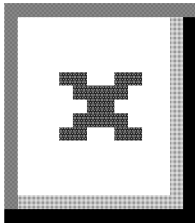
Each year, there are changes to Medicare costs and coverage options. Starting in 2024, there are also several important changes to Medicare that will affect prescription drug costs.

The Medicare Rights Center has a new comprehensive guide that covers

everything you need to know about Medicare costs and changes in 2024. This guide will help you:

- Learn about the new premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance for Medicare Part A, B, and D
- Discover the new benefits and services that Medicare will cover in 2024
- Compare Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans costs
- Apply for financial assistance programs that can help you pay for Medicare

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## **Medicare Reminder**

### **Part D costs**

Your Part D costs (including premiums, deductibles, and coinsurances or copayments) can change every year. Each fall, your plan should send you an Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) to inform you of any changes for the coming year. Your plan cannot change your deductible or premium during the plan year,

but the amount you pay for your drugs can change during the year based on which **coverage period** you are in. The chart below provides general Medicare drug costs for 2024.

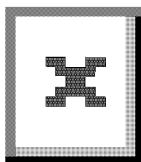
Medicare Part D costs	
In 2024, you will pay:	
Monthly premium	Varies by plan. National base premium is <b>\$34.70</b> . People with high incomes have a higher Part D premium.
Annual deductible	Varies by plan. Cannot be more than <b>\$545</b> if you do not have <b>Extra Help</b> . For those with Extra Help: <b>\$0</b>
Coinsurance and copays if you do not have Extra Help	<p>Vary by plan and by drug within plan. In most plans, after spending <b>usually \$5,030</b> in total drug costs, you reach the coverage gap.</p> <p>During the coverage gap you will have to pay 25% of the cost of your drugs.</p> <p>In all plans, after spending <b>\$8,000</b> out of pocket, you will leave the coverage gap and reach catastrophic coverage. During this period, you will owe no cost-sharing for the cost of your covered drugs.</p>
Coinsurance and copays if you have Medicaid and/or Extra Help	If you have Medicaid and your income is below 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL) (\$14,580/year in 2024 for individuals and

\$19,720/year for couples), you will pay **\$1.55** for generics and **\$4.60** for brand-name drugs. After spending **\$11,477.39** in total drug costs, you will reach catastrophic coverage and pay \$0 for each drug for the rest of the calendar year.

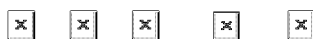
If you have Extra Help, you will pay **\$4.50** for generics and **\$11.20** for brand-name drugs. After spending **\$11,477.39** in total drug costs, you will reach catastrophic coverage and pay **\$0** for each drug for the rest of the calendar year.



Note: Many drug plans have preferred and non-preferred pharmacies in their network. You may pay less for your drugs at preferred pharmacies.



Developed by the Medicare Rights Center, Medicare Watch is a weekly newsletter providing Medicare news and policy developments, as well as useful Medicare reminders. Our work is made possible by your continued support. Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution today.



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**From:** Laurie Zephyrin <lz@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 1/4/2022 4:02:48 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>;  
"Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM)" <Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** "Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM)" <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>; "Labonte,  
Christiane (CMS/CM)" <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>; Noel Manu  
<nm@cmwf.org>; Morenike Ayo-Vaughan <mav@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: scheduling a meeting

Hi Meena,

Happy New Year!

Circling back on this! Look forward to connecting and will include our Medicare team and others at CMWF.

Thanks

Laurie

**Laurie Zephyrin MD, MPH, MBA**  
*Vice President of Advancing Health Equity*

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**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 17, 2021 6:11 PM  
**To:** Laurie Zephyrin <lz@cmwf.org>; Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM)  
<Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>; Labonte, Christiane  
(CMS/CM) <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** scheduling a meeting

Hi Laurie, so great to reconnect with you just now. I am adding Carie here who can send along the meeting request form so then we can schedule time for us to talk w your team about all things equity and value based care in the new year.

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6)

(cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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**From:** "Wallace, Mary (CMS/OC)" (b)(6)  
(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)  
**Sent:** 2/1/2023 4:33:04 PM +0000  
**To:** "Franklin, Julie G. (CMS/OC)" <Julie.Franklin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: FW: Deciding the fate of millions of Medicaid recipients

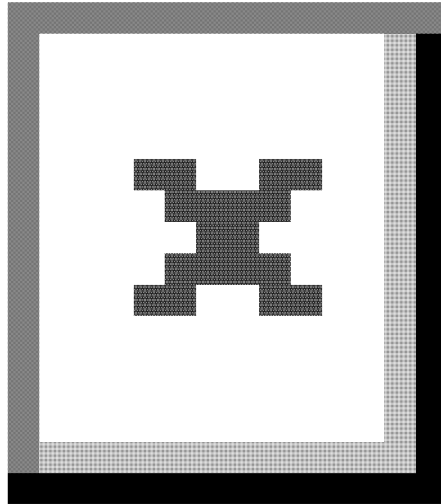
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**From:** POLITICO Pulse <pulse@email.politico.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 10:01 AM  
**To:** Wallace, Mary (CMS/OC) <Mary.Wallace@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Deciding the fate of millions of Medicaid recipients

Feb 01, 2023

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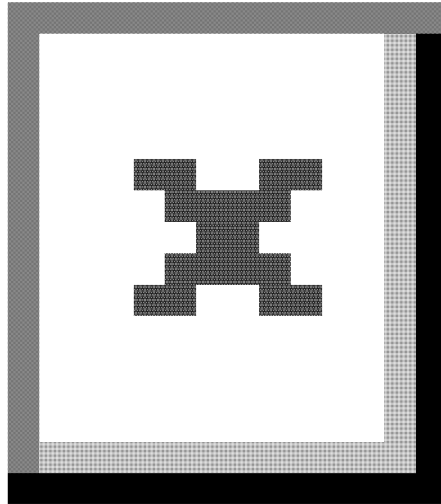


BY KRISTA MAHR AND DANIEL PAYNE

Presented by



*With Megan Messerly, Katherine Ellen Foley, Megan R. Wilson and  
Alice Miranda Ollstein*



States will start reevaluating whether the millions of Americans who have remained covered by Medicaid during the pandemic are still eligible for those benefits. | AP Photo/Julie Jacobson

**THE BEGINNING OF THE END** “As of today, states can start reevaluating whether the millions of Americans who have remained covered by Medicaid during the pandemic are still eligible for those health insurance benefits, Megan Messerly reports.

**How we got here:** Since March 2020, the so-called continuous coverage requirement has caused Medicaid rolls to swell as states

agreed not to remove anyone from the program during the pandemic in exchange for extra federal dollars.

But in December, the requirement was uncoupled from the federal public health emergency. Congress selected an end date for the requirement, setting states' redetermination work in motion. States can officially start kicking people off their Medicaid rolls on April 1.

**State split screen:** Some GOP-led states are more than ready to pare down the program. In December, 25 Republican governors, in a letter to President Joe Biden, said the continuous coverage requirement left them paying "hundreds of thousands of dollars" to cover people who now have other health insurance coverage and no longer need Medicaid.

In Arkansas, for instance, the Department of Human Services is beginning to send renewal letters to Medicaid recipients this month. The roughly 130,000 people who are part of the Medicaid expansion population in the state will be the first to have their eligibility in the program redetermined, with all redeterminations required to be completed within six months under a law passed by state lawmakers in 2021.

"The program was originally designed for the aged, blind, disabled and children, and that's who we are working to protect," Arkansas Department of Human Services spokesperson Gavin Lesnick told POLITICO. "The number one goal is to protect taxpayers."

Other states "especially blue states" plan to take their time. Illinois won't start initiating renewals until April 1, and even then, those who are part of that early group of redeterminations won't lose coverage until July 1 at the earliest. Colorado will start sending renewal packets in mid-March to people whose renewal date is in May.

And in Washington state, the earliest date ineligible people could lose their coverage is April 30.

**WELCOME TO WEDNESDAY PULSE** – Outdoor dining – the pandemic invention that spawned cabanas and ate up sidewalks round the world – may finally have peaked. Are you ready to see it go? Send your favorite outdoor dining spot inside or outside the Beltway, news and tips to [kmahr@politico.com](mailto:kmahr@politico.com) and [dpayne@politico.com](mailto:dpayne@politico.com).

**TODAY ON OUR PULSE CHECK PODCAST**, Ruth Reader talks with Daniel Payne about the Biden administration's plan to end the Covid-19 national and public health emergencies on May 11 and the action's implications. Plus, Katherine Ellen Foley on the four biggest takeaways from Pfizer's earnings call on Tuesday.

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A message from PhRMA:

Costly out-of-pocket expenses tied to deductible and coinsurance requirements are a leading concern for patients with commercial insurance. These harmful practices put in place by insurers and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) are even causing patients to abandon their medicines. New [IQVIA data](#) break down how insurers and their PBMs are impacting how patients access and afford their medicines.

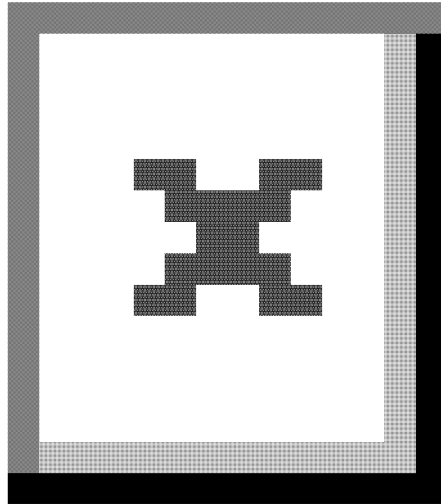
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**Listen to today's Pulse Check podcast**



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**PUBLIC HEALTH**



Americans can expect a long list of changes when the emergencies end this spring. | Mario Tama/Getty Images

**“TURNS OUT IT’S A HASSLE TO END AN EMERGENCY”** The White House’s announcement that it will end the Covid-19 public health emergency and a separate Covid national emergency on May 11 will mean new costs and more hassles for Americans seeking health care, Daniel reports.

A few key changes Americans can expect:

**“An end to free Covid-19 vaccines, tests and treatments.** People without health insurance will have to pay out of pocket, while

those with private plans could see more costs depending on the terms of their insurance. Insurers typically cover the costs of preventive care, such as vaccines, but often charge deductibles or require cost-sharing for drugs.

” **Cost-sharing for tests and medicine.** Beneficiaries of Medicare, Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program could face more cost-sharing for tests and some Covid antivirals, though vaccines will remain free.

” **Restricted access to controlled substance prescriptions.** Eased rules for prescribing controlled substances without an in-person doctor’s visit could end unless the Drug Enforcement Administration moves to extend them. That could affect people seeking mental health care, transgender care, treatment for opioid use disorder and even remedies for severe coughs.

” **Resumed Medicare coverage requirements.** Requirements waived during the emergency will resume. For example, Medicare patients seeking admission to a skilled nursing facility will first have to spend three days in a hospital.

---

## **JOIN POLITICO ON 2/9 TO HEAR FROM AMERICA’S**

**GOVERNORS:** In a divided Congress, more legislative and policy enforcement will shift to the states, meaning governors will take a leading role in setting the agenda for the nation. Join POLITICO on Thursday, Feb. 9 at World Wide Technology’s D.C. Innovation Center for The Fifty: America’s Governors, where we will examine where innovations are taking shape and new regulatory red lines, the future of reproductive health, and how climate change is being addressed across a series of one-on-one interviews. [REGISTER HERE.](#)

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IN CONGRESS

**DEMS PROPOSE TAKING THE “MEDICARE” OUT OF MEDICARE ADVANTAGE** “ House Democrats unveiled a new bill on Tuesday that would bar private insurance plans from calling themselves “Medicare Advantage,” an attempt to crack down on what they view as deceptive tactics insurers use to confuse patients and steer them away traditional Medicare.

The Save Medicare Act proposes a \$100,000 penalty every time an insurance company uses the word “Medicare.” Its introduction comes amid an enrollment period in which the private insurance industry is blanketing the airwaves with celebrity spokespeople pitching plans to older adults.

The bill has little chance of passing the Republican-controlled House, but it’s indicative of a broader, ongoing push by progressive lawmakers to target what they see as the corporatization of Medicare as private health insurance companies reap huge profits off the program.

On Tuesday, CMS released its latest enrollment report showing more than 30 million Americans are in a Medicare Advantage plan.

Progressive advocacy groups, including the Center for Health and Democracy, Social Security Works and People’s Action, recently briefed the Progressive Caucus on their concerns about the Medicare Advantage program.



“Only Medicare is Medicare,” Rep. Mark Pocan (D-Wis.) told reporters, adding that his mother, while in her 90s, signed up for a Medicare Advantage plan, mistaking it for traditional Medicare.

**FIRST IN PULSE: SENATORS ASK HHS TO IMPROVE FDA’S VAPE REGULATION** “In a bipartisan letter to HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra this morning, 13 senators, including long-time anti-youth-vaping advocate Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), slammed the “repeated failures” of the FDA’s tobacco regulatory authority to take e-cigarettes that appeal to minors off the market, Katherine reports.

The lawmakers criticized the agency’s recent court-ordered update that estimates it won’t finish reviewing marketing applications from major e-cigarette market players until the end of December “six months later than it previously estimated. Those delays, the senators argue, lead to more children using e-cigarettes. A federal survey from 2022 estimated that 2.6 million minors used an e-cigarette product in the last 30 days.

**An update from the FDA:** On Tuesday, Brian King, the head of the FDA’s tobacco regulatory division, published an update on progress from the Center for Tobacco Products in the last year. He said the center would respond to a December report on the center from the Reagan-Udall Foundation in the coming month.

**LET THE COVID OVERSIGHT BEGIN** “Rep. James Comer (R-Ky.), chair of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee, will lead the charge today as an oversight hearing begins on waste, fraud and abuse in the Covid relief programs, Megan R. Wilson reports.

“The Biden Administration faced little to no scrutiny under unchecked, one-party Democrat rule in Washington. This Committee conducted almost no oversight of federal government agencies, programs, or policies,” Comer plans to say in his opening remarks,

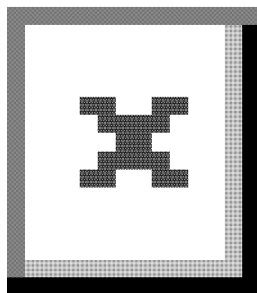
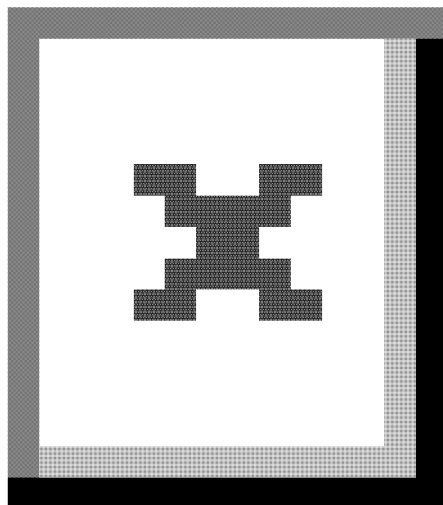
according to a copy obtained by Megan. “That is why we are having our first hearing of the new Congress on waste, fraud, and abuse in pandemic spending programs. We will hold many more hearings on this important issue.”

**The witnesses at the 10 a.m. hearing** include Gene Dodaro, who leads the Government Accountability Office; Roy Dotson, the National Pandemic Fraud Recovery coordinator; and Michael Horowitz, the chair of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee and inspector general of the Justice Department.

They each plan to discuss improper or fraudulent pandemic payments, which likely total hundreds of billions of dollars based on estimates from government agencies and law enforcement proceedings, as well as what has been done to identify or get the payments back and what more needs to be done.

---

A message from PhRMA:



## PROVIDERS

**ANOTHER ONE** “The Texas Medical Association filed another lawsuit to change government rules for enforcing the No Surprises Act” particularly over the increase in price for an independent dispute resolution, part of the process for determining how much providers get paid in surprise billing cases, Daniel reports.

The TMA argues that the nonrefundable administrative fee for resolving disputes between payers and providers through the process “\$350, up from \$50 last year” is illegal because it effectively keeps many providers from being able to engage in the process, especially those filing claims smaller than the new fee.

The suit also said the rule for “batching” claims, or submitting them together under one dispute resolution, is unlawful because it also restricts access to the process for some providers.

It’s one of the many cases the group has brought against the government to challenge the implementation of the No Surprises Act. The TMA is critical of the way agencies laid out the independent dispute process for claims, arguing the calculations tip the scales in favor of insurers.

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## **JOIN TUESDAY TO HEAR FROM MAYORS AROUND AMERICA:**

2022 brought in a new class of mayors leading “majority minority” cities, reshaping who is at the nation’s power tables and what their priorities are. Join POLITICO to hear from local leaders on how they’re responding to being tested by unequal Covid-19 outcomes, upticks in hate crimes, homelessness, lack of

affordable housing, inflation and a potential recession. [REGISTER HERE.](#)

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#### NAMES IN THE NEWS

**Megan L. Ranney** has been named the next dean of the Yale School of Public Health, starting on July 1. Ranney currently serves as the deputy dean of the Brown University School of Public Health, where she has been on the faculty since 2008.

#### WHAT WE'RE READING

Navy researchers are studying [geriatric dolphins](#) to learn more about the human aging process, The New York Times reports.

Scientists are bracing themselves for tighter federal controls over risky lab research, [Science reports](#).

---

A message from PhRMA:

Every day, patients at the pharmacy counter discover their commercial insurance coverage does not provide the level of access and affordability they need. New data from a study by IQVIA reveal the harmful practices of insurers and their pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) can lead to significantly higher out-of-pocket costs for medicines – causing some patients to abandon their medicines completely. [Learn more.](#)

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Daniel Payne [@\\_daniel\\_payne](#)

Ruth Reader [@RuthReader](#)

Erin Schumaker [@erinlschumaker](#)

Megan R. Wilson [@misswilson](#)

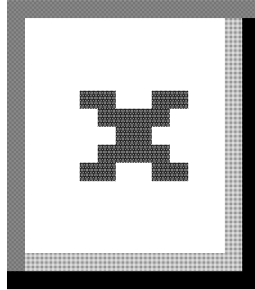
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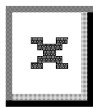
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**To:** "Wallace, Mary H. (CMS/OC)" <Mary.Wallace@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Jesse O'Connell Is CAP's New Senior Vice President for Education

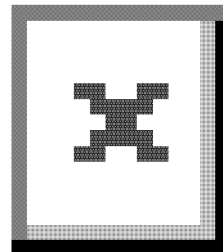
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## Education

# **The Center for American Progress welcomes Jesse O'Connell as senior vice president for Education.**

The Center for American Progress welcomes Jesse O'Connell as senior vice president for Education. In this role, he will lead our efforts to advance policies that guarantee all Americans have





access to high-quality educational opportunities across the full learning spectrum—including early childhood, K-12, and higher education. In his role, Jesse will work with the teams to develop, build support for, and successfully implement our education policy agenda. This policy agenda helps inform and is informed by meeting our economy, race equity, health, climate, and democracy challenges.

Prior to joining CAP, Jesse served as strategy director for federal policy at Lumina Foundation, leading the foundation's federal policy efforts to increase attainment of high-quality credentials and promote affordable postsecondary education. Follow Jesse on Twitter [@jesseocnl](https://twitter.com/jesseocnl).

## **Q+A WITH JESSE**

He hasn't even wrapped his first week with us, but we wanted to take a moment with Jesse to talk about his perspectives coming in and look at the nation's priorities at this important moment in history.

---

### **What first drew you to education policy?**

My grandfather was an immigrant and a domestic worker, and my mom was the first person in her family to go to college—so I grew up acutely aware of the opportunity that education can offer. Later, working in a college financial aid office I spoke every day to students and families and heard about the challenges and barriers they faced trying to get to and through college. It left me with the clear sense that policy change was the most effective lever to address those issues at scale.

**Given a background that has blended professional experiences, from being a college financial aid administrator to a director of federal policy priorities at Lumina Foundation, what perspectives do you look forward to lending our work across education policy?**

I've been really lucky that the various stops in my career have each provided a view into the policymaking process from a different angle. What you see as a funder is different than what you see at an association and is different than what you see as a practitioner. I'd like to think those experiences helped me think comprehensively about the way any given policy is both developed and received, and the value in seeking out different stakeholder perspectives throughout the process—especially in education policy, where community perspective is crucial. And I know the K-12 education policy team at CAP has a huge strength and focus in that regard.

**With the K-12 public education system serving the largest number of students overall, what should Congress and the White House focus on over the next year or two to reimagine the ways public schools should work for all students?**

There's no doubt that the federal government needs to continue to increase its investment in public schools, even as policymakers work to improve the equity of our current investment. And that investment must be both in physical schools infrastructure—which we've seen a start of through American Rescue Plan funds, but much much more is needed—as well as in our teachers, particularly given the tremendous strain our educator workforce has been under these past two years. I'd hope that we also see federal policymakers continuing to push for more access to rigorous and personalized pathways in K-12.

**The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated the child care workforce and reduced enrollment in early childhood education programs. But these systems were more vulnerable to such a crisis because, historically, the United States has deeply underinvested in early childhood education. How do you perceive the opportunity to address this long-standing problem?**

The pandemic finally pulled forward in the public consciousness the genuine precariousness that child care providers and early childhood educators face, a crisis that those in the field have been urgently trying to make people aware of for a long time. So if there's an opportunity before us, it's that there is finally an audience clamoring for long-overdue investments in early education and child care, and we've seen Democrats in congress really step up to try and get that done. And as policymakers make good on these historic investments, we have the chance to make lasting progress on child care quality, wages, supply, and affordability.

"Thinking critically, being exposed to a diverse range of ideas, seeing how to engage in civic life: All of this stems from education and is why education is a bedrock of democratic engagement."

**What are some of the biggest challenges facing higher education today and why?**

Affordability for sure that's still a challenge that cuts across all parts of the sector and lays at the root of both access concerns and the student debt crisis. But it's also pretty clear that higher ed is plagued with inconsistent quality, and our consumer protection mechanisms and quality assurance processes haven't been up to the challenges of making sure that students receive the experience and skills they expected from their program. We need to restore student and public trust in the system, because higher education is a crucial part of any effort to build an economy for all.

**Given this unique moment the country finds itself in, what piece of the education policy landscape is drawing your attention?**

Given my background in postsecondary education policy, I continue to spend a lot of time thinking about the challenge in how we limit ourselves around what the word "college"—what is it supposed to encompass and express, and how it is still used as a shorthand for a pretty specific and mostly outdated kind of experience. We need policymakers and the public to embrace and celebrate a wider range of pathways after high school, because that's what today's students are doing. We

came so close to making a historic and sorely needed investment in the nation's community colleges, and I want to see us get back to that conversation.

More broadly, I care a whole lot about the crucial role that education has to play in renewing our democracy and restoring social trust. Thinking critically, being exposed to a diverse range of ideas, seeing how to engage in civic life: All of this stems from education and is why education is a bedrock of democratic engagement.

### **Why CAP? Why now?**

I genuinely believe that CAP is uniquely positioned to advance key education policy issues at a moment when these issues are set to drive much of the prevailing national political narrative. This stuff matters to people—they're quintessential kitchen table issues. And because of that, people aren't looking for good-on-paper but lousy-in-real-life solutions. They want simple, straightforward ideas that make their lives better. That has always been CAP's strength. I feel really lucky that I have the chance to come onboard with CAP at this moment when the combination of recovery from the pandemic and historic investments in different parts of our education system are giving us this chance to finally bend the curve on access, affordability, and quality outcomes on every level and sector of education.

## **About the Education Department**

Our Education Department aims to change America's approach to early childhood, K-12 education, higher education, and lifelong learning by ensuring equitable access to resources, developing community-centered policies, and promoting the ability to participate fully in an inclusive economy built on a strong democracy.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE  
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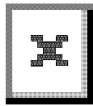
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**From:** Joel Martinez <progress@americanprogress.org>  
**Sent:** 6/1/2022 9:24:20 PM +0000  
**To:** "Wallace, Mary H. (CMS/OC)" <Mary.Wallace@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** CAP Energy & Environment // NSIP | The Summit of the Americas is an opportunity that the United States cannot waste

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## Energy and Environment

Hi Mary,

The science is clear: in order to avoid the worst consequences of the climate crisis, we must limit global temperature rise to 1.5-degrees. To do this, the United States and its regional partners must cooperate extensively on mitigation, adaptation, finance, and collaboration solutions at the national and subnational levels. For the past nine months, the National Security and International Climate Policy teams at the Center for American Progress have been considering concrete ways to advance a strategic path forward on climate action in the Western hemisphere, using the U.S. presidency of the Ninth Summit of the Americas this year as a driver. The United States hosts this year's summit at a moment when the Americas face a long list of societal and economic stressors, including a crisis of democratic backsliding; an ongoing pandemic; an uneven

economic recovery; and multiple migration crises that have unsettled regional politics and tested the capacity and political will of governments to address large-scale migration flows. The Summit presents an opportunity for Washington to reengage substantively with our hemispheric neighbors after the tumultuous years under the previous U.S. administration and to affirm shared values within the region. A shift in the Biden administration's regional security strategy that centers climate action can be key to safety and prosperity in the Americas. The Summit is an action forcing event that should galvanize consensus on:

- Mobilizing commitments and financing to enable a clean energy transition
- Prioritizing climate action in supply chains
- Elevating climate migration and adaptation solutions in the regional security narrative
- Leveraging subnational and non-state support toward climate action

The Summit of the Americas is an opportunity that the United States cannot waste.

*In solidarity,*

**Joel Martinez**

Senior Policy Analyst, National Security and International

Policy

Center for American Progress

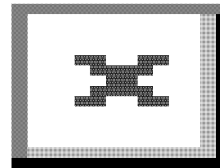
## **OUR LATEST WORK**

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### **These Top 5 Oil Companies Just Raked in \$35 Billion While Americans Pay More at the Pump**

Sally Hardin and Jenny Rowland-Shea

While families on tight budgets struggle to pay the sky-high price of gas--cause, these five oil companies -- Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron, BP, and ConocoPhillips -- more than tripled their profits in the first quarter of 2022 from this same time last year. Instead of using profits to lower costs for consumers, Big Oil is enriching their wealthy shareholders to the tune of \$61 billion in stock buybacks and dividends.



**READ  
MORE**

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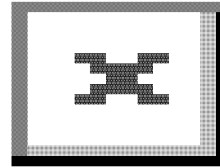
### **As Energy Prices Skyrocket, Congress Must Return the Oil and Gas Industry's Windfall Profits to the American People**

Seth Hanlon and Trevor Higgins

---



Congress should enact a temporary tax on windfall profits from the oil and gas companies that are raking in record profits at a time of crisis-level energy prices.



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MORE**

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## **MORE FROM OUR TEAM**

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### **A good listen: “Meeting the Climate Crisis - Lessons and Next Steps From the US and UK”**

Watch as Shadow Secretary for Climate Change and Net Zero Ed Miliband, Deputy Executive Director at the Climate Jobs National Resource Center Emma Rebhorn, and CAP’s John Podesta discuss seizing the opportunities and meeting the challenges of climate-centered politics, including approaches to creating clean energy jobs, fostering climate-friendly trade, and ensuring a just transition in industrial decarbonization.

### **A quick read: “A green salvo to counter Putin’s war in Ukraine”**

New in Politico EU, read John Podesta and Julian Popov’s argument for how the U.S. and EU can leverage their joint “Task Force on Energy Security” to accelerate clean energy deployment – ending energy dependence on and financial flows to Russia.

### **A bit of encouragement: “Fight for Our Future: Activists Demand Action on Climate and Justice”**

At the “Fight for Our Future” rally, timed with Earth Day 2022, activists took to the streets of Washington, D.C., to demand that our leaders finally deliver on climate, care, jobs, and justice. The Center for American Progress spoke with advocates about their vision for a just, clean energy future and asked them what they are fighting for.

You can follow the work of our team on Twitter at

✕ **@CAPEnergyPolicy**

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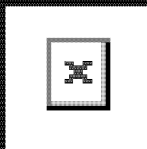
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**Sent:** 4/25/2024 3:32:50 PM +0000  
**To:** "Wallace, Mary (CMS/OC)" <Mary.Wallace@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** You're Invited | 2024 CAP Summit on Education

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# You're Invited

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## Summit on Education

**Reset. Reframe. Reform.**

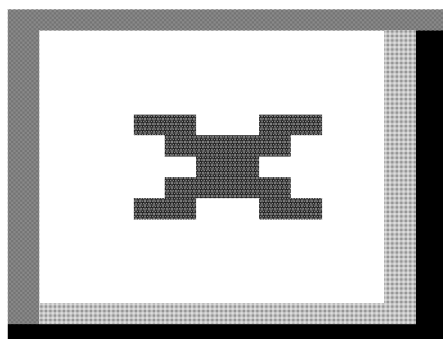
**May 1 - 2, 2024**

Online via Zoom

May 1 | 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM ET

May 2 | 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM ET

**RSVP**



*The American education system is at a crossroads, with implications for the future of our democracy, our economy, and national security.*

Bringing together researchers, advocates, and policymakers from across the education continuum—early childhood, K-12 education, higher education, and workforce development—this two-day summit will explore a path toward creating a strong progressive agenda for education. Through this event, the Center for American Progress and its partners will reset the conversation concerning education, reframing it as an essential pillar of democracy, and explore reforms that will strengthen education as a crucial vehicle for opportunity for students and their families.

RSVP today to hear from [Becky Pringle](#) of the National Education Association, [Catherine E. Lhamon](#) from the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education, [Randi Weingarten](#) of the American Federation of Teachers and many other experts in the field.

View the full online agenda and current speaker list [here](#).

**May 1 - 2, 2024**

**Online via Zoom**

**May 1 | 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM ET**

**May 2 | 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM ET**

*Closed-captioned-enabled video will be posted following the conclusion of the event.*

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**Sent:** 6/6/2023 5:03:50 PM +0000  
**To:** "Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM)" <Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>; "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; Joseph R. Betancourt <jbetancourt@cmwf.org>  
**CC:** Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: setting up time to connect

Hi Carrie, nice to meet you as well.

Joe is away the second week of August, but I will keep you posted regarding plans for a visit to DC or we can schedule a Zoom.

Best,

Lorraine

---

**From:** Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM) <Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 12:55 PM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; Joseph R. Betancourt <jbetancourt@cmwf.org>  
**Cc:** Lorraine Morales <lmorales@cmwf.org>; Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>  
**Subject:** RE: setting up time to connect

Hello,

Happy to help!

Nice to meet you, Lorraine.

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 5, 2023 9:55 PM  
**To:** Joseph R. Betancourt <jbetancourt@cmwf.org>  
**Cc:** Lorraine Morales <lmorales@cmwf.org>; Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>; Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM) <Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: setting up time to connect

Great â€” I am around the first two weeks of august so hopefully that will work! See you soon. Will let carie and Lorraine take it from here!

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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**Sent:** Monday, June 5, 2023 9:49 PM

**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>

**Cc:** Lorraine Morales <[lmorales@cmwf.org](mailto:lmorales@cmwf.org)>; Rachel Nuzum <[RN@CMWF.org](mailto:RN@CMWF.org)>; Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM) <[Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: setting up time to connect

Meena,

Thanks for reaching out, really appreciate it.

Look forward to connecting, would prefer in-person, should be in DC in August but can meet via zoom as well sooner.

My colleague Lorraine can assist.

Best

Joe

On Jun 2, 2023, at 11:49 AM, Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)  
<[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)> wrote:

Hi Joe,

Hi Joe,

I am sorry that I wasn't able to attend your reception recently, but wanted to have a chance to connect with you and say hello and hear about how you are settling in, what you are thinking about moving forward for the Commonwealth Fund, and how we can continue the good work together.

Adding Lorraine and Carie to help find some time for us. I don't know if/when you are in DC, happy to try to do a coffee etc or else good old fashioned zoom!

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6)

(cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)





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---

**From:** Laurie Zephyrin <lz@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 1/4/2022 4:19:23 PM +0000  
**To:** "Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM)" <Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>;  
"Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** Noel Manu <nm@cmwf.org>; Morenike Ayo-Vaughan <mav@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: scheduling a meeting  
**Attachments:** Meeting Request Form.doc

Thanks Carie,

Would you like us to complete the speaker form? Happy to- just wanted to clarify? Including the Advancing Health Equity team at CMWF.

Thanks

Laurie

---

**From:** Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM) <Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 4, 2022 11:13 AM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; Laurie Zephyrin <lz@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: scheduling a meeting

Hello, just resending the meeting request form 😊

Happy new year!

Carie

---

**From:** Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM)  
**Sent:** Monday, December 20, 2021 10:43 AM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[meena.seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:meena.seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>; [lz@cmwf.org](mailto:lz@cmwf.org)  
**Subject:** RE: scheduling a meeting

HI, Laurie!

Attached you will find a meeting request form, please complete and return it to me when you have a minute 😊

Thank you!

Carie

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)  
**Sent:** Friday, December 17, 2021 6:11 PM  
**To:** [lz@cmwf.org](mailto:lz@cmwf.org); Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM) <[Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <[Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov)>; Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM) <[Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Subject:** scheduling a meeting

Hi Laurie, so great to reconnect with you just now. I am adding Carie here who can send along the meeting request form so then we can schedule time for us to talk w your team about all things equity and value based care in the new year.

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (b)(6) (cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 6/6/2023 1:55:25 AM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Automatic reply: Automatic reply: setting up time to connect

Thanks for your message. I'll be back online on Wednesday, June 7th. Please reach out to Sara Federman (Sfederman@cmwf.org) with any pressing issues in my absence and she will route it to the appropriate Fund staff.  
Talk soon!  
Rachel

---

**From:** Joseph R. Betancourt <jbetancourt@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 8/3/2023 7:35:13 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Re: Joining soon

ok, let me know

can also just talk by phone

(b)(6)

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>

**Sent:** Thursday, August 3, 2023 3:34 PM

**To:** Joseph R. Betancourt <jbetancourt@cmwf.org>

**Subject:** Joining soon

I am having some issues w my computer- I might have to join by phone!

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

---

**From:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 9/21/2023 3:01:25 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** "Blumenthal, David" <dablumenthal@hsph.harvard.edu>; Sarah Conway <sjc@jhmi.edu>  
**Subject:** e-intro

Hi, Meena:

Hope you are well and holding up under the many pressures you have to manage.

I am writing to introduce you to Dr. Sarah Conway, a hospitalist, faculty member, and executive at Hopkins. I am mentoring Sarah as part of my role as chair of the board of the Carol Emmott Foundation, which is a new philanthropy devoted to advancing the careers of women in health and medicine.

I think you and Sarah might enjoy meeting and talking.

Good luck with your challenging and important work.

Very best

David

---

**From:** The Commonwealth Fund <rn@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 10/25/2023 1:50:10 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Embargoed Report: How Health Care Costs and Medical Debt are Making Americans Sicker and Poorer

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to share a prepublication, embargoed version of the Commonwealth Fund's forthcoming report, *Paying for It: How Health Care Costs and Medical Debt Are Making Americans Sicker and Poorer*, which is the newest in the Fund's ongoing research reporting on working-age adults' ability to afford health care. The report is being made available to inform policymakers in advance of media inquiries and **should not be cited or circulated broadly prior to 12:01 a.m. on October 26, 2023.**

The report draws from the Commonwealth Fund's recent *Health Care Affordability Survey*, fielded between April and July of 2023, which asked a nationally representative sample of working-age U.S. adults with and without health insurance about their ability to afford care.

**Its findings reveal that people with health insurance of all types struggle to pay for premiums, copayments, coinsurance, and uncovered health services, with over half (51%) of working-age adults struggling to afford their health care and nearly one in three (32%) saddled with medical debt.** For the first time, the findings are also broken down by public and private insurance type, insurance status, and income level.

Other key findings from the report include:

- **Wide-ranging affordability struggles.** When analyzed by insurance type, 43% of people with employer coverage, 45% with Medicaid, 51% with Medicare, and 57% with a marketplace or individual-market plan reported difficulty affording their care.
- **Substantial medical debt.** 85% percent of people with medical debt reported debt loads of \$500 or more, with nearly half carrying \$2,000 or more. More than two-thirds of working-age adults with medical debt said they were making payments directly to providers.
- **Access to care hindered.** 38% of working-age adults reported delaying or skipping needed health care or prescription drugs in the past year because they couldn't afford the expense, including 29% of those with employer plans. Rates were higher for individuals with marketplace or individual-market plans (37%), Medicaid (39%), and Medicare (42%).
- **Squeezing household budgets.** More than half (57%) of working-age adults reported that 10% or more of their monthly budget goes toward health care costs. For marketplace enrollees and low-income individuals with employer plans, nearly a quarter reported allocating 25% or more of their monthly budget to health care costs. Approximately 30% of working-age adults across various insurance types mentioned that health care costs made it harder to afford necessities like food and utilities.

The report highlights several potential policy options to reduce consumers' health care cost burdens, including improving protections against medical debt, permanently extending the enhanced marketplace premium subsidies set to expire in 2025, adjusting premiums and cost-sharing for employer coverage based on employee income, and eliminating Medicaid cost-sharing for high-value services.



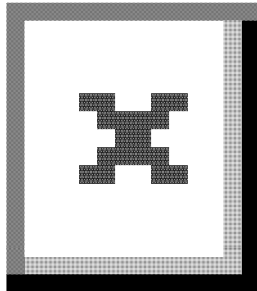
**The full embargoed report as well as factsheets highlighting findings and implications specific to employer-based insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, and Marketplace coverage can be accessed with the following login information:**

*Username:* media

*Password:* Media\_Fund\_1918 (case-sensitive)

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss these findings in further detail.

Best,  
Rachel Nuzum  
Senior Vice President for Policy  
The Commonwealth Fund  
202-360-2519



---

**From:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 10/26/2023 2:45:12 PM +0000  
**To:** Mark A Schuster <Mark.A.Schuster@KP.ORG>; "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** E-intro

Hi, Meena:

I'm writing to introduce you to Mark Schuster, MD, Ph.D, who is dean of the Kaiser Medical School. I've given you a little background about him, and expect you might both benefit from a connection.

Mark: Meena is Director of the Medicare Program and Deputy Administrator of CMS. She also shares with you the distinction of being an MD PhD.

Best

David

---

**From:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 10/26/2023 2:01:30 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** another doc

Hi, Meena:

Hope you are well and that the hot seat is not too hot.

I don't want to impose on you with introductions, but knowing how hard it is to find talented senior physicians with an interest in public service, I wondered if you would be interested in meeting another candidate for an opening should one arise. And thanks for seeing Sarah Conway.

I'm thinking in this case of Mark Schuster, who I have known since he graduated summa from Yale college. I gave him his first job before he went to Harvard Medical School, and he became a professor of pediatrics at Harvard, and a hugely successful health services researcher with a special interest in AIDS and quality of care generally. He has a PhD in health services research from RAND/UCLA where Bob Brook was his mentor and where he spent considerable time. He is now the founding dean of the innovative new Kaiser Medical School in Pasadena, where he has been for 10 years.

He has always been interested in public service, and is extremely thoughtful and smart.

Let me know if you would like me to introduce you.

Very best

David

---

**From:** "Turco, Molly (CMS/CM)" <Molly.Turco@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** 3/26/2024 4:19:24 PM +0000  
**To:** "OToole, Meghan (CMS/OA)" <Meghan.OToole1@cms.hhs.gov>; "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; "Weiss, Rachel (CMS/CM)" <rachel.weiss@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: FW: My story on MA/CMS Advance Notice

---

**From:** Wendell Potter <wendell@kingsportandwise.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 26, 2024 12:15 PM  
**To:** Turco, Molly (CMS/CM) <Molly.Turco@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** My story on MA/CMS Advance Notice

Hi Molly. I wanted to be sure you saw the story we published yesterday about the Advance Notice. Readers asked what they could say when they reach out to Congress and the administration so we will publish a follow-up story later today with suggestions. I'll also send a note to Stacy.

I hope all is well. I know this is such an intense time for you all.

Kindest regards,

Wendell

--

**Wendell Potter**

**Executive Editor, HEALTH CARE un-covered**

**President, Center for Health & Democracy**

President, Business Leaders for Health Care Transformation

Author of Deadly Spin and Nation on the Take

---

**From:** Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 11/14/2022 12:19:57 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Automatic reply: Automatic reply: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Hello,

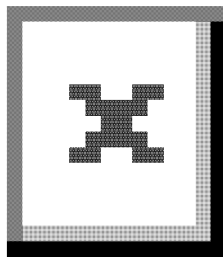
Thank you for your message. I will be out of the office on Monday, November 14th. In my absence please contact Molly FitzGerald (mf@cmwf.org) for anything urgent.

All the best,  
Katharine

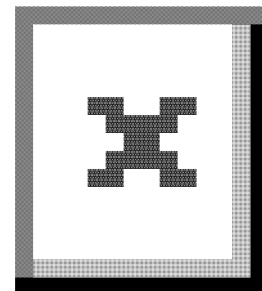
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**From:** The Commonwealth Fund <commonwealthfund@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 12/12/2022 5:01:37 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Commonwealth Fund Names Joseph R. Betancourt, M.D., as Its Next President

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**Commonwealth Fund  
Names Joseph R.  
Betancourt, M.D., as Its  
Next President**



December 12, 2022



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is our pleasure to announce that Joseph R. Betancourt, M.D., M.P.H., will become the Commonwealth Fund's eighth president on January 17, 2023. One of the nation's preeminent leaders in health care, equity, quality, and community health, Betancourt currently serves as the Senior Vice President for Equity and Community Health at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). He will be among the first Latino heads of a national health care foundation.

"I cannot think of anyone better than Joe Betancourt to lead the Commonwealth Fund into the future," said Michael Drake, M.D., President of the University of California, and Chair of the Commonwealth Fund Board of Directors. "His breadth of experience as a physician, health system leader, and pioneer in disparities research gives him keen insight and a diverse toolkit for addressing the challenges U.S. health care will face in the coming years. His will be a critically important new perspective and voice in health care philanthropy."

In his role at MGH, Betancourt oversees the organization's diversity, equity, inclusion, and community health portfolio, including its Center for Diversity and Inclusion, Disparities Solutions Center, Center for Community Health Improvement, and centers focused on gun violence prevention, community health innovation, immigrant health, and global health. Previously, Betancourt led the Mass General Brigham system's COVID Equity and Community Health response, served as Vice President and Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer at MGH, and directed its Disparities Solutions Center, which he founded. He is an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and a board-certified internist, whose practice has focused on Spanish-speaking and minority populations.

Betancourt earned his M.D. from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and completed an internal medicine residency at New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center. Following his residency, he was a member of one of the first classes in the Commonwealth Fund's Harvard University Fellowship in Minority Health Policy.

"It is an honor and privilege to lead an organization that has meant so much to me personally and to so many Americans over more than a

century,” said Betancourt. “Twenty-five years ago, the Commonwealth Fund propelled me into what has become an unimaginable journey in health care, and I am humbled beyond words to be given the opportunity to lead this critically important organization into the future, always remembering that our goal is to ensure access to high-quality, affordable health care for all.”

Betancourt will succeed David Blumenthal, M.D., who has served as Fund president since 2013. On behalf of the Board and everyone at the Fund, we want to thank David for his decade of inspired leadership. He is leaving the Fund a stronger, more diverse, and more impactful organization than at any time in its history.

We hope you will join us in welcoming Joe Betancourt in January as we continue to work with you all on building an equitable health care system that works for everyone.

Read the full announcement [here](#).

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**From:** The Commonwealth Fund <commonwealthfund@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 12/22/2022 4:59:36 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Season's Greetings!



Illustration by Rose Wong

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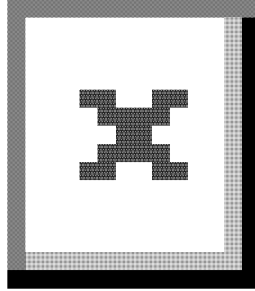
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**From:** The Commonwealth Fund <commonwealthfund@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 4/17/2023 8:11:35 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Please Join Us



As a valued policy partner, the  
Commonwealth Fund invites you to  
join our D.C. team for a reception to  
celebrate spring, reconnect in person,  
and meet our new President, Dr. Joe  
Betancourt.

**Thursday, May 18, 2023**

**RSVP**

[DCFund@cmwf.org](mailto:DCFund@cmwf.org)

**Questions?**

[sfederman@cmwf.org](mailto:sfederman@cmwf.org)

g

**INVITATION IS NON  
TRANSFERABLE**

This event meets the  
criteria for a widely  
attended event

5:30–7:30 PM – *Remarks at 6:00*

1301 K Street NW, West Tower, Penthouse

*For those arriving by car, there is a parking garage accessible from 13th Street NW. Please bring your photo ID to the lobby desk inside the Washington Post building (West entrance) to check in. A Commonwealth Fund staff person will greet you and direct you to the penthouse.*

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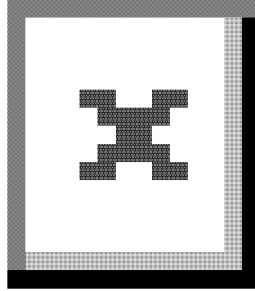
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**From:** The Commonwealth Fund <commonwealthfund@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 4/27/2023 1:20:34 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Rooftop Happy Hour for Dr. Joseph Betancourt



We hope you can join us for a happy hour reception to welcome and meet the Commonwealth Fund's new President, Dr. Joseph Betancourt.

**When:** Thursday, May 18th 5:30-7:30PM

**RSVP**

[DCFund@cmwf.org](mailto:DCFund@cmwf.org)

**Questions?**

[sfederman@cmwf.org](mailto:sfederman@cmwf.org)

g

**INVITATION IS NON TRANSFERABLE**

This event meets the criteria for a widely attended event

**Where:** 1301 K Street, NW, West

Tower, Penthouse

**What:** Cocktails, light fare, and a few

brief remarks at 6:00PM

*For those arriving by car, there is a parking garage accessible from 13th Street NW. Please bring your photo ID to the lobby desk inside the Washington Post building (West entrance) to check in. A Commonwealth Fund staff person will greet you and direct you to the penthouse.*

RSVP

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---

**From:** Molly Fitzgerald <mf@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 3/7/2022 11:09:38 PM +0000  
**To:** "Jacobs, Douglas (CMS/CM)" <Douglas.Jacobs@cms.hhs.gov>; "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>; Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>; "Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM)" <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Thank you, Dr. Jacobs! The Harkness Fellows and the Fund's International Program Staff will be together in person at the Eaton, so we welcome you to join us there. I will forward the meeting invitation to you now. Let me know if you have any questions, and we look forward to seeing you on March 17.

Best,

Molly

**Molly FitzGerald, M.P.H.**

*Program Manager, International Leadership Programs  
International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*

M (b)(6)  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



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Commonwealth  
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---

**From:** Jacobs, Douglas (CMS/CM) <Douglas.Jacobs@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 7, 2022 6:07 PM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; Molly Fitzgerald <mf@cmwf.org>  
**Cc:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>; Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>; Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM) <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Hi everyone, a pleasure to meet you here! Very much looking forward to this. Are the other meeting participants going to be in person, or participating virtually? If there are going to

be people participating in person, I would be happy to visit in person as well. Let me know what would be preferred!

All the best,

Doug

**Douglas Jacobs, MD, MPH** (he/him)

Senior Advisor, Center for Medicare

[Douglas.Jacobs@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Douglas.Jacobs@cms.hhs.gov)



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**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)

**Sent:** Monday, March 7, 2022 4:03 PM

**To:** Molly Fitzgerald <[mf@cmwf.org](mailto:mf@cmwf.org)>; Jacobs, Douglas (CMS/CM) <[Douglas.Jacobs@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Douglas.Jacobs@cms.hhs.gov)>

**Cc:** Gretchen Jacobson <[gj@cmwf.org](mailto:gj@cmwf.org)>; Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>; Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM) <[Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Hi all, Dr Doug Jacobs will be doing this session, adding him here. Thank you!

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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**From:** Molly Fitzgerald <[mf@cmwf.org](mailto:mf@cmwf.org)>

**Sent:** Monday, March 7, 2022 3:24 PM

**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>

**Cc:** Gretchen Jacobson <[gj@cmwf.org](mailto:gj@cmwf.org)>; Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>; Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM) <[Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Dear Dr. Seshamani,

We look forward to seeing you for the Harkness Fellows session (titled "The Future of Medicare") on March 17 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. at the

Eaton

DC.



Please review our COVID-19 safety protocol below and let us know if you plan to attend in person. If you choose to participate virtually, you can join the meeting using the Zoom details in the calendar event.

If you will be using slides (totally optional as we like to keep things conversational) please email them to me in advance so we can be sure to have everything set up appropriately.

Let us know if you have any questions and thank you again for participating.

Best,

Molly

### **Commonwealth Fund Meeting Protocol**

#### **1. Complete check-in form:**

<https://commonwealthfund.formstack.com/forms/selfcheck>

-For "Your reason for being at The Commonwealth Fund today?" select VISITOR

-For "Who are you visiting" enter "HWPS" for Harkness Washington Policy Seminar

#### **2. Confirm a negative COVID-19 test result upon arrival**

-If using a rapid test, the result must be from the morning/day of the meeting\*

-If using a PCR test, the result must be from within 72 hours of the meeting

#### **3. Wear a mask indoors**

\*If you do not have access to a rapid test the Commonwealth Fund can provide one on the day of the meeting. Please email Molly FitzGerald ([mf@cmwf.org](mailto:mf@cmwf.org)) to confirm that you will need a rapid test from the Fund, and plan to arrive at the Eaton 20-30 minutes before you are scheduled to speak.

**Molly FitzGerald, M.P.H.**

*Program Manager, International Leadership Programs  
International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*

M 617.688.7611

1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



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---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 10:05 AM

**To:** Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>; Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM)  
<[Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov)>

**Cc:** Molly Fitzgerald <[mf@cmwf.org](mailto:mf@cmwf.org)>; Gretchen Jacobson <[gj@cmwf.org](mailto:gj@cmwf.org)>

**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Great, thanks to you both, and Jon moving you to bcc. Happy to speak. Adding Christiane on my end.

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 9:59 AM  
**To:** Blum, Jonathan (CMS/OA) <[Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Molly Fitzgerald <[mf@cmwf.org](mailto:mf@cmwf.org)>; Gretchen Jacobson <[gj@cmwf.org](mailto:gj@cmwf.org)>; Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Thank Jon, really appreciate it. Would love to catch up at the appropriate time==best to the family.

Meena, nice to be connected to you again. We welcome your participation in the Harkness Washington Policy Seminar. Our Fellows are eager to learn about Medicare priorities and share their analogous international experiences.

Happy to supply you with any additional information to make the time with us productive.

Thanks again,

Reggie

---

**From:** Blum, Jonathan (CMS/OA) <[Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 7:16 AM  
**To:** Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>  
**Cc:** Molly Fitzgerald <[mf@cmwf.org](mailto:mf@cmwf.org)>; Gretchen Jacobson <[gj@cmwf.org](mailto:gj@cmwf.org)>; Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Hi Reggie—it's great to hear from you and I hope you and your family are well.

I'm copying Dr. Meena Seshamani, who as I'm sure you know, is our Dep. Administrator and Director for the Center for Medicare. Given the topic and her expertise, I recommend that Meena present on behalf of CMS.

I look forward to connecting soon,

Jon

---

**From:** Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 15, 2022 11:41 AM  
**To:** Blum, Jonathan (CMS/OA) <[Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Molly Fitzgerald <[mf@cmwf.org](mailto:mf@cmwf.org)>; Gretchen Jacobson <[gj@cmwf.org](mailto:gj@cmwf.org)>  
**Subject:** Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Hi Jon,

Hope you are well. Taryn told me she recently saw you "virtually".

Recognizing that many things have changed for you since last April when you met with the Harkness Fellows virtually, we are hoping you may be able to meet with the current Fellows in Washington, D.C.

We are happy to have eight Fellows with us this year from France, New Zealand, Norway, and the United Kingdom. We plan to be in D.C. as a group the week of March 14 and are currently arranging a meeting space.

**I am hoping you can join us on Thursday, March 17 from 10:00-11:00 am ET to speak about the future of Medicare.** As was the case last year, we will ask Gretchen Jacobson to do a brief introduction to the Fund's Medicare Program and then turn it over to you.

An overview of the seminar and our learning objectives are attached here. If this is something you are open to doing but the proposed time does not work, we are happy to adjust to fit your availability. Molly, copied here, will handle scheduling and other logistics.

Thank you,

Reggie



Hi Katharine, attached is the ethics form to fill out, I appreciate your help!

My best,  
Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) |)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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**From:** Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Date:** November 11, 2022 at 10:19:13 AM EST  
**To:** (b)(6)  
**Subject:** Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

ï»¿  
Dear Meena,

I am following up on an invitation to join the Commonwealth Fund on **Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>** at our International Forum Reception and Dinner in honor of **David Blumenthal** and his **tenure as President of the Commonwealth Fund**.

Please let me know if you can join us for this special evening. Attached is the invitation with the following information:

Old Ebbitt Grill (675 15h ST NW, Washington DC 20005)

Reception at 6:15 PM

Dinner and Remarks at 7:00 PM

All the best,  
Katharine

**Katharine Fields, MPA**  
*Program Associate*  
*International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*

O 212.606.3851 M b6  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



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# INTERNATIONAL FORUM RECEPTION AND DINNER

The Commonwealth Fund invites you to  
celebrate  
David Blumenthal's  
10 years of leadership as Fund President.

Wednesday, November 30th  
Reception at 6:15  
Dinner and Remarks at 7:00

RSVP

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875 15TH ST NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20003



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## International Forum

RECEPTION & DINNER



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---

**From:** Noel Manu <nm@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 1/14/2022 2:31:16 PM +0000  
**To:** Laurie Zephyrin <lz@cmwf.org>; "Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM)" <Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>; "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** Morenike Ayo-Vaughan <mav@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Re: scheduling a meeting  
**Attachments:** Meeting Request Form.doc

Good morning, Carie,  
Please see attached.  
Thank you,  
--

Noel Manu, MPH (she/her/hers)  
Program Manager, Advancing Health Equity  
646-369-3636



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**From:** Laurie Zephyrin <lz@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 4, 2022 11:19 AM  
**To:** Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM) <Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>; Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** Noel Manu <nm@cmwf.org>; Morenike Ayo-Vaughan <mav@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: scheduling a meeting

Thanks Carie,  
Would you like us to complete the speaker form? Happy to- just wanted to clarify? Including the Advancing Health Equity team at CMWF.  
Thanks  
Laurie

---

**From:** Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM) <Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 4, 2022 11:13 AM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; Laurie Zephyrin <lz@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: scheduling a meeting

Hello, just resending the meeting request form 😊

Happy new year!

Carie

---

**From:** Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM)  
**Sent:** Monday, December 20, 2021 10:43 AM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <meena.seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; lz@cmwf.org  
**Subject:** RE: scheduling a meeting

Hi, Laurie!

Attached you will find a meeting request form, please complete and return it to me when you have a minute 😊

Thank you!

Carie

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)  
**Sent:** Friday, December 17, 2021 6:11 PM  
**To:** [lz@cmwf.org](mailto:lz@cmwf.org); Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM) <[Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <[Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov)>; Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM) <[Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Subject:** scheduling a meeting

Hi Laurie, so great to reconnect with you just now. I am adding Carie here who can send along the meeting request form so then we can schedule time for us to talk w your team about all things equity and value based care in the new year.

My best,  
Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)  
Director, Center for Medicare  
(b)(6) (cell)  
[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 11/22/2022 4:33:59 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>;  
Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Great news!

**Reginald D. Williams II**  
*Vice President, International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*  
  
*Co-Lead, Behavioral Health*

(b)(6)

@RW\_Intl

1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 22, 2022 11:17 AM  
**To:** Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Cc:** Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Yes I just found out I can attend. Thank you! I am vegetarian (I eat dairy and eggs). Pls let me know what other information you need.

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 22, 2022 10:59 AM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Dear Meena,

Following up on your attendance at the November 30<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Fund reception and dinner.

All the best,  
Katharine

**Katharine Fields, MPA**  
*Program Associate  
International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*

O 212.606.3851 (b)(6)  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



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---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 15, 2022 7:25 PM  
**To:** Katharine Fields <[kf@cmwf.org](mailto:kf@cmwf.org)>  
**Cc:** Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>; Rachel Nuzum <[RN@CMWF.org](mailto:RN@CMWF.org)>; Sara Federman <[Sfederman@cmwf.org](mailto:Sfederman@cmwf.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Thank you have sent on!

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---

**From:** Katharine Fields <[kf@cmwf.org](mailto:kf@cmwf.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 15, 2022 2:15:10 PM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>; Rachel Nuzum <[RN@CMWF.org](mailto:RN@CMWF.org)>; Sara Federman <[Sfederman@cmwf.org](mailto:Sfederman@cmwf.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Meena,

Please see attached, and let me know if you need anything else.

All the best,  
Katharine

**Katharine Fields, MPA**  
*Program Associate*  
*International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*

O 212.606.3851 / (b)(6)  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



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---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 14, 2022 7:18 AM  
**To:** Katharine Fields <[kf@cmwf.org](mailto:kf@cmwf.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Hi Katharine, attached is the ethics form to fill out, I appreciate your help!

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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**From:** Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Date:** November 11, 2022 at 10:19:13 AM EST  
**To:** meena.seshamani@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

ï»¿  
Dear Meena,

I am following up on an invitation to join the Commonwealth Fund on **Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>** at our International Forum Reception and Dinner in honor of **David Blumenthal** and his **tenure as President of the Commonwealth Fund**.

Please let me know if you can join us for this special evening. Attached is the invitation with the following information:

Old Ebbitt Grill (675 15h ST NW, Washington DC 20005)  
Reception at 6:15 PM  
Dinner and Remarks at 7:00 PM

All the best,  
Katharine  
  
**Katharine Fields, MPA**  
*Program Associate*  
*International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*

O 212.606.3851 M (b)(6)  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021







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# INTERNATIONAL FORUM RECEPTION AND DINNER

The Commonwealth Fund invites you to  
celebrate  
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Wednesday, November 30th  
Reception at 6:15  
Dinner and Remarks at 7:00

RSVP

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875 15TH ST NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20003



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## International Forum

RECEPTION & DINNER



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---

**From:** Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 4/21/2022 4:31:38 PM +0000  
**To:** "Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM)" <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>; "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: New in JAMA: Leveraging Medicare to Advance Health Equity

Congratulations on this important contribution! We so enjoyed the conversation yesterday, look forward to ongoing collaboration!

Rachel

---

**From:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 21, 2022 11:53 AM  
**To:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** New in JAMA: Leveraging Medicare to Advance Health Equity

Hi all,

I wanted to flag that Meena and Doug authored a new piece in JAMA (published today) on how we can leverage Medicare to advance health equity. We are very excited about this piece and hope it will prompt important discussions. We hope you can amplify this piece with others working in health equity (it is free online). As always, we welcome any feedback!

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2791648>

Best,

Kristi

**Kristi Martin** (she/her)

Senior Advisor, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (cell)

[Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** Frederic Riccardi <friccardi@medicarerights.org>  
**Sent:** 10/31/2022 1:44:46 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Medicare enrollment and eligibility rule

Hi Meena,

Thank you for sharing, and we are thrilled to see the rules. Thank you for all your hard work and leadership.

Best,

Fred

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 28, 2022 9:41 PM  
**To:** Frederic Riccardi <friccardi@medicarerights.org>  
**Subject:** Medicare enrollment and eligibility rule

Hi Frederic, we have just published our Medicare enrollment and eligibility rule – eliminating delays in coverage, extending coverage for immunosuppressants after kidney transplant, and creating special enrollment periods for a variety of circumstances, including people losing Medicaid coverage whenever the PHE ends. We are excited for this work which drives our goal to expand access to coverage and care. Appreciate your thoughts and support.

Please see the press release here: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/biden-harris-administration-strengthens-medicare-finalized-policies-simplify-enrollment-and-expand>

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6)

(cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 4/25/2022 2:59:05 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Medicare rule on enrollment and eligibility released Friday

Thank you for the note, Meena. I am more than happy to help let others know about this.

Best,

Gretchen

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 25, 2022 10:13 AM  
**To:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** Medicare rule on enrollment and eligibility released Friday

Hi Gretchen, I hope you are well. You may have seen Friday – continuing the drumbeat of advancing equity and expanding access, we released a rule that proposes to eliminate Medicare coverage delays and late enrollment penalties, and proposes to create new special enrollment periods – especially important for people who could come off Medicaid with the end of the PHE, so they can get into Medicare. Appreciate any thoughts and amplification – and thanks for all that you and your team continue to do!

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 1/13/2022 8:18:48 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>; DSR <DSR@cmwf.org>; EMT <emt@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Health Affairs blog on Medicare vision

Hi, Meena:

Thanks for alerting me to this, and for your service. Interesting times for Medicare. Right decision in my view on Aduhelm.

Very best for the not so new year.

David

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 13, 2022 12:49 PM  
**To:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Subject:** Health Affairs blog on Medicare vision

Hi David,

Happy new year, and I hope you are well.

You may have seen already, but I wanted to reach out personally on the [blog in Health Affairs](#) we just published, outlining Medicare's strategy and plans in the Biden-Harris administration. At a high level, the blog articulates a vision for leaning into Medicare's role as a leader in the health system – driving towards equitable, patient-centered care in everything we do. I am excited to share the vision as a starting point to conversations with our partners.

We welcome your thoughts, questions, and feedback as we look to transform our health system to improve outcomes for all Americans. Feel free to amplify and share with other stakeholders you think may be interested in the vision or working with Medicare to achieve our goals. Looking forward to continued collaboration!

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) tell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** "Hunter, Leah (CMS/CM)" <Leah.Hunter@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** 6/6/2023 8:31:18 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; "Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM)" <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: FW: Statement on Merck suit

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**From:** Walter Gottlieb <GottliebW@NCPSSM.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 4:09 PM  
**To:** Cross-Call, Jesse (OS/IEA) <Jesse.Cross-call@hhs.gov>; Richard Fiesta <rffiesta@retiredamericans.org>; Sanders, Stacy (HHS/IOS) <Stacy.Sanders@hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** Steve Knievel <sknievel@citizen.org>; haeyoung@domesticworkers.org; TriciaN@kff.org; JulietteC@kff.org; vandewater@cbpp.org; istein@cbpp.org; Leslie.dach@gmail.com; aharris@protectourcare.org; woodhousebrad1@gmail.com; fisasi@familiesusa.org; BReavis@familiesusa.org; moreilly@aarp.org; david@patientsforaffordabledrugs.org; sarah@p4adnow.org; jstein@medicareadvocacy.org; dlipschutz@medicareadvocacy.org; gpuckrein@nmqf.org; edwin.park@georgetown.edu; jchoi@apiahf.org; kprindiville@justiceinaging.org; nkean@justiceinaging.org; rcarreon@unidosus.org; friccardi@medicarerights.org; lcopeland@medicarerights.org; Max Richtman <richtmanm@NCPSSM.org>; Dan Adcock <adcockd@NCPSSM.org>; darcher@justcareusa.org; lucy@p4adnow.org; katem@waxmanstrategies.com; Joyce Liu <jliu@apiahf.org>; Hoffman, Desiree <dhoffman@uaw.net>; Turner-Bailey, Renee <RTBailey@uaw.net>; Merith Basey <Merith@p4adnow.org>; Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>; Shaham, Lauren (CMS/OC) <Lauren.Shaham1@cms.hhs.gov>; Hunter, Leah (CMS/CM) <Leah.Hunter@cms.hhs.gov>; Ellis (she/her), Kyla (CMS/OA) <Kyla.Ellis@cms.hhs.gov>; Kahan, Zach (OS/IEA) <Zach.Kahan@hhs.gov>; Ciccone, Caroline (HHS/ASPA) <Caroline.Ciccone@hhs.gov>; Figueroa, Marvin (HHS/IEA) <Marvin.Figueroa@hhs.gov>; Yael Lehmann <YLehmann@familiesusa.org>; ecp57@georgetown.edu; Tesfaye, Eden (CMS/OA) <eden.tesfaye@cms.hhs.gov>; Blonar, Jonathan (CMS/OC) <Jonathan.Blonar@cms.hhs.gov>; Costello, Stefanie (CMS/OC) <Stefanie.Costello@cms.hhs.gov>; Joyce Liu <jliu@veng-group.com>; Gina Buccalo <gbuccalo@rhac.com>; Anne Montgomery <Montgomerya@ncpssm.org>; OToole, Meghan (CMS/OA) <Meghan.OToole1@cms.hhs.gov>; Moore, Jonathan (OS/IOS/) <Jonathan.Moore@hhs.gov>; matthew.hubbard@ncoa.org; KKertesz@medicareadvocacy.org; Fewkes, Glen <GFewkes@aarp.org>; Amber Christ <achrist@justiceinaging.org>; egee@americanprogress.org; nrapfogel@americanprogress.org; anneheathmontgomery@gmail.com; Peter Maybarduk <pmaybarduk@citizen.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Statement on Merck suit

And our statement...



June 6, 2023

## NEWS RELEASE

# BIG PHARMA GREED ON DISPLAY IN MERCK'S LAWSUIT

*Merck's decision to sue the federal government today demonstrates that there is no bottom to Big Pharma's greed and the corporate culture of putting profits before people. With its lawsuit, Merck has made it clear that one of the nation's most profitable drugmakers wants seniors to continue paying sky-high prices for their vital medications. (Merck made \$14.5 billion in profits last year.)*

*High prescription drug prices have forced millions of Medicare beneficiaries to ration doses or skip medications altogether. That's what the Inflation Reduction Act was intended to address, by allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices with Big Pharma. Half of Medicare beneficiaries have incomes under \$29,000 a year, and 28% of the average senior's Social Security benefit is consumed by out-of-pocket medical costs.*

*Merck can afford to negotiate a fair price for its product with Medicare and still do research and development, much of which is subsidized by U.S. taxpayers. Merck's constitutional arguments are spurious at best; the Veterans Administration has been successfully negotiating prices with Big Pharma for years. Drugmakers can still remain profitable while abiding by the Inflation Reduction Act, which was a long-awaited and landmark piece of legislation to protect seniors from industry price gouging.*

*While Merck's lawsuit is considered by the courts, we urge the Biden Administration to proceed with implementing the historic drug pricing reforms in the Inflation Reduction Act. □ "Max Richtman, President & CEO, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare*

###

*The National Committee, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization acts in the interests of its membership through advocacy, education, services, grassroots efforts and the leadership of the Board of Directors and professional staff. The work of the National Committee is directed toward developing better-informed citizens and voters.*

**Media Inquiries to:**

Walter Gottlieb

202-276-9089

[gottlieb@ncpssm.org](mailto:gottlieb@ncpssm.org)

---

**From:** Cross-Call, Jesse (OS/IEA) <[Jesse.Cross-call@hhs.gov](mailto:Jesse.Cross-call@hhs.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 2:01 PM

**To:** Richard Fiesta <[rfiesta@retiredamericans.org](mailto:rfiesta@retiredamericans.org)>; Sanders, Stacy (HHS/IOS) <[Stacy.Sanders@hhs.gov](mailto:Stacy.Sanders@hhs.gov)>

**Cc:** Steve Knievel <[sknievel@citizen.org](mailto:sknievel@citizen.org)>; haeyoung@domesticworkers.org <[haeyoung@domesticworkers.org](mailto:haeyoung@domesticworkers.org)>; TriciaN@kff.org <[TriciaN@kff.org](mailto:TriciaN@kff.org)>; JulietteC@kff.org <[JulietteC@kff.org](mailto:JulietteC@kff.org)>; vandewater@cbpp.org <[vandewater@cbpp.org](mailto:vandewater@cbpp.org)>; istein@cbpp.org <[istein@cbpp.org](mailto:istein@cbpp.org)>; Leslie.dach@gmail.com <[Leslie.dach@gmail.com](mailto:Leslie.dach@gmail.com)>; aharris@protectourcare.org <[aharris@protectourcare.org](mailto:aharris@protectourcare.org)>; woodhousebrad1@gmail.com <[woodhousebrad1@gmail.com](mailto:woodhousebrad1@gmail.com)>; fisasi@familiesusa.org <[fisasi@familiesusa.org](mailto:fisasi@familiesusa.org)>; BReavis@familiesusa.org <[BReavis@familiesusa.org](mailto:BReavis@familiesusa.org)>; moreilly@aarp.org <[moreilly@aarp.org](mailto:moreilly@aarp.org)>; david@patientsforaffordabledrugs.org <[david@patientsforaffordabledrugs.org](mailto:david@patientsforaffordabledrugs.org)>; sarah@p4adnow.org <[sarah@p4adnow.org](mailto:sarah@p4adnow.org)>; jstein@medicareadvocacy.org <[jstein@medicareadvocacy.org](mailto:jstein@medicareadvocacy.org)>; dlipschutz@medicareadvocacy.org <[dlipschutz@medicareadvocacy.org](mailto:dlipschutz@medicareadvocacy.org)>; gpuckrein@nmqf.org <[gpuckrein@nmqf.org](mailto:gpuckrein@nmqf.org)>; edwin.park@georgetown.edu <[edwin.park@georgetown.edu](mailto:edwin.park@georgetown.edu)>; jchoi@apiahf.org <[jchoi@apiahf.org](mailto:jchoi@apiahf.org)>; kprindiville@justiceinaging.org <[kprindiville@justiceinaging.org](mailto:kprindiville@justiceinaging.org)>; nkean@justiceinaging.org <[nkean@justiceinaging.org](mailto:nkean@justiceinaging.org)>; rcarreon@unidosus.org <[rcarreon@unidosus.org](mailto:rcarreon@unidosus.org)>; friccardi@medicarerights.org <[friccardi@medicarerights.org](mailto:friccardi@medicarerights.org)>; lcopeland@medicarerights.org <[lcopeland@medicarerights.org](mailto:lcopeland@medicarerights.org)>; Max Richtman <[richtmanm@NCPSSM.org](mailto:richtmanm@NCPSSM.org)>; Dan Adcock <[adcockd@NCPSSM.org](mailto:adcockd@NCPSSM.org)>; darcher@justcareusa.org <[darcher@justcareusa.org](mailto:darcher@justcareusa.org)>; lucy@p4adnow.org <[lucy@p4adnow.org](mailto:lucy@p4adnow.org)>; katem@waxmanstrategies.com <[katem@waxmanstrategies.com](mailto:katem@waxmanstrategies.com)>; Joyce Liu <[jliu@apiahf.org](mailto:jliu@apiahf.org)>; Hoffman, Desiree <[dhoffman@uaw.net](mailto:dhoffman@uaw.net)>; Turner-Bailey, Renee <[RTBailey@uaw.net](mailto:RTBailey@uaw.net)>; Merith Basey <[Merith@p4adnow.org](mailto:Merith@p4adnow.org)>; Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <[Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov)>;

Shaham, Lauren (CMS/OC) <Lauren.Shaham1@cms.hhs.gov>; Hunter, Leah (CMS/CM) <Leah.Hunter@cms.hhs.gov>; Ellis (she/her), Kyla (CMS/OA) <Kyla.Ellis@cms.hhs.gov>; Kahan, Zach (OS/IEA) <Zach.Kahan@hhs.gov>; Ciccone, Caroline (HHS/ASPA) <Caroline.Ciccone@hhs.gov>; Figueroa, Marvin (HHS/IEA) <Marvin.Figueroa@hhs.gov>; Yael Lehmann <YLehmann@familiesusa.org>; ecp57@georgetown.edu <ecp57@georgetown.edu>; Tesfaye, Eden (CMS/OA) <eden.tesfaye@cms.hhs.gov>; Blanar, Jonathan (CMS/OC) <Jonathan.Blanar@cms.hhs.gov>; Costello, Stefanie (CMS/OC) <Stefanie.Costello@cms.hhs.gov>; Walter Gottlieb <GottliebW@NCPSSM.org>; Joyce Liu <jliu@veng-group.com>; Gina Buccalo <gbuccalo@rhac.com>; Anne Montgomery <Montgomerya@ncpssm.org>; OToole, Meghan (CMS/OA) <Meghan.OToole1@cms.hhs.gov>; Moore, Jonathan (OS/IOS/) <Jonathan.Moore@hhs.gov>; matthew.hubbard@ncoa.org <matthew.hubbard@ncoa.org>; KKertesz@medicareadvocacy.org <KKertesz@medicareadvocacy.org>; Fewkes, Glen <GFewkes@aarp.org>; Amber Christ <achrist@justiceinaging.org>; egee@americanprogress.org <egee@americanprogress.org>; nrapfogel@americanprogress.org <nrapfogel@americanprogress.org>; anneheathmontgomery@gmail.com <anneheathmontgomery@gmail.com>; Peter Maybarduk <pmaybarduk@citizen.org>

**Subject:** RE: Statement on Merck suit

From the Secretary:

<https://twitter.com/SecBecerra/status/1666127814683242501?cxt=HHwWisC9ifCao58uAAAA>

---

**From:** Richard Fiesta <rfiesta@retiredamericans.org>

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 1:44 PM

**To:** Sanders, Stacy (HHS/IOS) <Stacy.Sanders@hhs.gov>

**Cc:** Steve Knievel <sknievel@citizen.org>; Cross-Call, Jesse (OS/IEA) <Jesse.Cross-call@hhs.gov>; haeyoung@domesticworkers.org; TriciaN@kff.org; JulietteC@kff.org; vandewater@cbpp.org; istein@cbpp.org; Leslie.dach@gmail.com; aharris@protectourcare.org; woodhousebrad1@gmail.com; fisasi@familiesusa.org; BReavis@familiesusa.org; moreilly@aarp.org; david@patientsforaffordabledrugs.org; sarah@p4adnow.org; jstein@medicareadvocacy.org; dlipschutz@medicareadvocacy.org; gpuckrein@nmqf.org; edwin.park@georgetown.edu; jchoi@apiahf.org; kprindiville@justiceinaging.org; nkean@justiceinaging.org; rcarreon@unidosus.org; friccardi@medicarerights.org; lcopeland@medicarerights.org; richtmanm@ncpssm.org; adcockd@NCPSSM.org; darcher@justcareusa.org; lucy@p4adnow.org; katem@waxmanstrategies.com; Joyce Liu <jliu@apiahf.org>; Hoffman, Desiree <dhoffman@uaw.net>; Turner-Bailey, Renee <RTBailey@uaw.net>; Merith Basey <Merith@p4adnow.org>; Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>; Shaham, Lauren (CMS/OC) <Lauren.Shaham1@cms.hhs.gov>; Hunter, Leah (CMS/CM) <Leah.Hunter@cms.hhs.gov>; Ellis (she/her), Kyla (CMS/OA) <Kyla.Ellis@cms.hhs.gov>; Kahan, Zach (OS/IEA) <Zach.Kahan@hhs.gov>; Ciccone, Caroline (HHS/ASPA) <Caroline.Ciccone@hhs.gov>; Figueroa, Marvin (HHS/IEA) <Marvin.Figueroa@hhs.gov>; Yael Lehmann <YLehmann@familiesusa.org>; ecp57@georgetown.edu; Tesfaye, Eden (CMS/OA) <eden.tesfaye@cms.hhs.gov>; Blanar, Jonathan (CMS/OC) <Jonathan.Blanar@cms.hhs.gov>; Costello, Stefanie (CMS/OC) <Stefanie.Costello@cms.hhs.gov>; Walter Gottlieb <GottliebW@ncpssm.org>; Joyce Liu <jliu@veng-group.com>; Gina Buccalo <gbuccalo@rhac.com>; Anne Montgomery <Montgomerya@ncpssm.org>; OToole, Meghan (CMS/OA) <Meghan.OToole1@cms.hhs.gov>; Moore, Jonathan (OS/IOS/) <Jonathan.Moore@hhs.gov>; matthew.hubbard@ncoa.org; KKertesz@medicareadvocacy.org; Fewkes, Glen <GFewkes@aarp.org>; Amber Christ

<achrist@justiceinaging.org>; egee@americanprogress.org; nrapfogel@americanprogress.org; anneheathmontgomery@gmail.com; Peter Maybarduk <[pmaybarduk@citizen.org](mailto:pmaybarduk@citizen.org)>

**Subject:** Re: Statement on Merck suit

**Alliance for Retired Americans Release**



**For Immediate Release Contact:** David Blank, 202/637-5275 or  
**June 6, 2023** [dblank@retiredamericans.org](mailto:dblank@retiredamericans.org)

## **Merck Lawsuit Over Drug Price Negotiation Reflects Industry Greed and Disregard for Seniors and Taxpayers**

*The following statement was issued by Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, regarding Merck's filing a lawsuit to block Medicare from negotiating lower drug prices on behalf of the American people.*

“Merck's ridiculous lawsuit is the equivalent of a toddler throwing a temper tantrum.

“Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs and too many seniors must choose between putting food on the table and paying for their medicine. That is because corporations like Merck have been allowed to charge taxpayers whatever they want for their drugs.

“Negotiating a fair price for drugs -- or any product -- is nothing new and is a hallmark of a free market economy. Governments around the world negotiate drug prices on behalf of their citizens every day, as do insurance companies. In the United States, the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and the Medicaid program already negotiate prices with Merck and the rest of the industry.

“The Inflation Reduction Act simply extends this power to Medicare and once implemented it will save taxpayers and patients \$25 billion. We cannot go backward.

“The 4.4 million members of the Alliance for Retired Americans call on Merck and the rest of the drug industry to stop crying crocodile tears and come to the negotiating table in good faith.”

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*The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization with more than 4.4 million members fighting for retirement security for all Americans. @activeretirees [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org)*

On Tue, Jun 6, 2023 at 1:04 PM Sanders, Stacy (HHS/IOS) <[Stacy.Sanders@hhs.gov](mailto:Stacy.Sanders@hhs.gov)> wrote:

Very helpful to see—thank you.

At the risk of clogging in-boxes, I want to encourage folks to use this list as a space to share content you are putting out on the IRA.

Thanks for getting the ball rolling on the sharing, Steve.

Stacy Sanders (she/her)

Counselor to the Secretary

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Cell (b)(6)

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**From:** Steve Knievel <[sknievel@citizen.org](mailto:sknievel@citizen.org)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 6, 2023 12:30 PM

**To:** Cross-Call, Jesse (OS/IEA) <[Jesse.Cross-call@hhs.gov](mailto:Jesse.Cross-call@hhs.gov)>; [haeyoung@domesticworkers.org](mailto:haeyoung@domesticworkers.org); [TriciaN@kff.org](mailto:TriciaN@kff.org); [JulietteC@kff.org](mailto:JulietteC@kff.org); [vandewater@cbpp.org](mailto:vandewater@cbpp.org); [istein@cbpp.org](mailto:istein@cbpp.org); [Leslie.dach@gmail.com](mailto:Leslie.dach@gmail.com); [aharris@protectourcare.org](mailto:aharris@protectourcare.org); [woodhousebrad1@gmail.com](mailto:woodhousebrad1@gmail.com); [fisasi@familiesusa.org](mailto:fisasi@familiesusa.org); [BReavis@familiesusa.org](mailto:BReavis@familiesusa.org); [moreilly@aarp.org](mailto:moreilly@aarp.org); [david@patientsforaffordabledrugs.org](mailto:david@patientsforaffordabledrugs.org); [sarah@p4adnow.org](mailto:sarah@p4adnow.org); [jstein@medicareadvocacy.org](mailto:jstein@medicareadvocacy.org); [dlipschutz@medicareadvocacy.org](mailto:dlipschutz@medicareadvocacy.org); [gpuckrein@nmqf.org](mailto:gpuckrein@nmqf.org); [edwin.park@georgetown.edu](mailto:edwin.park@georgetown.edu); [jchoi@apiahf.org](mailto:jchoi@apiahf.org); [kprindiville@justiceinaging.org](mailto:kprindiville@justiceinaging.org); [nkean@justiceinaging.org](mailto:nkean@justiceinaging.org); [rcarreon@unidosus.org](mailto:rcarreon@unidosus.org); [friccardi@medicarerights.org](mailto:friccardi@medicarerights.org); [lcopeland@medicarerights.org](mailto:lcopeland@medicarerights.org); [richtmanm@ncpssm.org](mailto:richtmanm@ncpssm.org); [adcockd@NCPSSM.org](mailto:adcockd@NCPSSM.org); [rfiesta@retiredamericans.org](mailto:rfiesta@retiredamericans.org);



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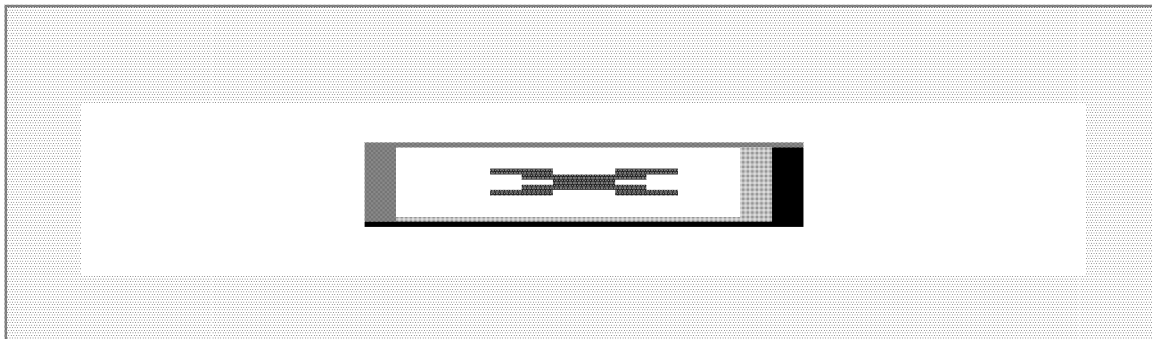
**Subject:** statement on Merck suit

Hi all,

We wanted to share with folks the statement we just released regarding the announced lawsuit from Merck. Thank you all for your work to make the negotiation program a success.

Best,

Steve



## Merck Lawsuit a Desperate Attempt to Beat Back Popular Legislation to Lower Drug Prices

For Immediate Release: June 6, 2023

Contact: Darcey Rakestraw, [darcey@2050strategies.com](mailto:darcey@2050strategies.com)

Omar Baddar, [obaddar@citizen.org](mailto:obaddar@citizen.org)

WASHINGTON, D.C. â€” Today Merck reportedly sued the federal government over the provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act that allow Medicare to negotiate directly with pharmaceutical companies on drug prices. **In response, Public Citizen President Robert Weissman issued the following statement:**

"Merck is claiming the U.S. constitution requires the U.S. government and people to be suckers. Thatâ€™s not true."

â€”There's no Sucker Clause in the 1st Amendment, 5th Amendment, or anywhere else in the Constitution.â€”

â€”This lawsuit is a desperate attempt by the industry to beat back popular legislation that would curtail Big Pharmaâ€™s ability to price gouge Medicare and secure monopoly profits. Full stop.â€”

â€”While Big Pharmaâ€™s litigation gambit plays out, it is critical that the federal government continue its preparation for price negotiations. Delay in the commencement of long overdue negotiations will result in billions of dollars in excess costs for taxpayers and consumers.â€”

###

***View our [press releases](#), [press contacts](#), and [experts](#).***

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Richard Fiesta

Executive Director

Alliance for Retired Americans

815 16th St., NW 4th Floor

Washington, DC 20006

(b)(6)

[rfiesta@retiredamericans.org](mailto:rfiesta@retiredamericans.org)

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**From:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 10/29/2022 12:28:00 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Re: Medicare enrollment and eligibility rule  
Thank you, Meena. I look forward to reading it in detail and appreciate the heads-up.  
Best,  
Gretchen

On Oct 28, 2022, at 9:43 PM, Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov> wrote:

Hi Gretchen, we have just published our Medicare enrollment and eligibility rule – eliminating delays in coverage, extending coverage for immunosuppressants after kidney transplant, and creating special enrollment periods for a variety of circumstances, including people losing Medicaid coverage whenever the PHE ends. We are excited for this work which drives our goal to expand access to coverage and care. Appreciate your thoughts and support.

Please see the press release here: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/biden-harris-administration-strengthens-medicare-finalized-policies-simplify-enrollment-and-expand>

My best,  
Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD (she/her)**  
Director, Center for Medicare  
(b)(6) tell)  
[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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**From:** Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 2/22/2024 2:40:55 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; "Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM)" <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>; "Jacobs, Douglas (CMS/CM)" <Douglas.Jacobs@cms.hhs.gov>; "Turco, Molly (CMS/CM)" <Molly.Turco@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** HHS opportunities to increase access and utilization of SDOH benefits  
**Attachments:** Interested Parties Memo on MA (Duals) SDOH Benefits.pdf

Meena and team – hope you are all doing well. I wanted to share a new interested parties memo on the topic of Admin actions that could increase access to and utilization of SDOH benefits for MA/dual beneficiaries.

Attached, the memo outlines 7 specific actions that CMS could take ***within its existing regulatory authority*** to increase MA/Dual beneficiaries' access to and utilization of SDOH supplemental benefits.

These recommended actions would further enable, incentivize, and hold MA/Duals plans accountable to providing these supplemental benefits. To ensure clarity and reduce complexity, CMS should consolidate this guidance on SDOH screening, navigation, and benefits into a single document and integrate this guidance into all relevant regulatory mechanisms.

These recommendations have been informed by our grantees longstanding work in this space, have been extensively vetted with dozens of current and former federal leaders and MA/Duals experts and reflect on-the-ground learning from health plan executives and their benefit design and actuarial teams regarding the pragmatic choices they are making on these issues given the current regulatory context.

Knowing your deep commitment to tackling these issues, we'll be eager to hear your thoughts, feedback and/or questions – and would be grateful if you might share the memo with other colleagues. We're also happy to bring our grantees and partners together to have a discussion or answer any questions you may have.

Thanks and talk soon!

Rachel

**Rachel Nuzum, MPH** (she/her/hers)  
*Senior Vice President, Policy*

Call (b)(6) Tweet: @raenuzum Web: [commonwealthfund.org](https://commonwealthfund.org)





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---

**From:** "Harris, William (CMS/OA)" <William.Harris@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** 5/12/2022 12:57:27 AM +0000  
**To:** Lindsey Copeland <lcopeland@medicarerights.org>  
**CC:** "Blum, Jonathan (CMS/OA)" <Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov>; "Engelhardt, Tim (CMS/FCHCO)" <Tim.Engelhardt@cms.hhs.gov>; "Fowler, Liz (CMS/CMMI)" <Liz.Fowler@cms.hhs.gov>; "Montz, Ellen (CMS/CCIO)" <Ellen.Montz@cms.hhs.gov>; "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; "Tsai, Daniel (CMS/OA)" <Daniel.Tsai@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Letter on Medicare-Related Impacts of the PHE Unwinding

Hi Lindsey,

Thanks very much for reaching out with this letter. We are in receipt, and I will make sure it gets to the Administrator and others working on the issue (many of whom are already copied here – thanks). Thanks again and let me know if you need anything further in the meantime.

Will

**Will Harris**

Senior Advisor

Office of the Administrator

[William.Harris@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:William.Harris@cms.hhs.gov)

(202) 870-3214

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---

**From:** Lindsey Copeland <lcopeland@medicarerights.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 11, 2022 5:49 PM  
**To:** Brooks-LaSure, Chiquita (CMS/OA) <Chiquita.Brooks-LaSure@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** Blum, Jonathan (CMS/OA) <Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov>; Engelhardt, Tim (CMS/FCHCO) <Tim.Engelhardt@cms.hhs.gov>; Fowler, Liz (CMS/CMMI) <Liz.Fowler@cms.hhs.gov>; Montz, Ellen (CMS/CCIO) <Ellen.Montz@cms.hhs.gov>; Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)

<Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; Tsai, Daniel (CMS/OA)

<Daniel.Tsai@cms.hhs.gov>

**Subject:** Letter on Medicare-Related Impacts of the PHE Unwinding

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to respond to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) in a way that promotes the health and well-being of people with Medicare.

As this work continues, please find an attached letter from ten national organizations that serve older adults, people with disabilities, families, and caregivers. We write to highlight two Medicare enrollment-related problems we anticipate as the PHE is unwound, and to respectfully recommend administrative solutions.

Specifically, we are concerned that some individuals who maintained Medicaid or other coverage during this time may have missed critical enrollment windows, including for Medicare and Medigap. Without CMS intervention, they may now or soon experience significant disruptions in access to affordable coverage and care.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and leadership. We would welcome the opportunity to answer any questions or to otherwise be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Copeland

---

Lindsey Copeland (she/her/hers)  
Federal Policy Director  
Medicare Rights Center  
1444 I Street NW, Suite 1105  
Washington, DC 20005  
Tel: 202-637-0961  
<https://www.medicarerights.org>





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**From:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 6/7/2022 4:19:45 PM +0000  
**To:** "Fowler, Liz (CMS/CMMI)" <Liz.Fowler@cms.hhs.gov>; "Harlow, Jennifer A. (CMS/CMMI)" <Jennifer.Harlow@cms.hhs.gov>; "Diephuis, Bradford (CMS/CTR)" <Bradford.Diephuis@cms.hhs.gov>; "Rawal, Purva (CMS/CMMI)" <Purva.Rawal@cms.hhs.gov>; "Lukens, Ellen W. (CMS/CMMI)" <Ellen.Lukens@cms.hhs.gov>; "Muldoon, L. Daniel (CMS/CMMI)" <Lawrence.Muldoon1@cms.hhs.gov>; "Turco, Molly (CMS/CM)" <Molly.Turco@cms.hhs.gov>; "Rice, Cheri M. (CMS/CM)" <Cheri.Rice@cms.hhs.gov>; "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Risk Adjustment

Thank you, Liz. It would be great to hear what can be shared and areas that would be helpful for the Commonwealth Fund to explore.

Gretchen

**Gretchen Jacobson, Ph.D.**  
*Vice President, Medicare*

Washington, DC

G 410 245 7030  
(b)(6)



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---

**From:** Fowler, Liz (CMS/CMMI) <Liz.Fowler@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 7, 2022 8:53 AM  
**To:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>; Harlow, Jennifer A. (CMS/CMMI) <Jennifer.Harlow@cms.hhs.gov>; Diephuis, Bradford (CMS/CTR) <Bradford.Diephuis@cms.hhs.gov>; Rawal, Purva (CMS/CMMI) <Purva.Rawal@cms.hhs.gov>; Lukens, Ellen W. (CMS/CMMI)

<Ellen.Lukens@cms.hhs.gov>; Muldoon, L. Daniel (CMS/CMMI)  
<Lawrence.Muldoon1@cms.hhs.gov>; Turco, Molly (CMS/CM)  
<Molly.Turco@cms.hhs.gov>; Rice, Cheri M. (CMS/CM) <Cheri.Rice@cms.hhs.gov>;  
Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>

**Subject:** Risk Adjustment

Gretchen – so nice to see you last night! I’m copying the team that has been thinking about risk adjustment and done external interviews looking for input and new ideas. They might be able to share what they’ve heard in case it sparks ideas for Commonwealth Fund to explore.

In addition to the CMMI team, I’ve included Meena, as I just mentioned the conversation to her!

**Liz Fowler** (she/her/hers)

Director, CMS Innovation Center

(b)(6) cell)

[Liz.Fowler@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Liz.Fowler@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** Joseph R. Betancourt <jbetancourt@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 6/20/2023 4:41:28 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Re: connecting at Aspen  
Meena,

Thanks for reaching out, would be great to connect!

Maybe 4pm tomorrow before Speaker Reception? I'm staying downtown so can try to connect there as well.

My cell is 617.335.3105.

Look forward to it.

Best  
Joe

On Jun 20, 2023, at 11:11 AM, Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)  
<Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov> wrote:

Hi Joe, we will both be at Aspen – if schedules align, will be great to say hello (I also might try to come to your session). My cell is below, whats yours, and we can try to connect?

My best,  
Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)  
Director, Center for Medicare  
2 (b)(6) (cell)  
[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 4/21/2022 6:56:42 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: JAMA viewpoint on leveraging Medicare to advance health equity

Thanks Meena.

Look forward to reading it.

Because of the number of Commonwealth folks at yesterday's meeting, I bowed out, but hear it went well.

Best

David

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 21, 2022 1:11 PM  
**To:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Subject:** JAMA viewpoint on leveraging Medicare to advance health equity

Hi David,

I hope you are well.

I'm excited to share that we just published a [viewpoint piece in JAMA](#) that outlines how Medicare will advance health equity. At a high level, the approach to equity is two-fold: improving operations, and putting in place specific policies to address disparities and advance health equity. It continues the drumbeat of Medicare's role as a leader in the health system – driving towards equitable, person-centered care in everything we do.

I welcome your thoughts, questions, and feedback as we look to transform our health system to improve outcomes for all Americans. Thanks for your support!

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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**From:** Sara Federman <Sfederman@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 5/22/2023 8:41:44 PM +0000  
**To:** "Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM)" <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** "Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM)" <Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>; Lorraine Morales <lmorales@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Re: Invitation: Commonwealth Fund in DC - join us 5/18

Hi Christiane,

No worries – and we're happy to help make the connection between Meena and Joe. Your team can reach out to Joe directly at [jbetancourt@cmwf.org](mailto:jbetancourt@cmwf.org), and include his assistant Lorraine ([lmorales@cmwf.org](mailto:lmorales@cmwf.org)) for scheduling. Could you also please CC Rachel ([rn@cmwf.org](mailto:rn@cmwf.org)) and me when you reach out?

Thanks!

Sara

---

**From:** Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM) <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at 5:41 PM  
**To:** Sara Federman <Sfederman@cmwf.org>, Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>  
**Cc:** Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM) <Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Invitation: Commonwealth Fund in DC - join us 5/18

Hi Sara –

I'm so sorry, but Meena and Kristi are not able to make it tomorrow. On a related note, Meena would appreciate an opportunity to connect with Joe. Can you let us know how to reach him, or introduce them via email?

Many thanks –

Christiane

**Christiane LaBonte** (she/her)

Special Assistant to Deputy Administrator and Director Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD  
CMS Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (cell)

[christiane.labonte@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:christiane.labonte@cms.hhs.gov)

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**From:** Sara Federman <[Sfederman@cmwf.org](mailto:Sfederman@cmwf.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 16, 2023 3:25 PM  
**To:** Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM) <[Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov)>; Rachel Nuzum <[RN@CMWF.org](mailto:RN@CMWF.org)>  
**Cc:** Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM) <[Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Invitation: Commonwealth Fund in DC - join us 5/18

Hi Christiane,

Apologies for the delay! The completed form is attached. Please confirm as soon as you're able whether Meena and Kristi will attend on Thursday.

Best,

Sara

---

**From:** Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM) <[Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 12, 2023 2:26 PM  
**To:** Rachel Nuzum <[RN@CMWF.org](mailto:RN@CMWF.org)>; Sara Federman <[Sfederman@cmwf.org](mailto:Sfederman@cmwf.org)>  
**Cc:** Spangler, Carie (CMS/CM) <[Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Carie.Spangler@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Invitation: Commonwealth Fund in DC - join us 5/18



Hi Rachel & Sara –

Thanks so much for your invitation for Meena Seshamani and Kristi Martin to join you on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Can you fill out the attached and return directly to me, please? Meena and Kristi will need Ethics clearance to attend. Please let me know if you have any questions.

All the best –

Christiane

**Christiane LaBonte** (she/her)

Special Assistant to Deputy Administrator and Director Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD

CMS Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (cell)

[christiane.labonte@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:christiane.labonte@cms.hhs.gov)

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**From:** Rachel Nuzum <[RN@CMWF.org](mailto:RN@CMWF.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 4, 2023 10:37 AM  
**To:** Rachel Nuzum <[RN@CMWF.org](mailto:RN@CMWF.org)>  
**Cc:** Sara Federman <[Sfederman@cmwf.org](mailto:Sfederman@cmwf.org)>

**Subject:** Invitation: Commonwealth Fund in DC - join us 5/18  
**Importance:** High

Friends,

Wanted to make sure you received this invitation from the Fund for our 5/18 reception with Joe Betancourt. He will be making remarks at 6:00 but its primarily an opportunity to connect and familiarize Joe with our policy partners in DC and to get together in person!

Hope to see you on the 18<sup>th</sup>!

Rachel

**Rachel Nuzum, MPH** (she/her/hers)  
*Senior Vice President, Policy*

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**From:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 4/30/2022 3:08:29 AM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Re: released final rule on MA/D  
Thank you, Meena.

On Apr 29, 2022, at 7:52 PM, Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov> wrote:

Hi Gretchen, apologies for the late evening email, but I wanted to flag that we just released the [MA and Part D final rule](#) that includes important updates and improvements to the Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D programs this afternoon. This final rule builds on the agency's strategic pillars to expand access to quality, affordable care, advance health equity, and be a responsible steward of public programs.

To **expand access to affordable health care** the rule includes a new policy that will reduce out-of-pocket costs for beneficiaries with Medicare Part D. In recent years, more Part D plans and pharmacies have entered into arrangements—called price concessions—where plans pay less money to pharmacies for dispensed drugs if the pharmacies do not meet certain metrics. However, there is no public visibility on these pharmacy price concessions, and these lower prices are not passed along to the beneficiary at the point of sale. Beginning in 2024, this rule requires that Part D plans apply all of those pharmacy price concessions to the point of sale price. This important change will reduce beneficiary cost-sharing and improve price transparency and market competition in the Part D program.

We also are taking important steps to **improve health equity** by reinstating a requirement that MA and Part D plans inform enrollees of the availability of free multi-language translation services whenever they share required documents with their enrollees. We want to make sure all enrollees are aware of these free services. This final rule also includes important changes to protect beneficiaries by strengthening our oversight of third-party organizations that market MA and Part D plans to people with Medicare. More specifically, through this rule we are holding MA organizations and Part D sponsors accountable to detect and prevent the use of confusing or potentially misleading marketing tactics by these third-party organizations.

The rule also **strengthens our role as a responsible steward of the Medicare program** by limiting MA plans' ability to enter into new contracts or expand their footprint if their previous performance in the program is poor. In addition, this final rule will provide greater transparency and clarity on how Medicare dollars are spent by expanding medical loss ratio reporting requirements, including greater transparency on plans' spending for supplemental benefits such as housing, food, and transportation assistance. This information will help us better understand how we can most effectively support the health and social needs of people on Medicare. Finally, this final rule places special emphasis on improving the experiences of dually eligible beneficiaries who are enrolled in Medicare Advantage Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans.

We are excited to share this news with you, and please let me know if you have any questions.

My best,  
Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** Molly Fitzgerald <mf@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 3/7/2022 8:24:03 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>; Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>;  
"Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM)" <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Dear Dr. Seshamani,

We look forward to seeing you for the Harkness Fellows session (titled "The Future of Medicare") on March 17 from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. at the

Eaton  
DC.

Please review our COVID-19 safety protocol below and let us know if you plan to attend in person. If you choose to participate virtually, you can join the meeting using the Zoom details in the calendar event.

If you will be using slides (totally optional as we like to keep things conversational) please email them to me in advance so we can be sure to have everything set up appropriately.

Let us know if you have any questions and thank you again for participating.

Best,

Molly

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-If using a PCR test, the result must be from within 72 hours of the meeting

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**Molly FitzGerald, M.P.H.**

*Program Manager, International Leadership Programs  
International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*

M (b)(6)  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



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---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 10:05 AM  
**To:** Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>; Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM) <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** Molly Fitzgerald <mf@cmwf.org>; Gretchen Jacobson <gj@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Great, thanks to you both, and Jon moving you to bcc. Happy to speak. Adding Christiane on my end.

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 9:59 AM

**To:** Blum, Jonathan (CMS/OA) <[Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov)>

**Cc:** Molly Fitzgerald <[mf@cmwf.org](mailto:mf@cmwf.org)>; Gretchen Jacobson <[gj@cmwf.org](mailto:gj@cmwf.org)>; Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Thank Jon, really appreciate it. Would love to catch up at the appropriate time==best to the family.

Meena, nice to be connected to you again. We welcome your participation in the Harkness Washington Policy Seminar. Our Fellows are eager to learn about Medicare priorities and share their analogous international experiences.

Happy to supply you with any additional information to make the time with us productive.

Thanks again,

Reggie

---

**From:** Blum, Jonathan (CMS/OA) <[Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 7:16 AM  
**To:** Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>  
**Cc:** Molly Fitzgerald <[mf@cmwf.org](mailto:mf@cmwf.org)>; Gretchen Jacobson <[gj@cmwf.org](mailto:gj@cmwf.org)>; Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Invitation

Hi Reggieâ€”itâ€™s great to hear from you and I hope you and your family are well.

Iâ€™m copying Dr. Meena Seshamani, who as Iâ€™m sure you know, is our Dep. Administrator and Director for the Center for Medicare. Given the topic and her expertise, I recommend that Meena present on behalf of CMS.

I look forward to connecting soon,

Jon

---

**From:** Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 15, 2022 11:41 AM  
**To:** Blum, Jonathan (CMS/OA) <[Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Molly Fitzgerald <[mf@cmwf.org](mailto:mf@cmwf.org)>; Gretchen Jacobson <[gj@cmwf.org](mailto:gj@cmwf.org)>  
**Subject:** Commonwealth Fund Invitation



Hi Jon,

Hope you are well. Taryn told me she recently saw you â€œvirtuallyâ€.

Recognizing that many things have changed for you since last April when you met with the Harkness Fellows virtually, we are hoping you may be able to meet with the current Fellows in Washington, D.C.

We are happy to have eight Fellows with us this year from France, New Zealand, Norway, and the United Kingdom. We plan to be in D.C. as a group the week of March 14 and are currently arranging a meeting space.

**I am hoping you can join us on Thursday, March 17 from 10:00-11:00 am ET to speak about the future of Medicare.** As was the case last year, we will ask Gretchen Jacobson to do a brief introduction to the Fundâ€™s Medicare Program and then turn it over to you.

An overview of the seminar and our learning objectives are attached here. If this is something you are open to doing but the proposed time does not work, we are happy to adjust to fit your availability. Molly, copied here, will handle scheduling and other logistics.

Thank you,

Reggie

---

**From:** "Turco, Molly (CMS/CM)" <Molly.Turco@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** 2/27/2024 9:01:00 PM +0000  
**To:** "Labonte, Christiane (CMS/CM)" <Christiane.Labonte@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: FW: MA Meeting Thursday

---

**From:** Bourland, Sarah (OS/IEA) <Sarah.Bourland@hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 27, 2024 11:15 AM  
**To:** Turco, Molly (CMS/CM) <Molly.Turco@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** MA Meeting Thursday

Hi – sending along details for Thursday. Let me know if/when you want to chat!

Thanks,

Sarah

#### **Final Agenda for Group Discussion**

- Welcome/opening from Sec. Becerra (1-2 mins)
- Opening from Dr. Seshamani (1 min)
- Discussion (**moderated by Melanie Egorin; Secretary, Dr. Seshamani, and Stacy should respond as desired**)
- Reps. Pocan and Schakowsky, Wendell Potter, Jamila Headley and Carmen Rhodes (Be A Hero), Wendell Potter (Center for Health and Democracy)
- Difficulty switching from Medicare Advantage to traditional Medicare
- Rep. Takano, Diane Archer, and Rick Gilfillan
- Enrollee education
- Reps. Khanna and Schakowsky, David Lipschutz (Center for Medicare Advocacy)
- Delays and denials of care
- Closing

#### **Stakeholder Participants**

- Diane Archer, President, Just Care USA

- Will Fischer, Principal, Portside Strategies
- Rick Gilfillan, Independent Consultant and Former CMMI Director
- Kata Kertesz, Senior Policy Attorney, Center for Medicare Advocacy
- David Lipschutz, Associate Director, Center for Medicare Advocacy
- Wendell Potter, President, Center for Health and Democracy
- Carmen Rhodes, Senior Advisor, Be A Hero (*participating virtually*)
- Jamila Headley, Executive Director, Be A Hero (*participating virtually*)

### **Members of Congress Participating:**

- Rep. Mark Pocan (WI-02)
- Rep. Rosa DeLauro (CT-03)
- Rep. Ro Khanna (CA-17)
- Rep. Mark Takano (CA-39)
- Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL-09)
- Rep. Lloyd Doggett (TX-37)

### **HHS/CMS Participants**

- Secretary Becerra
- Stacy Sanders, Counselor to Secretary Becerra
- Josh Kramer, Policy Advisor, Office of the Secretary
- Melanie Egorin, Assistant Secretary for Legislation
- Alex Graf, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation
- Jesse Cross-Call, Acting Director of External Affairs, Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs
- Sarah Kaminer Bourland, Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs
- Dr. Meena Seshamani, CMS Deputy Administrator and Director of the Center for Medicare
- Molly Turco, Senior Advisor, CMS Center for Medicare
- Meghan O'Toole, Senior Advisor to the CMS Administrator

**Sarah Kaminer Bourland** (she/her)

Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



---

**From:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 2/2/2023 7:40:49 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: aligning quality metrics

Hi, Meena.

This email will work until April when I expect to be back at Harvard. But my forever email is [dblumenthal100@gmail.com](mailto:dblumenthal100@gmail.com). Will be back in touch. May also want to see if we can chat at some point about a new book project that I am involved in about the health care presidencies of Obama, Trump and Biden. More to come on that.

Stay well

David

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 9:55 PM  
**To:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Subject:** Re: aligning quality metrics

I am so glad this reached you! Do you have a new email address or is this still the best one to use? Would love to hear how your next adventure is going.

And yes- Look forward to your feedback.

Meena

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---

**From:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 7:24:35 PM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: aligning quality metrics

Hi, Meena:

So nice to hear from you. Also nice to see this moving along. In the twilight of the Trump administration, I was invited to serve on a "summit" at HHS that was facilitated by Mike Leavitt and convened by the Secretary. Its goal was to create a unified national set of quality measures. Seems like this may have been the outgrowth of that effort, or maybe not.

Anyway congrats on this. Look forward to reading the piece.

David

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 5:17 PM  
**To:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Subject:** aligning quality metrics

Hi David, I hope you are well!

I wanted to bring to your attention that we just published an article in the New England Journal of Medicine, entitled "Aligning Quality Measures across CMS" the Universal Foundation.

[https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2215539?query=featured\\_home](https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2215539?query=featured_home)

In it, we describe a "Universal Foundation" of quality measures that would apply across as many CMS quality rating and value-based care programs as possible, with additional measures added on, depending on the population or setting.

It is intended to improve quality outcomes, reduce provider burden, advance equity, and aid the transition to digital reporting. In the article we outline preliminary adult and pediatric Universal Foundation measures.

We have created a cross-center working group for this, and the Universal Foundation will continue to evolve over time, soliciting feedback through comments, rulemaking, listening sessions, and other forums.

I appreciate your engagement as always; please let me know if you have any questions.

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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**From:** Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 11/22/2022 3:59:07 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Dear Meena,

Following up on your attendance at the November 30<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Fund reception and dinner.

All the best,  
Katharine

**Katharine Fields, MPA**  
*Program Associate*  
*International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*

O 212.606.3851 (b)(6)  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 15, 2022 7:25 PM  
**To:** Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Cc:** Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>; Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>; Sara Federman <Sfederman@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal



Thank you have sent on!

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**From:** Katharine Fields <[kf@cmwf.org](mailto:kf@cmwf.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 15, 2022 2:15:10 PM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>; Rachel Nuzum <[RN@CMWF.org](mailto:RN@CMWF.org)>; Sara Federman <[Sfederman@cmwf.org](mailto:Sfederman@cmwf.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Meena,

Please see attached, and let me know if you need anything else.

All the best,  
Katharine

**Katharine Fields, MPA**  
*Program Associate*  
*International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*  
O 212.606.3851 / (b)(6)  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 14, 2022 7:18 AM  
**To:** Katharine Fields <[kf@cmwf.org](mailto:kf@cmwf.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Hi Katharine, attached is the ethics form to fill out, I appreciate your help!

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) (email)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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**From:** Katharine Fields <[kf@cmwf.org](mailto:kf@cmwf.org)>  
**Date:** November 11, 2022 at 10:19:13 AM EST  
**To:** [meena.seshamani@gmail.com](mailto:meena.seshamani@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

ï»¿

Dear Meena,

I am following up on an invitation to join the Commonwealth Fund on **Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>** at our International Forum Reception and Dinner in honor of **David Blumenthal** and his **tenure as President of the Commonwealth Fund**.

Please let me know if you can join us for this special evening. Attached is the invitation with the following information:

Old Ebbitt Grill (675 15h ST NW, Washington DC 20005)

Reception at 6:15 PM

Dinner and Remarks at 7:00 PM

All the best,  
Katharine

**Katharine Fields, MPA**  
*Program Associate*  
*International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*

O 212.606.3851 (b)(6)  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



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# INTERNATIONAL FORUM RECEPTION AND DINNER

The Commonwealth Fund invites you to  
celebrate  
David Blumenthal's  
10 years of leadership as Fund President.

Wednesday, November 30th  
Reception at 6:15  
Dinner and Remarks at 7:00

RSVP

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875 15TH ST NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20005



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## International Forum

RECEPTION & DINNER



*This meets the requirements of a widely attended event.*

**From:** Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 11/22/2022 4:36:29 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Meena,

Wonderful! We look forward to having you join us. As far as your dietary preference you can let your server know when ordering that you’d like the vegetarian option.

All the best,

Katharine

**Katharine Fields, MPA**  
*Program Associate*  
*International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*  
  
O 212.606.3851 (b)(6)  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 22, 2022 11:17 AM  
**To:** Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Cc:** Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Yes I just found out I can attend. Thank you! I am vegetarian (I eat dairy and eggs). Pls let me know what other information you need.

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) ell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** Katharine Fields <[kf@cmwf.org](mailto:kf@cmwf.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 22, 2022 10:59 AM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)>  
**Cc:** Reginald Williams <[rw@cmwf.org](mailto:rw@cmwf.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Dear Meena,

Following up on your attendance at the November 30<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Fund reception and dinner.

All the best,  
Katharine

**Katharine Fields, MPA**  
*Program Associate*  
*International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*

O 212.606.3851 (b)(6)  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



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**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 15, 2022 7:25 PM  
**To:** Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Cc:** Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>; Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>; Sara Federman <Sfederman@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Thank you have sent on!

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**From:** Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 15, 2022 2:15:10 PM  
**To:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Cc:** Reginald Williams <rw@cmwf.org>; Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>; Sara Federman <Sfederman@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Meena,

Please see attached, and let me know if you need anything else.

All the best,  
Katharine

**Katharine Fields, MPA**  
*Program Associate*  
*International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*

O 212.606.385 (b)(6)  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



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**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 14, 2022 7:18 AM  
**To:** Katharine Fields <kf@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Hi Katharine, attached is the ethics form to fill out, I appreciate your help!

My best,  
Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)  
Director, Center for Medicare



(b)(6)

ell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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**From:** Katharine Fields <[kf@cmwf.org](mailto:kf@cmwf.org)>

**Date:** November 11, 2022 at 10:19:13 AM EST

**To:** [meena.seshamani@gmail.com](mailto:meena.seshamani@gmail.com)

**Subject:** Commonwealth Fund Dinner | David Blumenthal

Dear Meena,

I am following up on an invitation to join the Commonwealth Fund on **Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>** at our International Forum Reception and Dinner in honor of **David Blumenthal** and his **tenure as President of the Commonwealth Fund**.

Please let me know if you can join us for this special evening. Attached is the invitation with the following information:

Old Ebbitt Grill (675 15h ST NW, Washington DC 20005)

Reception at 6:15 PM

Dinner and Remarks at 7:00 PM

All the best,  
Katharine

**Katharine Fields, MPA**

*Program Associate*

*International Health Policy and Practice Innovations*

O 212.606.3851 (b)(6)  
1 East 75th Street, New York, NY 10021



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# INTERNATIONAL FORUM RECEPTION AND DINNER

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Wednesday, November 30th  
Reception at 6:15  
Dinner and Remarks at 7:00

RSVP

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WASHINGTON, DC 20005



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## International Forum

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---

**From:** Christina Ramsay <cr@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 3/13/2023 3:02:03 PM +0000  
**CC:** Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>; Corinne Lewis <cl@cmwf.org>;  
Melinda K. Abrams <MKA@CMWF.org>  
**Subject:** Memo: Medicare Primary Care Payment Reform  
**Attachments:** Interested Parties Memo\_Medicare Primary Care Payment  
Reform\_3.7.23.pdf

Dear colleagues,

Please find attached a memo detailing policy opportunities for Congress to advance Medicare primary care payment reform.

Primary care is the only health service associated with improved life expectancy and reduced health care disparities – and, as the frontline of our health care system, it is critical for addressing the growing behavioral health crisis and increasing social needs of patients, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. But in the United States, several indicators suggest that the sustainability and future of primary care is at risk.

There is growing consensus that changing *how* and *how much* we pay for primary care is a critical next step for policymakers to strengthen primary care in the U.S. As one of the largest insurers in the country, Medicare plays a critical role in leading the charge by increasing our nation's investment in primary care services and changing the way we pay for them, moving towards more population-based approaches.

We're happy to further discuss these ideas with you if of interest—thanks so much.

Best,

Christina

**Christina Ramsay, MPH** (*she/her/hers*)  
*Program Officer, Federal and State Health Policy*

(b)(6) @cyingramsay





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---

**From:** Lindsey Copeland <lcopeland@medicarerights.org>  
**Sent:** 5/11/2022 9:48:44 PM +0000  
**To:** "Brooks-LaSure, Chiquita (CMS/OA)" <Chiquita.Brooks-LaSure@cms.hhs.gov>  
**CC:** "Blum, Jonathan (CMS/OA)" <Jonathan.Blum@cms.hhs.gov>; "Engelhardt, Tim (CMS/FCHCO)" <Tim.Engelhardt@cms.hhs.gov>; "Fowler, Liz (CMS/CMMI)" <Liz.Fowler@cms.hhs.gov>; "Montz, Ellen (CMS/CCIO)" <Ellen.Montz@cms.hhs.gov>; "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; "Tsai, Daniel (CMS/OA)" <Daniel.Tsai@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Letter on Medicare-Related Impacts of the PHE Unwinding  
**Attachments:** Medicare PHE Unwinding Concerns.pdf

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to respond to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) in a way that promotes the health and well-being of people with Medicare.

As this work continues, please find an attached letter from ten national organizations that serve older adults, people with disabilities, families, and caregivers. We write to highlight two Medicare enrollment-related problems we anticipate as the PHE is unwound, and to respectfully recommend administrative solutions.

Specifically, we are concerned that some individuals who maintained Medicaid or other coverage during this time may have missed critical enrollment windows, including for Medicare and Medigap. Without CMS intervention, they may now or soon experience significant disruptions in access to affordable coverage and care.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and leadership. We would welcome the opportunity to answer any questions or to otherwise be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Copeland

---

Lindsey Copeland (she/her/hers)  
Federal Policy Director  
Medicare Rights Center  
1444 I Street NW, Suite 1105

Washington, DC 20005  
Tel: 202-637-0961  
<https://www.medicarerights.org>



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---

**From:** Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 1/12/2022 6:12:36 PM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>; "Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM)" <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Input on upcoming MA blog series

Kristi and Meena,

Hope you're both doing well! We have an upcoming project with Arnold Ventures to put out a blog series on MA, and I wanted to check in with you and get your input to make sure it's as useful as possible:

The series is slated to include separate blogs focusing on several MA sub-topics, including payment, risk adjustment, quality, benefits, care for high-needs people, and SNPs. We plan to interview 5-6 experts per topic, and each blog will synthesize their thinking about what is/isn't working, what additional information is needed, and how MA might be improved in the given area. Are there any folks with particularly valuable viewpoints that you think we should consider for interviews? Appreciate your input!

Congrats on the Medicare vision piece earlier this week. Really exciting to see these priorities elevated.

Many thanks in advance,

Rachel and Gretchen

**Rachel Nuzum, MPH** (she/her/hers)  
*Vice President, Federal and State Health Policy*

Call: (b)(6) Tweet: @raenuzum Web: [commonwealthfund.org](https://commonwealthfund.org)



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---

**From:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA)" <(b)(6)>  
(b)(6)  
**Sent:** 4/3/2024 5:36:49 PM +0000  
**To:** "Boulanger, Jennifer (CMS/OL)" <Jennifer.Boulanger@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: FW: outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS  
**Attachments:** Rapfogel\_Resume\_Sept\_2023\_PMF.pdf

---

**From:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 3, 2024 1:34 PM  
**To:** Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA) <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>; Newlin, Manda (CMS/OL) <Manda.Newlin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS

Just talked to this person. She is in the PMF pool – comes highly recommended. Wanted to share.

---

**From:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM)  
**Sent:** Monday, March 25, 2024 1:10 PM  
**To:** Ritter, Christina (CMS/CM) <Christina.Ritter@cms.hhs.gov>; Strawbridge (she/her), Lara (CMS/CM) <Lara.Strawbridge@cms.hhs.gov>; Brock, Janet (CMS/CM) <janet.brock2@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS

Someone in the PMF pool.

---

**From:** Emily Gee <egeee@americanprogress.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 25, 2024 12:56 PM  
**To:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS

Hi, Kristi,

I hope you are doing well. Nicole Rapfogel, who has been at CAP since 2019, is graduating with her MPH this spring and is also a Presidential Management Fellow finalist. She is an outstanding researcher and writer, and she has been central to CAP's work on ACA and drug pricing reforms. She's been a standout here at CAP for her sense of initiative, strong work ethic and outstanding work product, and collegiality, and as much as I would love to keep

her with us forever, she's ready for the next stage in her in her professional development and new opportunities.

I don't know whether you might still be hiring for the IRA drug office, but if you or someone else at CMS might have time to speak with her, even just for an informational chat, I'd appreciate it. Her resume is attached and she's [nicolerapfogel@gmail.com](mailto:nicolerapfogel@gmail.com). I've been encouraging her to consider roles in the federal government as a way to grow her expertise. Anyone who hires her will be very lucky to have her.

Best,

Emily

**Emily R. Gee, PhD**

Senior Vice President, Inclusive Growth

Center for American Progress

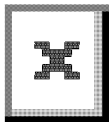
(b)(6)

---

**From:** AEI Economics <aeieconomics@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 11/18/2022 12:00:24 PM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OL)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Conservatives Should Embrace Economic Growth, Not Downplay Its Significance

---

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

Conservatives should embrace economic growth, encourage participation in economic life, and be optimistic about the future. In order to do this, **Michael R. Strain** says, it's time for the Republican Party to move on from former President Donald Trump and his populist agenda of grievance. **Alex Brill** urges policymakers to take precautions to prevent another pandemic, lest Americans fail to learn the lessons of COVID-19. **James C. Capretta** analyzes the increasingly concerning state of federal unfunded liabilities and explains why America's fiscal problem is more than simply our current debt; it's the ability to pay for future Social Security and Medicaid programs.

**Desmond Lachman** breaks down why the recent realization of how many large borrowers there are "due to the world's major central banks attempting to

regain control over inflation” harms the global financial system. **Brill** explains why permanently extending the child tax credit enacted in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 would be fiscally costly and harm the overall economy. **Claude Barfield** examines recent developments and differences in how states in the European Union (particularly Germany) and the United States approach economic decoupling from China.

In a two-part series, **Thomas P. Miller** digs into a series of issues with Medicare Advantage and other factors limiting choice and competition options in Medicare. **Mark J. Warshawsky** responds to the proposal to eliminate the \$160,200 cap on earnings subject to the payroll tax rate of 12.4 percent paid to Social Security, and he argues there are better solutions to achieve a solvent Social Security program.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **The Use of Evidence to Control Access and Cost of Pharmaceuticals**

Friday, November 18 | [\*\*RSVP HERE>>\*\*](#)

### **Global Discord: A Book Event with Paul Tucker**

Tuesday, November 22 | [\*\*RSVP HERE>>\*\*](#)

### **Reforming the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

Monday, December 5 | [\*\*RSVP HERE>>\*\*](#)

## FEATURED RESEARCH

# **The Minimum Wage and Union Membership Among Minimum Wage Workers: Why Do Unions Advocate for Minimum Wage Increases?**

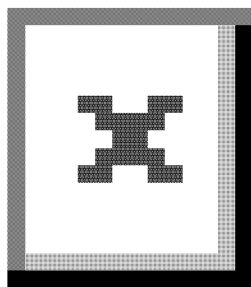
Michael R. Strain and Jeffrey Clemens | [@MichaelRStrain](#) | IZA Institute of Labor Economics

Over the past decade, organized labor has played a significant role in advocating minimum wage increases. In this paper, Michael R. Strain and Jeffrey Clemens investigate the effects of minimum wage increases on union membership among individuals in minimum wage-intensive industries. They find that minimum wage increases predict declines in union membership among low-skilled workers in these industries.

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## **American Renewal: A Conservative Plan to Save the Nation's Finances and Strengthen the Social Contract**

Edited by Paul Ryan and Angela Rachidi



The purpose of *American Renewal: A Conservative Plan to Save the Nation's Finances and Strengthen the Social Contract* (American Enterprise Institute, 2022) is to promote thoughtful and informed discussions, offer serious policy solutions, and demonstrate real reasons for hope. In the enormous economic challenges of our age lies an opportunity of renewal. If we stabilize our debt, revitalize our economy, and restore the promise of upward mobility, we will be the authors of a great new chapter in

the remarkable American story.

AEI's economics and health care scholars tackle the issues of Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, the Social Security Disability Insurance Trust Fund disability insurance, and improving the tax code in this volume.

[Read the book here.](#)

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## POLITICAL ECONOMY

### **The Republicans Lose with Trump**

Michael R. Strain | [@MichaelRStrain](#) | Project Syndicate

Republicans were sorely disappointed in their performance in the US midterm elections, as the anticipated "red wave" was nowhere to be seen. Michael R. Strain hopes this is the moment when the Republican party finally realizes that former President Donald Trump is a serious electoral liability. It's time for the party to move toward a platform built of sound, effective policies that improve voters' lives and economic prospects and away from a populist agenda of grievance.

### **Federal Unfunded Liabilities Are Growing More Rapidly Than Public Debt**

James C. Capretta | [RealClearPolicy](#)

As unfunded liabilities continue to rise with aging populations and promised benefits, America's fiscal problem is more than simply our current debt; it's the ability to pay for future Social Security and Medicaid programs. James C. Capretta analyzes the precarious fiscal situation and explains what policymakers should consider doing to help resolve this issue.

## **Don't Let Pandemic Fatigue Inhibit Pandemic Preparedness**

Alex Brill | [@AlexBrill DC](#) | [AEIdeas](#)

While Americans may want to put COVID-19 behind them, pandemics are a recurring threat, and one will likely materialize for our children or grandchildren. Therefore, policymakers should recognize the significant risk of another pandemic and invest wisely to prepare for it lest Americans fail to learn the lesson of COVID-19, says Alex Brill.

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## **MACROECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES**

### **Beware, Fed, of the Coming Credit Market Hangover**

Desmond Lachman | [New York Post](#)

Now that the world's major central banks have rediscovered old-time monetary policy religion to regain control over inflation, we're discovering how many large borrowers there are. Desmond Lachman explains how this realization could pose a risk to the stability of the world financial system and why the Federal Reserve should take these developments seriously.



## **Macroeconomics of the Child Tax Credit**

Alex Brill | [@AlexBrill\\_DC](#) | AEIdeas

A permanent extension of the child tax credit enacted in President Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which originally lasted one year, would be costly in fiscal terms and harm the overall economy. Alex Brill explains how the original expansion resulted in an increase in the marginal tax rates for households with children and drove a reduction in the labor supply.

## **Decoupling with China—Germany Dissents as US-EU Trade Frictions Rise**

Claude Barfield | AEIdeas

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's recent trip to Beijing has complicated the already-tense trade dialogue between the United States and the European Union, especially regarding a uniform approach to China and electric vehicles. Claude Barfield breaks down recent developments and dissonance between the US's and the EU's approaches to economic decoupling from China.

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## **MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

### **Sticky Rules for Medicare Enrollment, Part I**

Thomas P. Miller | AEIdeas

With the annual open season for Medicare enrollment upon us, Medicare Advantage enrollment continues to grow. About 48 percent of those eligible for Medicare Parts A and B are already enrolled in various types of those private plans, meaning Medicare Advantage could command a majority within the next two years. Thomas P. Miller explains why this means that even more current and future Medicare beneficiaries could still be stuck with just a backward-looking traditional program that will approach future insolvency at only a slightly slower rate.

## **No to Eliminating (or Raising) the Social Security Tax**

Mark J. Warshawsky | Inside Sources

Mark J. Warshawsky responds to the proposal to eliminate the \$160,200 cap on earnings subject to the payroll tax rate of 12.4 percent paid to Social Security, and he explains why such a policy move would be a poor choice. He says the revenues would be far below the amount needed for program solvency at the current benefit levels and argues there are many more reasonable ways to achieve a solvent Social Security program without raising payroll taxes.

## **Sticky Rules for Medicare Enrollment, Part II**

Thomas P. Miller | AEIdeas

Even as private Medicare Advantage plans threaten to overtake the traditional fee-for-service Medicare program in overall enrollment, the degree of competition and choice involved is mostly limited to the initial year of eligibility for Medicare. Thomas P. Miller explains why this is a failure of recent policy, with strong political forces behind it.

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## **FEATURED PODCASTS**



### **The Future-Optimism of 'Star Trek'**

Faster, Please!â€”The Podcast

Perhaps no film, book, or TV show gets held up as the standard for sci-fi more than *Star Trek*. To learn more about the history of the franchise and to discuss its future-optimism and cultural importance, James Pethokoukis sits down with Ryan Britt. Britt is the author of *Phasers on Stun! How the Making and Remaking of Star Trek Changed the World*, (Plume, 2022), which came out earlier this year.

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)

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## **MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK**

### **2022 Irving Kristol Award Presentation**

Arthur C. Brooks | AEI Annual Dinner

### **Joe Biden and the GOP: Headed for a Showdown over the Economy?**

Desmond Lachman | 19fortyfive.com

### **America Is Pursuing Happiness in All the Wrong Places**

Arthur C. Brooks | *Atlantic*

### **The End of the Chinese Economic Miracle**

Desmond Lachman | *National Review*

### **Meetings Are Miserable**

Arthur C. Brooks | *Atlantic*

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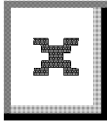
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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

In view of recent reports showing economic freedom in decline across the world, **James Pethokoukis** [writes](#) about the growing challenge facing market advocates and why the US should lead the charge toward more economic freedom, as it has done in the past. In two recent articles, **Desmond Lachman** [looks](#) at the growing danger the Federal Reserve's rising interest rates poses to America and other countries.

With the election fast approaching, **James C. Capretta** [examines](#) how a strong free-market-oriented health care plan would look and how it could emphasize consumer choice and provide a needed alternative to more government control. **Mark J. Warshawsky** [argues](#) against another economic narrative involving Obamacare's impact on the Disability Insurance Trust Fund.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Spain Goes to the Polls**

Thursday, July 20 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

### **The Government Performance and Results Act at 30: Assessing Past and Current Federal Management Initiatives**

Monday, July 31 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

## **FEATURED TESTIMONY**

### **Testimony on “Protecting Social Security for All: Making the Wealthy Pay Their Fair Share”**

Andrew G. Biggs | Senate Committee on the Budget

Andrew G. Biggs testified last week before the Senate Committee on the Budget about the proposal to raise taxes on richer Americans to preserve Social Security. Biggs argued that this approach is inconsistent with Social Security’s history and philosophy, is out of step with how government pensions around the world are funded, leaves little on the table to address the federal government’s massive long-term fiscal gap, and is unnecessary, given the already-record-high Social Security benefits and total retirement incomes and record-low rates of poverty in old age.

## **FEATURED RESEARCH**

### **Apocalypse Not: The Resilience of Small to Medium-Sized Retail Businesses in the 2010s**

Robert Kulick | Computer & Communications Industry Association

Examining the impact of 2010s technological innovations on small to medium-sized businesses (SMB), this study suggests a direct link between the resurgence and growth of retail SMBs and increased adoption and use of digital and e-commerce technology, rebutting the narrative that e-commerce technology has limited opportunities for small businesses and effectively killed retail entrepreneurship.

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## HEALTH CARE AND THE PANDEMIC

### **10 Health Care Ideas for No One in Particular**

James C. Capretta | RealClearPolicy

The unifying theme for a competition-focused health care plan should be providing more structure to the market so consumers can more readily identify and benefit from lower-priced and higher-value care and insurance plans.

### **No, Obamacare Did Not Reduce Federal Disability**

#### **Rolls**

Mark J. Warshawsky | AEIdeas

During the Obamacare debate, advocates of the comprehensive health care reform law often argued that expanded access to health insurance would do much to reduce claims for federal disability insurance. A recent study by economists at Williams College suggests otherwise.

### **Rethinking Education in the Wake of the Pandemic**

James Pethokoukis and Frederick M. Hess | AEIdeas

Frederick M. Hess sat down with James Pethokoukis to discuss his new book, *The Great School Rethink* (Harvard Education Press, 2023). Among other topics, Hess discusses the pandemic's effect on children's education and its long-lasting implications.

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## POLITICAL ECONOMY

### **Brace for 1930s-Style Economic Disorder—Especially If Interest Rates Keep Climbing**

Desmond Lachman | *New York Post*

As the Federal Reserve continues to raise interest rates, Desmond Lachman draws parallels between today's economic outlook and the outlook in the 1930s. He highlights the global and domestic risks US and European economic policymakers should assess when considering interest rate hikes.

### **The 21st-Century Decline of Economic Freedom**

James Pethokoukis | AEIdeas

Economic freedom has stagnated and declined in the 21st century after peaking in 2000. In AEIdeas, James Pethokoukis looks at the roots of this decline and calls for American economic leadership in reconstituting an open and free economy.

### **The Federal Reserve Keeps Fighting the Last War**

Desmond Lachman | [19fortyfive.com](https://19fortyfive.com)



When inflation rates rose, the Federal Reserve held off on raising interest rates based on backward-looking analysis that did not properly consider the macroeconomic risks of maintaining low interest rates and flooding the market with liquidity. Now, a similar backward-looking, data-dependent policy risks over-tightening and pushing the economy into recession.

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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

**China's Recovery Is Struggling. There's an Upside for the Fed.**

Desmond Lachman | *Barron's*

**Google Isn't Grad School**

Arthur C. Brooks | *Atlantic*

**New York Rent Control: Could the End Be Near?**

Howard Husock | *AEIdeas*

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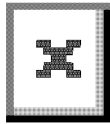
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**Subject:** Considering the Underlying Causes of the 2023 Bank Panic

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

Recent economic trends have led some economists to argue that America is steamrolling toward a recession. **Desmond Lachman** examines the argument and considers President Joe Biden's culpability. Meanwhile, **James Capretta** writes that the president's new health care policies are unlikely to create substantial, if any, improvements in affordability or quality of care.

As America faces its fifth consecutive quarter of negative productivity growth, **James Pethokoukis** dives into recent economic literature to determine whether work-from-home policies are a primary driver of the decline. Meanwhile, **Phil Gramm** highlights the dangers of an overactive administrative state and how House Republicans can rein in the growing regulatory burdens imposed by the Biden administration.

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

**The Government Performance and Results Act at 30: Assessing Past and Current Federal Management Initiatives**

Monday, July 31 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

**The Continued Conundrum of Drug Pricing**

Thursday, September 14 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

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## **FEATURED TESTIMONY**

### **Innovation Saves Lives: Evaluating Medicare Coverage Pathways for Innovative Drugs, Medical Devices, and Technology**

Brian J. Miller | House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Brian Miller testified this week on how lawmakers can foster innovation in the medical field, focusing on how Medicare coverage affects device development. In his testimony, Miller highlights current Medicare coverage policies and possible reforms, improvements in medical device regulation to support Medicare coverage, and payment for health technology.

### **Burdensome Red Tape: Overregulation in Health Care and the Impact on Small Businesses**

Brian J. Miller | House Committee on Small Business

In his testimony before the House Committee on Small Business, Brian Miller highlights the increasing regulatory burden facing health care providers, the important role that small providers play in the health care system, and recent consolidation trends in the industry.

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## FEATURED RESEARCH

### **The Underlying Causes of the Bank Panic of 2023**

Paul H. Kupiec | American Enterprise Institute

In a new paper, Paul Kupiec outlines the underlying causes of the 2023 banking crisis. Kupiec explains the economic conditions that initially rendered these banks' business models profitable and the factors that led to their eventual decline.

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## ANALYZING "BIDENOMICS"

### **How Congress Can Stop Biden's Regulatory Onslaught**

Phil Gramm and Mike Solon | *Wall Street Journal*

A key component of President Joe Biden's economic agenda is increasing the powers of the regulatory state. Phil Gramm argues that this administration, like many before, is

exceeding its constitutional authority. However, if they stay united, House Republicans can use their power of the purse to restrain unilateral executive action.

## **America Is Facing a Recession. Should We Blame Joe Biden?**

Desmond Lachman | 19fortyfive.com

As the American economy emerges from the pandemic and inflation rates begin to fall, neither President Joe Biden nor Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell will assume responsibility for the overheated economy of 2021 and 2022 that created today's recession risks. Desmond Lachman examines the underlying causes of the economic strife and where blame should be placed, if anywhere.

## **Biden's Underwhelming Plan to Cut Health Costs**

James C. Capretta | AEIdeas

President Joe Biden announced his latest plan to lower health care costs for American households. The plan includes a rule to reimpose restrictions on short-term, limited-duration insurance; guidance on the No Surprises Act; and an inquiry into credit cards and medical debt. The net effect will likely be an increase in overall costs rather than a reduction, and it is far too trivial to matter for most patients.

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## **POLITICAL ECONOMY**

## **What We're Learning About Work from Home and Productivity Growth**

James Pethokoukis | AEIdeas

The US is experiencing the longest productivity losing streak since records began in 1948—with five consecutive quarters of negative year-over-year productivity growth. James Pethokoukis breaks down recent research to examine whether working from home has played a key role in the decline.

## **The Great Recession, COVID-19, and Interest Hikes Left a 15-Year Mark on Housing**

Stan Veuger et al. | Greater Greater Washington

In a new Greater Greater Washington article, Stan Veuger et al. explore how the Great Recession, COVID-19 pandemic, and Federal Reserve's recent interest rate hikes have affected mortgages in the greater Washington metropolitan area.

## **There and Back Again: Learning from Poland's Socialist Experiment**

James Pethokoukis | AEIdeas

The new book *The Road to Socialism and Back: An Economic History of Poland, 1939–2019* (Fraser Institute, 2023) provides a compelling story of Poland's impoverishing socialist turn and subsequent rebound into a successful market-dominated mixed economy. In AEIdeas, James Pethokoukis considers the book's central criticism of socialist economic policies that led to Poland's economic malaise.

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## **FEATURED PODCASTS**



## **The Necessity and Political Challenges of Social Security Reform**

Andrew G. Biggs joins James Pethokoukis in this episode of *Political Economy* to discuss his ideas for Social Security reform.

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## **MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK**

### **China's Recovery Is Struggling. There's an Upside for the Fed.**

Desmond Lachman | *Barron's*

### **Google Isn't Grad School**

Arthur C. Brooks | *Atlantic*

### **New York Rent Control: Could the End Be Near?**

Howard Husock | *AEIdeas*

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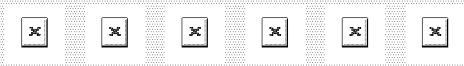
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**Subject:** Vital Signs: Innovation Saves Lives: Evaluating Medicare Coverage Pathways for Innovative Drugs, Medical Devices, and Technology



# Vital Signs

Your regular health policy checkup from the American Enterprise Institute

## Featured Testimony

### **Innovation Saves Lives: Evaluating Medicare Coverage Pathways for Innovative Drugs, Medical Devices, and Technology**

Brian J. Miller | House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Brian J. Miller testified before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce this week on how lawmakers can foster innovation in the medical field, to ensure the next generation of breakthrough technology reaches patients. [Read more.](#)

## Health in Politics

### **Biden's Underwhelming Plan to Cut Health Costs**

James C. Capretta | AEIdeas

President Joe Biden's latest plan to lower health care costs for American households is far too trivial to matter for most patients. The net effect will likely be an increase in overall costs rather than a reduction. [Read more.](#)

## **10 Health Care Ideas for No One in Particular**

James C. Capretta | *RealClearPolicy*

With the Republican primary in full swing, James Capretta describes what a better agenda for health policy—one focused on driving costs down and promoting consumer choice—would look like. [Read more.](#)

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## **FDA Reform**

### **A Priority Review Voucher Program to Fuel Generic Drug Development**

Brian J. Miller, Ted Cho, and Patrick Dumas | *Health Affairs*

Priority review vouchers (PRV) were used to incentivize the creation of new drugs, but they could also increase competition in the generic market. An expansion of PRV for drugs entering the market with limited or no competition could alleviate the high cost of prescription drugs in the US. [Read more.](#)

### **Science Policy After the COVID-19 Crisis**

M. Anthony Mills and Brian J. Miller | *AEI Event*

Watch AEI scholars and distinguished guests in a two-part conversation examining COVID-19's impact on conceptions of scientific evidence for public decision-making and what the pandemic has taught us about institutional reform to promote resiliency in the FDA and other public health agencies. [Watch here.](#)



## **Upcoming Events**

### **The Continued Conundrum of Drug Pricing**

Thursday, September 14, 1:30–3:00 p.m. ET

Join AEI's Kirsten Axelsen and Brian J. Miller as they host a panel of experts to discuss how to balance drug pricing innovation with fiscal prudence by deploying the principles of managed care.

RSVP  
TODAY

## **Preparing for the Federal Legalization of Cannabis**

Wednesday, October 25, 3:00–4:30 p.m. ET

Join a panel of experts that will discuss how cannabis policy could and should tackle key questions of product regulation, advertising, distribution, and taxation.

RSVP  
TODAY

## **Health Care in Hindsight**

### **Comments on No Surprises Act Rulemaking, Part I**

Benedic N. Ippolito, Loren Adler, and Matthew Fiedler

With the Biden administration's recent rule clarification regarding surprise billing, Benedic N. Ippolito's work on implementing the No Surprises Act remains pertinent. [Read more.](#)

## **More from AEI Scholars**

### **Weighing Policy Options for Returning Savings from Site-Neutral Payment Reforms to Hospitals**

Benedic N. Ippolito, Loren Adler, and Matthew Fiedler | USC-Brookings Schaeffer Initiative for Health Policy

**“Fair Prices” in the Inflation Reduction Act: Put Value in Front**

Kirsten Axelsen | AEIdeas

**Using the Employee Retirement Income Security Act as a Transparency Sword, Not a Shield**

Thomas P. Miller | AEIdeas

Read more at [www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care](http://www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care).  
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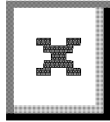
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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

Economists and policymakers have been receiving positive economic news, with signs of slowing inflation and possibly avoiding a recession. **Michael R. Strain** argues in his latest op-ed that while the US is receiving positive news, it should still maintain caution to avoid sliding back into high inflation. Meanwhile, looking to the long term, **Andrew G. Biggs** explains the realities and misconceptions surrounding retirement in the years to come.

Looking across the Atlantic, **Stan Veuger** examines the United Kingdom's economic status, seven years after Brexit promised to restore the UK's economic outlook. Back toward the Pacific, **Desmond Lachman** looks ahead to the Bank of Japan's upcoming monetary policy decisions and asks whether the Bank of Japan will learn from the Federal Reserve's mistakes.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **The Government Performance and Results Act at 30: Assessing Past and Current Federal Management Initiatives**

Monday, July 31 | [\*\*RSVP HERE >>\*\*](#)

### **The Continued Conundrum of Drug Pricing**

Thursday, September 14 | [\*\*RSVP HERE >>\*\*](#)

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## FEATURED RESEARCH

### **Protecting Workers, Firms, and Worker-Firm**

### **Attachment during COVID-19: Economic**

### **Considerations for the Assessment of Policy Measures**

Stan Veuger, Eliana Carranza, and Michael Weber | World Bank

COVID-19 triggered a worldwide crisis, and the economic effects are still being felt and analyzed today. The crisis's public health origins set it apart from recessions caused by monetary policy mistakes or credit market frictions. This paper examines the policies enacted to mitigate the crisis's economic effects.

### **Remote Work and City Structure**

Ferdinando Monte, Charly Porcher, and Esteban Rossi-Hansberg | National Bureau of Economic Research

Following the pandemic, businesses, employees, and employers all found a new relationship with working from home. As the prevalence of working from home has risen, workers have increasingly been given the choice to work in the central business district or (partially) at home. This paper breaks down the trade-offs that workers and employers face.

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## **FEATURED TESTIMONY**

### **The Costs of Diabetes and Considerations for Policy Responses**

**Benedic N. Ippolito | Joint Economic Committee**

Over 37 million Americans have diabetes (including those who are undiagnosed). As the prevalence of diabetes has risen, so have its costs to individuals and the country. The burden of diabetes includes the substantial direct health costs and the costs indirectly attributable to the condition. In his testimony, Benedic Ippolito emphasizes what is known about the costs of diabetes and, in turn, the potential value of relatively new therapies for the disease (and related conditions).

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## **RECESSION WATCH**



## **A US Recession Is Still Possible**

Michael R. Strain | Project Syndicate

Optimism is growing that the United States can avoid a recession. This emerging consensus may end up being correct. Everyone is rooting for a soft landing. However, while the odds of such a landing have increased in recent months, the Fed should not stop raising rates until there is clear evidence that core inflation is on a path to its 2 percent target.

## **Hold the Champagne on the U.S. Economic Recovery**

Desmond Lachman | *National Review*

Following the most aggressive monetary policy in four decades, economists and policymakers have seen increasing signs of a rebound, but many things could still go wrong in the months ahead.

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## **FOREIGN MARKETS**

## **The Bank of Japan Is Repeating the Fed's Mistakes**

Desmond Lachman | *Barron's*

As the unfortunately high inflation that the Federal Reserve recently experienced finally shows signs of decreasing, the Bank of Japan should be careful about wishing for higher inflation. The Bank of Japan will make a pivotal decision in the next week to maintain or depart from its easy monetary policy.

## **The British Experiment in Self-Government Continues**

Stan Veuger | *Foreign Policy*

Seven years after the referendum on whether the United Kingdom should remain a member of the European Union, the sunlit uplands promised by “Brexiters” are nowhere in sight. Stan Veuger looks at a new book titled *Follow the Money: How Much Does Britain Cost?* (Abacus, 2023) and the policies hindering Britain’s post-“European Union economy.

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## **POLITICAL ECONOMY**

### **Will Retirees’ Incomes Be Enough? It Depends On What You Count As Income**

Andrew G. Biggs | *Forbes*

Andrew Biggs looks at the recently released National Retirement Risk Index numbers to provide context and information on the projections of retirement income adequacy. These projections are flawed and should take all income sources into account. Otherwise, policymakers could live in fear of a retirement crisis that may never occur.

### **Why Is Economic Growth Good?**

James Pethokoukis | *AEIdeas*

With emerging and growing narratives surrounding economic growth and the use of GDP to determine economic strength and health, James Pethokoukis answers the question of why GDP has to keep going up. He emphasizes that economic growth means more and better access to what people need and want, even if they don't yet know what they need and want.

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## FEATURED PODCASTS



### Jeremy Horpedahl: Are American Families Thriving?

Jeremy Horpendahl joins James Pethokoukis in this episode of *Political Economy* to discuss the American family today.

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)

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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

### Housing Finance Watch (Week 29, 2023)

Edward J. Pinto, Tobias Peter, and Sissi Li | AEI Housing Center

### The Neoclassical Growth of China

Jesús Fernández-Villaverde, Lee E. Ohanian, and Wen Yao | National

Bureau of Economic Research

## **National Power Is Made out of People**

James Pethokoukis | AEIdeas

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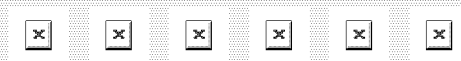
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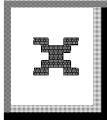
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**Subject:** Trustees vs. the Congressional Budget Office: Projection Accuracy for Social Security

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

As the presidential election season begins, some candidates have begun outlining an economic policy agenda for the next four years. In an AEIdeas post, **James Pethokoukis** examines Gov. Ron DeSantis's 10-point economic policy plan and considers whether the governor's growth target is realistic. The Congressional Budget Office and Social Security trustees each put out an annual report on the federal government's largest entitlement programs and their fiscal health. **Mark J. Washawsky** looks at these reports' similarities and differences. Noticing little difference in quality, he argues that the two reports should be consolidated into one. Recently, Fitch Ratings stripped the US of its coveted AAA credit rating. This has raised alarm bells for many economists, including **Desmond Lachman**, who writes on this development, the growing concern about high federal debt, and the Washington political class's reluctance to address the problem.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **The Continued Conundrum of Drug Pricing**

Thursday, September 14 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

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## POLITICAL ECONOMY

### **Trustees vs. the Congressional Budget Office:**

### **Projection Accuracy for Social Security**

Mark J. Warshawsky | [AEIdeas](#)

Each year, the Congressional Budget Office and Social Security trustees produce evaluations of Social Security's fiscal health and projections for its solvency. Mark J. Warshawsky compares the accuracy of the two projections of Social Security finances and argues for improving both.

### **Thinking About Ron DeSantis's Gross Domestic**

### **Product Goal.**

James Pethokoukis | [AEIdeas](#)

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis's 10-point economic agenda includes a 3 percent economic growth target. Is this goal possible? If so, then faster labor productivity growth will be essential, given the long-term slowdown in labor force growth as baby boomers retire and birth rates decline.

## **America's Credit Rating Was Just Slashed.**

### **America Should Be Worried.**

Desmond Lachman | [19fortyfive.com](http://19fortyfive.com)

The US government's credit score was recently bumped down from AAA to AA+. Looking at the dismal state of the federal government's finances, Desmond Lachman argues that this should be a timely wake-up call to Washington before the dollar tanks, and inflation takes off again.

---

## **MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK**

### **Congress Must Get Ahead on Artificial Intelligence Legislation Before It's Too Late**

Rob Portman and Sam Mulopulos | *Hill*

### **Does Money (and Economic Growth) Buy Happiness?**

James Pethokoukis | *AEIdeas*

### **Japan Needs to Kill Yield Curve Control Quickly. Its Credibility Is at Stake.**

Desmond Lachman | *Barron's*

### **How the Middle Class Is Faring: My Long-Read Q&A with Jeremy Horpedahl**

James Pethokoukis and Jeremy Horpedahl | *AEIdeas*

**The Tough Questions Journalists Won't Ask Fed Chair Jay Powell**  
**Desmond Lachman | *New York Post***

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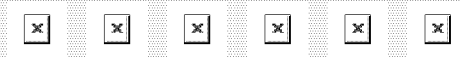
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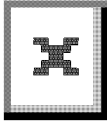


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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

As the US attempts to build its semiconductor manufacturing capacity to bolster national and economic security, the CHIPS Act remains one of the previous Congressâ€™s most consequential pieces of legislation. **Claude Barfield** writes on concerns about applying subsidies to increase domestic production. Meanwhile, **Mark Warshawsky** looks at legislation in California that, if enacted, would remove crucial Medicaid eligibility requirements and increase the number of high-income earners on Medicaid.

As the United States faces increased pressure to correct its unsustainable fiscal path, budget deficits remain on policymakersâ€™ minds. **James Capretta** tackled the issue twice this week. One article examines the potential harms of a House Republican budgetary standoff, while another takes a look at a lesser-known fiscal process that may inadvertently contribute to the federal deficit.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **The Continued Conundrum of Drug Pricing**

Thursday, September 14 | [\*\*RSVP HERE >>\*\*](#)

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## FEATURED RESEARCH

### **Depositor Discipline and the Banking Panic of 2023**

Paul H. Kupiec | American Enterprise Institute

Looking back on the bank collapses earlier this year, Paul Kupiec examines short-term creditors'™ role in the panic. At the time, a significant body of research suggested these creditors exerted market discipline and reduced risk in the banking sector. However, Kupiec shows that changes in monetary policy, alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, caused enough of a shift to alter baseline assumptions in the market.

### **The Behavioral Foundations of Default Effects: Theory and Evidence from Medicare Part D**

Boris Vabson et al. | *American Economic Review*

Medicare Part D includes a plethora of options for beneficiaries. However, most enrollees follow their default assignments regardless of disruption to care patterns. Beneficiary passivity can cause many problems, including increased costs to the patient and taxpayer

and decreased quality of care. Boris Vabson et al. test this hypothesis and examine the policy implications of beneficiaries remaining with the default option.

## **Rationing Medicine Through Bureaucracy: Authorization Restrictions in Medicare**

Boris Vabson et al. | [Social Science Review Network](#)

Policymakers have long attempted to balance the trade-off between additional cost-savings restrictions and high administrative costs in Medicare. Boris Vabson dives into whether prior authorization for drug coverage saves enough money through diversion to cheaper drugs—or exclusion in general—to justify the administrative costs.

## **POLITICAL ECONOMY**

## **Shutting Down the Government Won't Help the Republicans**

James C. Capretta | [RealClearPolicy](#)

Following the resolution of the debt-ceiling standoff, many thought the chance of a government shutdown this year had been mitigated. However, House Republicans now appear primed for another internal fight over the United States'™ fiscal future. James Capretta breaks down details from the debt-ceiling debate and considers the threat of an upcoming government shutdown.

## **Thoughts on the Industrial Policy Debate**

Claude Barfield | [AEIdeas](#)

Policymakers have been concerned about the United Statesâ€™ growing dependence on East Asia for microchip manufacturing. The CHIPS Act targeted broad national security aims. However, skepticism remains about the Biden administrationâ€™s Pentagon-style industrial policy of targeted manufacturing subsidies rather than more expansive economic strategies.

## HEALTH CARE POLICY

### **This Is Reform? California Wants to Let Its Billionaires Go on Medicaid.**

Mark J. Warshawsky | *Hill*

California may soon strike asset testing for those above age 65 in determining eligibility for long-term care benefits under Medicaid. This will allow high-income earners to benefit from a social program designed to help Americans in economic need. Because Medicaid is financed from state and federal tax dollars, the federal governmentâ€™not just California taxpayersâ€™will pick up roughly half this \$1.2 billion bill. Mark Warshawsky says this is a big step in the wrong direction.

### **Making a Deposit into a Congressional Bank Account**

James C. Capretta | *AEIdeas*

Congress has long used budgetary rules and tactics to offset future spending and show that additional spending is budget neutral. The Medicare Modernization Fund is a prime example; it has spent no money on its original purpose but instead serves as a place for Congress to store savings that eventually offset future spending. James Capretta breaks down this

system's flaws and how it can lead to incorrect budgetary accounting and increased deficits.

---

## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

### **Prior Authorization Reduces Net Costs of Medicare Part D**

Boris Vabson | AEIdeas

### **To Get Happier, Choose to Read This Column**

Arthur C. Brooks | *Atlantic*

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**Subject:** Vital Signs: The Behavioral Foundations of Default Effects



# Vital Signs

Your regular health policy checkup from the American Enterprise Institute

## Featured Reports

### **The Behavioral Foundations of Default Effects: Theory and Evidence from Medicare Part D**

Boris Vabson et al. | *American Economic Review*

Medicare Part D includes a plethora of options for beneficiaries. However, most enrollees follow their default assignments regardless of disruption to care patterns. Beneficiary passivity can cause many problems, including increased costs to the patient and taxpayer and decreased quality of care. Boris Vabson et al. test this hypothesis and examine the policy implications of beneficiaries remaining with the default option. [Read more.](#)

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## Medicare and Medicaid

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## **Pharmaceutical Innovation**

### **The Good Virus Review: An Unlikely Healer**

David Shaywitz | Wall Street Journal

Biology has a long and vivid history of using bacteriophage, or phages, as a treatment mechanism. David Shaywitz writes a review of Tom Ireland's *The Good Virus: The Amazing Story and Forgotten Promise of the Phage* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2023), which examines not only the history of phages but also their potential impact on the scientific community and how we treat infections in the future. [Read more.](#)

### **Prior Authorization Reduces Net Costs of Medicare Part D**

Boris Vabson | AEIdeas

Summarizing a recent study that he and his colleagues performed, Boris Vabson writes that the evidence clearly shows prior authorization significantly affects drug spending—a fact that

should be central to policy discussions regarding drug markets and health care markets more broadly. [Read more.](#)

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## Upcoming Events

### **The Continued Conundrum of Drug Pricing**

Thursday, September 14, 1:30–3:00 p.m. ET

Join AEI’s Kirsten Axelsen and Brian J. Miller as they host a panel of experts to discuss how to balance drug pricing innovation with fiscal prudence by deploying the principles of managed care.

RSVP  
TODAY

### **Preparing for the Federal Legalization of Cannabis**

Wednesday, October 25, 3:00–4:30 p.m. ET

Join a panel of experts who will discuss how cannabis policy could and should tackle key questions of product regulation, advertising, distribution, and taxation.

RSVP  
TODAY

## Health Care in Hindsight

### **Testimony: Health Care Consolidation and Competition After the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act**

Scott Gottlieb | House Judiciary Committee



Consolidation in the health care industry has been a growing concern for many years now. Scott Gottlieb testified on the subject in 2012, explaining how the Affordable Care Act contributed to growing roadblocks to entrepreneurs, leading to consolidation. [Read more.](#)

## More from AEI Scholars

### **Biden's Underwhelming Plan to Cut Health Costs**

James C. Capretta | *AEIdeas*

### **A Priority Review Voucher Program to Fuel Generic Drug Development**

Brian J. Miller, Ted Cho, and Patrick Dumas | *Health Affairs*

### **Using the Employee Retirement Income Security Act as a Transparency Sword, Not a Shield**

Thomas P. Miller | *AEIdeas*

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**Subject:** Vital Signs: The Costs of Diabetes and Considerations for Policy Responses



# Vital Signs

Your regular health policy checkup from the American Enterprise Institute

## Featured Testimonies

### **The Costs of Diabetes and Considerations for Policy Responses**

Benedic N. Ippolito | Joint Economic Committee

In his testimony, Benedic Ippolito explains what we know about the costs of diabetes and, in turn, the potential value of relatively new therapies for the disease (and related conditions). He also emphasizes principles to guide policy aimed at alleviating the health and non-health costs associated with this condition. [Read more.](#)

### **Burdensome Red Tape: Overregulation in Health Care and the Impact on Small Businesses**

Brian J. Miller | House Committee on Small Business

In his testimony before the House Small Business Committee, Brian J. Miller discusses the increasing regulatory burden on health care providers, small providers's™ important role in the system, and consolidation in the health care system. [Read more.](#)

## Pharmaceutical Innovation

## **Lessons for Biopharma from a Health Care AI Pioneer**

David Shaywitz | Timmerman Report

Drug developers have an opportunity to more efficiently use multidimensional data. David Shaywitz discusses how artificial intelligence could affect the industry, advance scientific discoveries, and improve human health. [Read more.](#)

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### **Upcoming Events**

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Join a panel of experts who will discuss how cannabis policy could and should tackle key questions of product regulation, advertising, distribution, and taxation.

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TODAY

### **Health Care in Hindsight**

#### **Who Will Be the Candidate with a Plan?**

James C. Capretta | *National Review*

As the GOP primary begins with a new crop of candidates trailing behind Donald Trump, the scene closely resembles the previous contentious Republican primary. In 2015, James C. Capretta wanted the candidates to have and clearly articulate an ambitious vision for the country's economic future. This advice remains vital for candidates and voters today. [Read more.](#)

## More from AEI Scholars

### **Biden's Underwhelming Plan to Cut Health Costs**

James C. Capretta | *AEIdeas*

### **A Priority Review Voucher Program to Fuel Generic Drug Development**

Brian J. Miller, Ted Cho, and Patrick Dumas | *Health Affairs*

### **Using the Employee Retirement Income Security Act as a Transparency Sword, Not a Shield**

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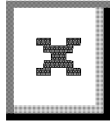
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**Subject:** Why Industrial Policy Fails

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

Joe Biden™s economic record and agenda have solidified into a concrete platform for the next election. **Michael Strain** considers the administration™s focus on industrial policy that, despite emphasizing workers, is unlikely to actually help everyday Americans. Meanwhile, **James Capretta** writes on the growing fiscal problem perpetuated by the White House, which paradoxically advocates high spending while touting its fiscal responsibility.

The estimated amount of pandemic relief money stolen is over \$1 trillion. **Phil Gramm** questions why the IRS is emphasizing audits rather than going after those who stole from taxpayers. **Desmond Lachman** worries that the Federal Reserve is failing to account for the lag time between interest rate hikes and economic results, which could cause a recession next year.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**The Continued Conundrum of Drug Pricing**

Thursday, September 14 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

**Has the Fed Produced a Soft Economic Landing?**

Thursday, September 21 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

**The Two-Parent Privilege: A Book Event with Melissa Kearney**

Tuesday, September 26 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

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## POLITICAL ECONOMY

### **Why Industrial Policy Fails**

Michael R. Strain | Project Syndicate

One of American populism's few redeeming features has been its renewed focus on workers. But the protectionist economic policies that populism proposes won't work. Michael Strain writes that policymakers owe it to workers to focus on policies that will advance mass flourishing rather than using tariffs and subsidies to support specific industries.

### **The Fed Is Engaged in Monetary Policy Overkill**

Desmond Lachman | Mortgage Note

The US housing market will likely face a future with lower interest rates on mortgages but one in which a recession complicates the long-run economic outlook. Desmond Lachman points out that monetary policy operates with long and variable lags and that misreading economic indicators can, in turn, increase the chances that the Federal Reserve will overcorrect and engage in monetary policy overkill.

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## **BIDENOMICS**

### **President Biden Wants to Debate Debt Stabilization, Not Enact a Plan**

James C. Capretta | *RealClearPolicy*

Congress was fully under Democratic control in 2021 and 2022, yet the Biden administration made no serious effort to narrow future budget deficits. President Joe Biden has yet to offer a plan for preventing Social Security insolvency, and has advanced tax-heavy plans that even some Democrats oppose.

### **Biden's IRS Chases Chump Change**

Phil Gramm and Jodey Arrington | *Wall Street Journal*

During the pandemic, to get money out the door, the US government failed to protect over \$1 trillion. Now as the IRS adds 87,000 agents to audit American businesses and citizens, Phil Gramm asks: Why not devote those resources to tracking down the missing trillion?

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## FEATURED PODCASTS



### **The “Big Is Bad” Approach to Antitrust**

The Biden Federal Trade Commission wants to undo the last 40 years of antitrust policy, which it sees as a failed experiment. Is the Biden administration right? To answer that question, James Pethokoukis speaks with Timothy J. Muris.

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)

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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

### **The Five Biggest Mistakes People Make When Picking a Medicare Plan**

Amitabh Chandra | *Wall Street Journal*

### **Amicus Brief in *Texas v. Department of Homeland Security***

Stan Veuger et al. | US District Court for the Southern District of Texas

### **China’s Madoff Economy Could Come Crashing Down”with Worldwide Effect**

Desmond Lachman | *New York Post*



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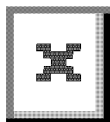
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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

Former President Donald Trump recently spoke to Larry Kudlow about the decline of the American dollar. **Desmond Lachman** looks at Trump's claims and explains how they miss details that are key to examining monetary policy. Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve has proposed drastically changing the stress test rules and capital requirements for large banks. **Paul Kupiec** examines the new proposal and discusses how it is misguided and lacks transparency.

American retirement policy has been the subject of some of the most consequential policy debates in the 20th and 21st centuries. A recent government report looked at the incoming class of retirees and raised alarm. **Andrew Biggs** considers the data and points out how the report doesn't consider key aspects of retirement income. Looking at a debate on Social Security during the 20th century, **James Capretta** reminds readers of when Joe Biden voted for policies in the Senate that he now, as president, considers attacks on Social Security and Medicare.

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## FEATURED RESEARCH

### **How Did Federal Aid to States and Localities Affect Testing and Vaccine Delivery?**

Stan Veuger et al. | *Journal of Public Economics*

During the pandemic, testing and, eventually, vaccination became a top priority for public health officials. As a result, a large amount of money was taken from the federal government and allocated to states and localities. Stan Veuger and his coauthors attempt to determine this funding's efficiency and effects on the vaccination and testing rates.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Intellectual Property and Emergencies: Policy for Medicines and Vaccines**

Wednesday, August 30 | [\*\*RSVP HERE >>\*\*](#)

**The Continued Conundrum of Drug Pricing**

Thursday, September 14 | [\*\*RSVP HERE >>\*\*](#)

**Has the Fed Produced a Soft Economic Landing?**

Thursday, September 21 | [\*\*RSVP HERE >>\*\*](#)

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## SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

### **You™re Probably Saving Enough for Retirement**

Andrew G. Biggs | *Wall Street Journal*

A report from the Government Accountability Office looked at households of workers age 51 to 64, analyzing these workers ability to save for retirement and current retirement savings. The report raised alarm bells regarding low-income workers™ ability to retire comfortably. Andrew Biggs looks at the report™s data and findings and points out numerous problems with its methodology and conclusion.

### **Sen. Biden Voted for Reagan™s 1981 Spending and Tax Cuts**

James C. Capretta | *AEIdeas*

President Joe Biden has routinely touted his agenda to “defend” Social Security and Medicare from Republicans™ proposals. These proposals were outlined in the Republican Study Committee™s budget, which aims to extend the trust funds™ solvency. James Capretta writes that such proposals are not new; in fact, Biden voted for them at consequential times in US history.

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## POLITICAL ECONOMY

## **Is Paid Leave a Pro-Growth Policy?**

James Pethokoukis | *AEIdeas*

Paid leave, whether mandated by Washington or funded by new taxes on rich people and large companies, might seem like another obviously good thing. However, even the most attractive ideas turn out to have trade-offs if you dig deeply enough. James Pethokoukis looks at this policy and other avenues for reform.

## **An Age of Economic Plenty or Scarcity?**

Desmond Lachman | *AEIdeas*

Perhaps the reversal of numerous favorable postwar trends will usher in a labor shortage and economic scarcity. However, it is equally plausible that today's burst in economically disruptive technology will cause an excess labor supply, falling wages, and economic plenty. Making long-term economic predictions requires a dose of humility.

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## **MONETARY POLICY AND FINANCIAL MARKETS**

### **The Fed's Bank Stress Test Proposal Would Only Heighten Uncertainty**

Paul H. Kupiec | *Hill*

Regulators recently called for introducing a standardized approach to determine a floor for the credit risk capital a bank must hold. The justifications and process for the proposed changes to large bank regulatory capital requirements lack transparency, which could lead to regulators targeting banks that disagree with their political agenda.

## **Donald Trump and the Almighty Dollar**

Desmond Lachman | *Hill*

Donald Trump recently asserted that the US dollar is losing its dominance as the world's international reserve currency. Desmond Lachman writes on how this claim is misguided and fails to recognize that the US dollar has no serious challenger.

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## **FEATURED PODCASTS**



### ***Hold These Truths with Dan Crenshaw: How AI Could Save Health Care***

Brian Miller recently spoke to Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-TX) on artificial intelligence's potential to revolutionize health care.

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)

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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

### **Russia's and China's Economic Eclipses Prove the US System Is Still the Best**

Desmond Lachman | *New York Post*

### **In a World of Such Dizzying Change, Nothing Is Certain**

Desmond Lachman | *Financial Times*

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**From:** AEI Health Policy <aeihealthpolicy@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 8/30/2023 7:00:19 PM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Vital Signs: The 510(k) Third-Party Review Program: Promise and Potential



# Vital Signs

Your regular health policy checkup from the American Enterprise Institute

## Featured Reports

### **The 510(k) Third-Party Review Program: Promise and Potential**

Brian J. Miller, William Blanks, and Brian Yagi | *Journal of Medical Systems*

In a follow-up to their prior working paper, Brian Miller and his coauthors published a review of the 510(k) third-party review program. In their report, they review how the medical device industry innovates rapidly and how the Food and Drug Administration's 510(k) pathway could be reformed to better accommodate the next generation of medical technology. [Read more.](#)

## Featured Articles

### **The Five Biggest Mistakes People Make When Picking a Medicare Plan**

Amitabh Chandra | *Wall Street Journal*

Those who are nearing retirement or already covered by Medicare might be overwhelmed by all the plan choices. With that in mind, Amitabh Chandra looks at the mistakes people make all too often when selecting Medicare options, explains how they can make better choices, and recommends which types of plans they should consider. [Read more.](#)



## **Sen. Biden Voted for Reagan's 1981 Spending and Tax Cuts**

James C. Capretta | AEIdeas

President Joe Biden has routinely touted his agenda to "defend" Social Security and Medicare from Republicans' proposals. These proposals were outlined in the Republican Study Committee's budget, which aims to extend the trust funds' solvency. James Capretta writes that such proposals are not new; in fact, Biden voted for them at consequential times in US history. [Read more.](#)

## **Too Fast or Too Slow: Ambivalence About Drug Development Affects Health**

Kirsten Axelsen | RealClearHealth

The courts, policymakers, and implementing agencies can establish policy and precedent that use thoughtful incentives to encourage development of the next generation of new drugs, including drugs that are the second, third, or fourth developed for treating a disease but that benefit patients' health or well-being. [Read more.](#)



### **Upcoming Events**

## **The Continued Conundrum of Drug Pricing**

Thursday, September 14, 1:30–3:00 p.m. ET

Join AEI's Kirsten Axelsen and Brian J. Miller as they host a panel of experts to discuss how to balance drug pricing innovation with fiscal prudence by deploying the principles of managed care.

RSVP  
TODAY

## **Preparing for the Federal Legalization of Cannabis**

Wednesday, October 25, 3:00–4:30 p.m. ET

Join a panel of experts who will discuss how cannabis policy could and should tackle key questions of product regulation, advertising, distribution, and taxation.

RSVP  
TODAY

## Podcasts

### **How AI Could Save Health Care**

Brian J. Miller and Dan Crenshaw | *Hold These Truths with Dan Crenshaw*

Brian Miller recently spoke to Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-TX) on artificial intelligence's potential to revolutionize health care. [Read more.](#)

## Health Care in Hindsight

### **Will the Inflation Reduction Act Make Drugs More Affordable?**

Kirsten Axelsen | AEIdeas

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services recently published a list of 10 drugs subject to the Inflation Reduction Act's price controls. In this article from 2022, Kirsten Axelsen wrote on the potential impacts of price setting in the drug market. [Read more.](#)

## More from AEI Scholars

### **The Costs of Diabetes and Considerations for Policy Responses**

Benedic N. Ippolito | Joint Economic Committee

### **Burdensome Red Tape: Overregulation in Health Care and the Impact on Small Business**

Brian J. Miller | House Committee on Small Business

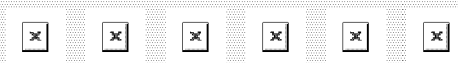
## **Lessons for Biopharma from a Health Care AI Pioneer**

David Shaywitz | Timmerman Report

Read more at [www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care](http://www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care)  
Tips? Comments? Questions? Email Jack Rowing at [Jack.Rowing@AEI.org](mailto:Jack.Rowing@AEI.org)

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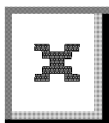
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**From:** AEI Economics <aeieconomics@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 9/1/2023 11:00:44 AM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** China's economy is in serious trouble. The Fed should take note. (The Ledger)

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

Amid an ongoing crisis among Federal Reserve member banks, in which almost half of the members have undergone insolvency this year alone, **Paul Kupiec** and **Alex Pollock** discuss the need for transparency and disclosure of risk to prevent more taxpayer money going towards bailouts. In the global economy, debate continues over several important nations' economic sustainability. **Desmond Lachman** discusses how this debate relates to China, and calls for greater recognition of the obvious economic risks that China's economy poses to the global economic order. Americans—and especially the Federal Reserve—must not ignore high inflation and ever-increasing interest rates when considering the Chinese economy's sustainability. **Steve Kamin** writes that, despite suggestions that the dollar's international dominance is waning, there is little to no chance that Americans will see the international pecking order of currencies change in their lifetime.

Considering recent enthusiasm for increasing industrial economic policies, **James Pethokoukis** takes a look back at the Trump administration's record on industrial policy and discusses why it never lived up to its promises. **Mark Warshawsky** presents a convincing argument for why increases in at-home care benefits under Medicaid will not save money in the long term. **Kirsten Axelsen** discusses the dangers of remaining ambivalent about decisions regarding health care policy. In particular, **Axelsen** calls for more transparency and consistency from courts, policymakers, and implementing agencies in establishing policies and precedents that could lead to the next lifesaving breakthrough in drug research and development.

## FEATURED RESEARCH

### Depositor Discipline and the Banking Panic of 2023

Paul H. Kupiec | *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance*

In a new paper, Paul Kupiec discusses the factors that led to the 2023 banking panic. In particular, a review of four major banks that either failed or voluntarily liquidated during the first half of 2023 can help illustrate the relationship between these banks' operating costs and uninsured deposit funding. Kupiec explores the extent to which these uninsured depositors can be a reliable source of market discipline in a banking system flush with deposit liquidity.

## **Beyond the Spoiler Effect: Can Ranked Choice Voting Solve the Problem of Political Polarization?**

Scott Ganz et al. | Social Science Research Network

In a forthcoming paper published by the *University of Illinois Law Review*, Scott Ganz, Nathan Atkinson, and Edward B. Foley present empirical evidence that suggests ranked choice voting, particularly instant runoff voting, falls short of its promise to be an effective antidote to today's heightened political polarization.

## **Replacement Rates and the Retirement Crisis**

Andrew G. Biggs | AEI Economic Policy Working Paper Series

In a new working paper in the AEI Economic Policy Working Paper Series, Andrew Biggs looks at why even good studies can calculate future replacement rates wrong and discusses how these miscalculations contribute to narratives surrounding the future prospects of retirement. At a time when entitlement reform is back in the spotlight, it is all the more vital to ensure that proper and accurate calculations and models are informing those making important policy decisions.

## **The 510(k) Third Party Review Program: Promise and Potential**

**Brian J. Miller | Journal of Medical Systems**

In a new paper published in the Journal of Medical Systems, Brian Miller and co-authors William Banks and Brian Yagi discuss the evolution of the 510(k) program, an application and review pathway for low- and moderate-risk devices with incremental changes to a previously “predicate” device. The paper suggests that reforming the third-party review program, an aspect of 510(k) that has fallen out of use in recent years, could be the key to solving the backlog of 510(k) applications that the Food and Drug Administration’s Center for Devices and Radiological Health is currently facing.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**The Continued Conundrum of Drug Pricing**

Thursday, September 14 | [\*\*RSVP HERE>>\*\*](#)

**Has the Fed Produced a Soft Economic Landing?**

Thursday, September 21 | [\*\*RSVP HERE>>\*\*](#)

**Methodologies in Fiscal, Economic, and Health Spending**

Friday, September 22 | [\*\*RSVP HERE>>\*\*](#)

**The Two-Parent Privilege: A Book Event with Melissa Kearney**

Tuesday, September 26 | [\*\*RSVP HERE>>\*\*](#)

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## **MONETARY POLICY AND FINANCIAL MARKETS**

## **The New Bank Bailout**

Paul H. Kupiec and Alex J. Pollock | *Wall Street Journal*

Less than two decades after the 2008 banking crisis, taxpayers are yet again bailing out banks, but this time itâ€™s the Federal Reserve member banks. Under American taxpayersâ€™ noses, these 12 district banks have suffered significant operating losses, with four facing deep insolvency and as many as six more possibly following suit in the next year. Paul Kupiec and Alex Pollock suggest that requiring member banks that are registered with the SEC to disclose their risk and proximity to bailing out the Federal Reserve district banks could help alleviate the taxpayersâ€™ tab.

## **The Federal Reserve Must Pay Attention: China's Economy Is In Serious Trouble**

Desmond Lachman | [19fortyfive.com](http://19fortyfive.com)

Under Jerome Powell, the Federal Reserve has shifted its focus away from world economic developments, becoming fixated on the US economy alone. Desmond Lachman writes that this movement towards a US-centric approach misses a consideration that is vital when deciding monetary policy. An approach grounded in recognizing the sources of Chinaâ€™s economic malaise could help the Fed avoid monetary policy overkill.

## **Is the Role of the Dollar About to Significantly Change?**

Steve B. Kamin | *International Economy Magazine*



Amid growing concerns regarding the status of the dollar as the dominant international reserve currency, Steve Kamin argues that the likelihood of the dollar falling to second on the international pecking order remains low. While acknowledging that the US, and the West, will continue to experience erosion from technological innovations and widening geopolitical rifts, Kamin remains confident that the dollar will maintain its dominant position in the global economy.

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## POLITICAL ECONOMY

### **More Trump Tariffs? We Did This Before, and It Didn't Work Out**

James Pethokoukis | AEIdeas

James Pethokoukis discusses the economic practicality of calls for bolstering the nation's industrial policy. In particular, former President Trump's recent proposal to implement a 10 percent tariff on all foreign goods sold in the US echoes several policies enacted under his administration. Pethokoukis explores how these past policies panned out and discusses several reliable economic models that present harsh conclusions regarding the future if this new 10 percent tariff proposal comes to fruition.

## **The Expansion of Home Care Benefits in Medicaid Does Not Save Money on Long-Term Care**

Mark J. Warshawsky | *AEIdeas*

The conversation on diversifying Medicaid's budgeting includes many advocates who claim that expanding funding for at-home care benefits would almost certainly lead to decreases in long-term spending. Mark Warshawsky points out that these claims fall short of reality, as the data backing their arguments fail to consider all states and thus have heavy biases. The truth is that increases in at-home care cannot guarantee decreases in long-term Medicaid spending. As Warshawsky writes, the economic rule remains the same: "A dollar change costs a dollar."

## **Too Fast or Too Slow: Ambivalence About Drug Development Affects Health**

Kirsten Axelsen | *RealClearHealth*

Today's debates on drug development policies are rampant with opposing influences and general ambivalence. Kirsten Axelsen writes that these conflicting positions can significantly threaten drug development and access, as contradictory policies can get in the way of incentivizing companies to invest money in researching and developing the next lifesaving drug.

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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

### **China's Dark Cloud Over the South African Economy**

Desmond Lachman | *BusinessDay*

### **No One Is Above the Law? Biden's Bureau of Land Management Thinks It Is.**

Benjamin Zycher | *Hill*

### **Turkeyâ€”a Key NATO Playerâ€”Is Headed for Serious Economic Turmoil**

Desmond Lachman | *New York Post*

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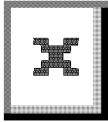
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**From:** AEI Economics <aeieconomics@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 9/8/2023 11:00:42 AM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** The US needs to be Smarter About its Economic Leverage (The Ledger)

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

As debate continues to rage over the future of US-China trade relations, **Neena Shenai** offers insight into the different tools at the United States's disposal for securing strong leverage against the Chinese economy. **Shenai** looks beyond short-term measures, such as sanctions and investment restrictions, as the best ways of combating Chinese global influence. Instead, she suggests that a return to free-market values and a commitment to getting America's political and economic house in order could be the key to the US maintaining its position as the global economic powerhouse it has proven itself to be. One short-term measure gaining significant traction is an increase in industrial policy, a stance that former President Donald Trump articulated in his recent proposal to enact a 10 percent tariff on all foreign imports. **Kyle Pomerleau** takes a look at this proposal and discusses why it is rooted in a misunderstanding of how tariffs affect trade. Fewer imports would lead to fewer exports, leaving the US with lower economic output. At the core of these

trade discussions lies the question of how much China's ongoing economic turmoil will affect the global economy. **Desmond Lachman** writes that any belief that China's woes will not affect other nations is naïve. In particular, **Lachman** argues that Jerome Powell and the Fed must recognize that China's economic crisis will most definitely harm the global market.

Rep. Kevin McCarthy's (R-CA) control over the House Freedom Caucus will face one of its most significant tests in the coming weeks as Congress tries to pass a bipartisan budget deal before the September 30 funding deadline. **James Pethokoukis** suggests that this impending budget fight is mere political theater and will have little to no impact on overall market activity. On the other hand, the Federal Reserve continuing to fall asleep at the wheel will affect the market significantly, argues **Desmond Lachman**. Because of an overreliance on data-dependent models for monetary policy decisions, the Fed has set up what could be a coming period of economic weakness and recession. Lack of prudence and foresight has also poisoned the Federal Reserve's district banks. However, this time around, it is the taxpayers bailing them out instead of the Fed's member banks, writes **Paul Kupiec**.

Studies show that as many as two-thirds of US physicians experience burnout. **Brian Miller** writes on how this phenomenon decreases quality of care and increases average health care costs. **Miller** argues that any attempt to address these burnouts must begin with a reevaluation of the performance metrics that are currently used to measure clinical validity. Another sector that would benefit from a fundamental reevaluation would be current federal spending on agricultural R&D. **Vincent Smith** discusses the need for legislators to increase funding for agricultural technological innovation in order to prevent productivity growth from becoming negative. **James Pethokoukis** reports on the recently passed law that allows for Medicare to negotiate directly with drug companies over the prices of a list of drugs. **Pethokoukis** points out that this price negotiation poses a serious danger to investments in future drug development and innovation.

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## FEATURED RESEARCH

### **Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall, Who's the Most Hawkish Central Bank of All?**

Steven B. Kamin | AEI Economic Working Paper Series

In a new working paper, Steve Kamin analyzes the extent to which central banks around the world have responded to the post-pandemic surge in inflation. In particular, this paper finds that central banks with proven histories of high inflation on average tend to overtighten their responses, while those with histories of struggling to push inflation up to target tend to respond in a more dovish manner.

### **Don't Reverse the Recent Food Aid Reforms by Passing the American Farmers Feed the World Act**

Vincent H. Smith and Stephanie Mercier | American Enterprise Institute

In a new paper, Vincent Smith and Stephanie Mercier explore the intricacies of the newly proposed American Farmers Feed the World Act. While this act may sound positive, it would actually hurt the operation of nonemergency development aid and harm the ability of small farmers in developing nations to become more productive and resilient to external shocks. Investing in farmers in developing countries and encouraging them to become more resilient has proved to be an effective tool for reducing long-term dependency on emergency humanitarian assistance.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**The Continued Conundrum of Drug Pricing**

Thursday, September 14 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

**Has the Fed Produced a Soft Economic Landing?**

Thursday, September 21 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

**Methodologies in Fiscal, Economic, and Health Spending Projections**

Friday, September 22 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

**The Two-Parent Privilege: A Book Event with Melissa Kearney**

Tuesday, September 26 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

**Streamlining the Immigration Bureaucracy: A Conversation with Rep. Tony Gonzales (R-TX)**

Thursday, September 28 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

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## INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY AND TRADE

**America Needs to Be Smarter About Its Economic Leverage**

Neena Shenai | RealClearPolicy

Today's debates over how the US should use its economic statecraft to respond to China's growing economic influence tend to focus on "single use" tools—that is, tools such as sanctions and investment restrictions that will either succeed or fail. Neena Shenai suggests that these tools can fall short in effectiveness and efficiency. Another set of tools is available, centered on free-market values and a push for technological innovation and investment in the US.

## **Trump's Tariffs Won't Address the Trade Deficit**

Kyle Pomerleau | *AEIdeas*

In a letter last week to the *Wall Street Journal*, former president Donald Trump defended his proposed plan to enact a 10 percent tariff on all foreign imports if reelected. Kyle Pomerleau takes a look at this proposal and discusses why it misses the mark on the relationship between tariffs and the US economy. A 10 percent tariff would certainly decrease imports but also likely decrease exports, resulting in unintended harms to the domestic economy.

## **China's Economic Crisis Won't Be Contained to China**

Desmond Lachman | *National Review*

Desmond Lachman writes on China's looming economic decline and points out that it will affect nations. Vital Asian and European markets, such as Japan's and Germany's, live in the dark shadow of the Chinese economy and face almost certain economic slowdowns. Lachman argues that Jerome Powell and the Federal Reserve must realize how much China's economic troubles will affect global financial markets and the US economic outlook.



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## POLITICAL ECONOMY AND MONETARY POLICY

### **Shutting Down the Government Is a Choice of Theater over Substance**

James Pethokoukis | *AEIdeas*

Now that Congress is back in session, the stage is set for yet another showdown over government funding agreements. With the current budget year set to expire on September 30, a government shutdown awaits if bipartisan funding agreements are not passed in the coming weeks. James Pethokoukis writes that any shutdown would be a mere political performance with little to no actual economic impact on the market.

### **The Mistake-Prone Federal Reserve Could Be Sending Us into Recession**

Desmond Lachman | *New York Post*

One defining characteristic of the Federal Reserve under Jerome Powell has been its consistent reliance on data-driven monetary policy. Important decisions regarding interest rates have for the most part depended on complex quantitative economic models. Desmond Lachman writes that greater prudence would have reminded the Fed that interest hikes take over a year to have a full economic effect. Yet the Fed continues to make new decisions without considering external risks, leaving open the possibility of a recession next year.

## **The New Bank Bailout**

Paul H. Kupiec and Alex J. Pollock | *Wall Street Journal*

Less than two decades after the 2008 banking crisis, taxpayers are yet again bailing out banks, but this time it's the Federal Reserve member banks. Under American taxpayers' noses, the Federal Reserve's 12 district banks have suffered significant operating losses, with four facing deep insolvency and as many as six more possibly following suit in the next year. Paul Kupiec suggests that requiring member banks that are registered with the Securities and Exchange Committee to disclose their risk and proximity to bailing out the Federal Reserve district banks could alleviate the taxpayers' tab.

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## **HEALTH CARE AND AGRICULTURE ECONOMICS**

### **Improving Health Care Quality Measurement to Combat Clinician Burnout**

Brian J. Miller, Anthony M. DiGiorgio, and Jesse M. Ehrenfeld | *JAMA Network*

Today's clinicians on average face an overwhelmingly significant amount of burnout. These burnouts not only impose productivity and efficiency concerns but also increase health care costs across the board. In a new *JAMA Network* article, Brian J. Miller, Anthony M. DiGiorgio, and Jesse M. Ehrenfeld explore the causes of clinician burnout and discuss how to reform performance metrics to reduce overall burnout.

## **American Farmers Urgently Need New Technology to Keep Food on the World's Table**

Vincent H. Smith and Phillip G. Pardey | MarketWatch

Given fears that agricultural productivity growth will turn negative, Vincent H. Smith and Phillip G. Pardey call for legislators to increase federal investment in agriculture research and development. The US needs technological innovation is if it wants to prepare American farmers to face challenges driven by global climate change shocks and competitive global markets with significantly higher rates on investment in new agricultural technologies.

## **Medicare Drug Negotiation and the Risk to Innovation**

James Pehokoukis | AEIdeas

In the wake of last week's announcement regarding price negotiations between Medicare and drug companies, James Pethokoukis discusses the danger these negotiations pose to drug development and innovation. Particularly, drug companies may be forced to limit research and development spending, leading to decreases in scientific breakthroughs. The incalculable benefits of future drug development make it practically impossible to rationally predict just how much these negotiations could cost.

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## **FEATURED PODCASTS**



**Of Economics and Termites**

Michael R. Strain | Q & A, Hosted by Jay Nordlinger of National Review

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)

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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

**Responses to Questions for the Record on “Innovation Saves Lives:  
Evaluating Medicare Coverage Pathways for Innovative Drugs, Medical  
Devices, and Technology”**

Brian J. Miller | House Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Letter: China Must Not Be in Economic Policy Denial**

Desmond Lachman | *Washington Post*

**Letter: The Impact of China’s Economic Woes**

Desmond Lachman | *New York Times*

**American Enterprise Institute Roundtable on Addressing the Underlying  
Causes of the Banking Crisis of 2023**

Paul H. Kupiec | *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance*

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Read more at [www.aei.org/policy/economics](https://www.aei.org/policy/economics).

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**From:** Benedic Ippolito <Benedic.Ippolito@AEI.org>  
**Sent:** 9/11/2023 1:54:55 PM +0000  
**To:** Loren Adler <LAdler@brookings.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: Re: Health Policy Happy Hour is Back

Looking forward to seeing everyone this Thursday on AEI's roof. Fingers crossed, but the weather is looking great.

If you haven't yet, please let Loren or I know if you plan to join.

See you soon,

Ben

---

**From:** Loren Adler <LAdler@brookings.edu>  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 30, 2023 at 12:44 PM  
**To:** Benedic Ippolito <Benedic.Ippolito@AEI.org>  
**Subject:** Health Policy Happy Hour is Back

Summer's winding down, which critically means that AEI's roof deck can once again maintain non-sweltering internal temperatures and, therefore, Ben and I can finally host you lovely folks again.

Please come join us on **Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup>**, kicking off at 5pm. We'll have drinks and snacks. Feel free to invite along colleagues.

And please let us know if you're able to join so we can give AEI's front desk a list of attendees.

**When: Thursday, September 14. 5 – 8 PM.**

**Where: AEI, 1789 Massachusetts Ave. NW**

Looking forward to seeing everyone,

Loren Adler

Fellow and Associate Director

Brookings Schaeffer Initiative on Health Policy

202-238-3511

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**From:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 2/2/2023 12:24:35 AM +0000  
**To:** "Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA)" <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: aligning quality metrics

Hi, Meena:

So nice to hear from you. Also nice to see this moving along. In the twilight of the Trump administration, I was invited to serve on a "summit" at HHS that was facilitated by Mike Leavitt and convened by the Secretary. Its goal was to create a unified national set of quality measures. Seems like this may have been the outgrowth of that effort, or maybe not.

Anyway congrats on this. Look forward to reading the piece.

David

---

**From:** Seshamani, Meena (CMS/OA) <Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 5:17 PM  
**To:** David Blumenthal <DB@CMWF.org>  
**Subject:** aligning quality metrics

Hi David, I hope you are well!

I wanted to bring to your attention that we just published an article in the New England Journal of Medicine, entitled "Aligning Quality Measures across CMS – the Universal Foundation."

[https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2215539?query=featured\\_home](https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2215539?query=featured_home)

In it, we describe a "Universal Foundation" of quality measures that would apply across as many CMS quality rating and value-based care programs as possible, with additional measures added on, depending on the population or setting.



It is intended to improve quality outcomes, reduce provider burden, advance equity, and aid the transition to digital reporting. In the article we outline preliminary adult and pediatric Universal Foundation measures.

We have created a cross-center working group for this, and the Universal Foundation will continue to evolve over time, soliciting feedback through comments, rulemaking, listening sessions, and other forums.

I appreciate your engagement as always; please let me know if you have any questions.

My best,

Meena

**Meena Seshamani, MD, PhD** (she/her)

Director, Center for Medicare

(b)(6) cell)

[Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Meena.Seshamani@cms.hhs.gov)



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---

**From:** Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>  
**Sent:** 5/4/2023 2:37:25 PM +0000  
**To:** Rachel Nuzum <RN@CMWF.org>  
**CC:** Sara Federman <Sfederman@cmwf.org>  
**Subject:** Invitation: Commonwealth Fund in DC - join us 5/18  
**Attachments:** 5.18\_invite.png

Friends,

Wanted to make sure you received this invitation from the Fund for our 5/18 reception with Joe Betancourt. He will be making remarks at 6:00 but its primarily an opportunity to connect and familiarize Joe with our policy partners in DC and to get together in person!

Hope to see you on the 18<sup>th</sup>!

Rachel

**Rachel Nuzum, MPH** (she/her/hers)  
*Senior Vice President, Policy*

Call: (b)(6) Tweet: @raenuzum Web: [commonwealthfund.org](https://commonwealthfund.org)



**The  
Commonwealth  
Fund**

*Affordable. quality health care. For everyone.*

---

**From:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA)" (b)(6)  
(b)(6) (b)(6)  
**Sent:** 4/3/2024 5:48:02 PM +0000  
**To:** "Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM)" <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>; "Newlin, Manda (CMS/OL)" <Manda.Newlin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: RE: outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS

Thanks Kristi!

---

**From:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 3, 2024 1:34 PM  
**To:** Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA) <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>; Newlin, Manda (CMS/OL) <Manda.Newlin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS

Just talked to this person. She is in the PMF pool – comes highly recommended. Wanted to share.

---

**From:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM)  
**Sent:** Monday, March 25, 2024 1:10 PM  
**To:** Ritter, Christina (CMS/CM) <Christina.Ritter@cms.hhs.gov>; Strawbridge (she/her), Lara (CMS/CM) <Lara.Strawbridge@cms.hhs.gov>; Brock, Janet (CMS/CM) <janet.brock2@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS

Someone in the PMF pool.

---

**From:** Emily Gee <egee@americanprogress.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 25, 2024 12:56 PM  
**To:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS

Hi, Kristi,

I hope you are doing well. Nicole Rapfogel, who has been at CAP since 2019, is graduating with her MPH this spring and is also a Presidential Management Fellow finalist. She is an outstanding researcher and writer, and she has been central to CAP's work on ACA and drug pricing reforms. She's been a standout here at CAP for her sense of initiative, strong work ethic and outstanding work product, and collegiality, and as much as I would love to keep

her with us forever, she's ready for the next stage in her in her professional development and new opportunities.

I don't know whether you might still be hiring for the IRA drug office, but if you or someone else at CMS might have time to speak with her, even just for an informational chat, I'd appreciate it. Her resume is attached and she's (b)(6) I've been encouraging her to consider roles in the federal government as a way to grow her expertise. Anyone who hires her will be very lucky to have her.

Best,

Emily

**Emily R. Gee, PhD**

Senior Vice President, Inclusive Growth

Center for American Progress

202-682-0326

**From:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OL)" (b)(6)  
(b)(6) (b)(6)  
**Sent:** 1/13/2023 6:31:07 PM +0000  
**To:** "Fowler (she/her), Liz (CMS/CMMI)" <Liz.Fowler@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: FW: Letter Urging Medicare Advantage Changes to Improve Seniors' Health

To Democratic Subscribers

## Letter Urging Medicare Advantage Changes to Improve Seniors' Health

Sending Office: Honorable Pramila Jayapal  
Sent By: Rachel.Madley@mail.house.gov

**Current signers:** Jayapal, DeLauro, Schakowsky

**Endorsed by:** Center for Health and Democracy, Center for Medicare Advocacy, Social Security Works

Dear Colleague,

We invite you to join us in sending a letter to President Biden, Secretary Becerra, and CMS Administrator Brooks-LaSure urging Medicare Advantage (MA) reforms that will improve healthcare for seniors and people with disabilities. This letter is especially timely given the recent [New York Times article](#), "[How Insurers Exploited Medicare for Billions](#)," which outlined rampant abuse in MA plans and highlighted concerns from Medicare beneficiaries. This sign-on letter addresses many of those concerns, specifically, asking CMS to:

1. Finalize and strongly enforce the proposed prohibition on MA plans denying prior authorization requests for coverage of a Medicare covered item or service based on criteria not found in traditional Medicare coverage policies, and issue new guidance prohibiting the use of step therapy for Medicare Part B.
2. Require MA plans to cover services from any medical provider that accepts Medicare's approved rate. At a minimum, require MA networks to cover care at the top 50 cancer hospitals in the country.

3. Stop overpayments by developing a more accurate risk scoring model based on patient demographics and prohibiting the use of unscrupulous methods to increase care costs.
4. Reinvest the \$46.5 billion annual savings from MA overpayments into lowering Medicare premiums, eliminating deductibles, expanding benefits to include dental, vision, and hearing, or otherwise improving medical care for all Medicare beneficiaries.

As enrollment in MA nears 50 percent of all Medicare beneficiaries, spending per beneficiary is growing faster in MA than original Medicare.<sup>i</sup> In addition, research indicates that health outcomes in MA may be worse than those on traditional Medicare. MA plans have reportedly inappropriately delayed and denied care.<sup>ii</sup> The Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that beneficiaries are more likely to switch from MA to traditional Medicare if they are in bad health compared to good health and that beneficiaries in their last year of life are more than twice as likely to switch from MA to traditional Medicare.<sup>iii,iv</sup> Similarly, an increased percentage of MA beneficiaries report having trouble paying their medical bills or getting care due to cost than in traditional Medicare.<sup>v,vi</sup> MA beneficiaries are also more likely to be placed in low quality nursing homes than those in traditional Medicare.<sup>vii</sup>

The reforms proposed in this letter would stop overpayments to MA plans and control Medicare spending, improve patient care and outcomes, and improve upon current Medicare benefits. I hope you will join me in calling for these timely reforms on behalf of our constituents.

To sign on please use this [Quill Link](#). Feel free to reach out to Rachel Madley ([Rachel.madley@mail.house.gov](mailto:Rachel.madley@mail.house.gov)) with any questions.

Sincerely,

PRAMILA JAYAPAL

Member of Congress

ROSA DELAURO

Member of Congress

JAN SCHAKOWSKY

Member of Congress

---

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/higher-and-faster-growing-spending-per-medicare-advantage-enrollee-adds-to-medicare-solvency-and-affordability-challenges/>

<sup>[2]</sup> Grimm, Christi. *Some Medicare Advantage Organization Denials of Prior Authorization Requests Raise Concerns About Beneficiary Access to Medically Necessary Care*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General. April 28, 2022.

<sup>[3]</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-17-393>

<sup>[4]</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-106026>

<sup>[5]</sup> <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.121.008762>

<sup>[6]</sup> <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/problems-getting-care-due-to-cost-or-paying-medical-bills-among-medicare-beneficiaries/>

Letter Text:

Dear President Biden, Secretary Becerra, and Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

We appreciate the attention you are giving to reforming Medicare Advantage plans and improving care for seniors. We especially want to applaud the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) recent rule that prohibits these plans from imposing additional clinical criteria on patients to approve prior authorization. However, we believe there is still much more that needs to be done to protect seniors from fraud and abuse. We urge you to build on your current work to improve Medicare by fixing the harms to patient care and rapidly increasing costs within the Medicare Advantage program. This will also save money that can then be used to reinvest in seniors' care.

Outside of traditional Medicare, seniors can choose a Medicare Advantage plan administered by a private health insurance company. Medicare Advantage, also known as Medicare Part C, was intended to improve patient care and decrease growing healthcare costs. Today, close to 50 percent of Medicare beneficiaries are now enrolled in a Medicare Advantage (MA) plan. MA plans often offer low or no premiums, out-of-pocket caps on spending, and other benefits that make the plans appear advantageous, especially to low-income seniors and seniors of color who are more likely to enroll in MA than traditional Medicare.

Although at its inception the MA program was expected to reduce Medicare spending, MA plans in the aggregate have never produced savings for Medicare due to the MA program's payment policies. Instead, as enrollment in MA grows, spending per beneficiary has grown faster in MA than original Medicare, and that spending is being funneled into corporate profits under the guise of operating costs instead of into care for patients. Additionally, inappropriate care delays and denials within MA are harming seniors and people with disabilities. Research and patient experience confirms the harms to MA patients' healthcare. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that beneficiaries are more likely to switch from MA to traditional Medicare if they are in bad health compared to good health and that beneficiaries in their last year of life are more than twice as likely to switch from MA to traditional Medicare.<sup>viii</sup> Similarly, a statistically significant increased percentage of MA beneficiaries report having trouble paying their medical bills or getting care due to cost than in traditional Medicare.<sup>ix,x</sup> MA beneficiaries are also more likely to be placed in low quality nursing homes than those in traditional Medicare.<sup>xi</sup>

In order to ensure that MA plans cover all medically reasonable and necessary services from high quality providers covered under traditional Medicare and protect the fiscal integrity of the Medicare Trust Fund, we urge CMS to make the following improvements:

1. Finalize and strongly enforce the proposed prohibition on MA plans denying prior authorization requests for coverage of a Medicare covered item or service based on criteria not found in traditional Medicare coverage policies, and issue new guidance prohibiting the use of step therapy for Medicare Part B.
2. Require MA plans to cover services from any medical provider that accepts Medicare's approved rate. At a minimum, require MA networks to cover care at the top 50 cancer hospitals in the country.
3. Stop overpayments by developing a more accurate risk scoring model based on patient demographics and prohibiting the use of unscrupulous methods to increase care costs.

4. Reinvest the \$46.5 billion annual savings from MA overpayments into lowering Medicare premiums, eliminating deductibles, expanding benefits to include dental, vision, and hearing, or otherwise improving medical care for all Medicare beneficiaries.

### **1. Finalize and enforce proposed rule on prior authorization in MA plans:**

Thank you for proposing a strong Medicare Part C & D Rule for 2024 that prohibits MA plans from imposing any additional clinical criteria for prior authorization approvals outside of current Medicare coverage policies.<sup>xii</sup> An April 2022 report from the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS OIG) shows that as many as 85,000 medical prior authorizations and 1.5 million payment requests are improperly denied by MA organizations each year.<sup>xiii</sup> In addition, MA organizations are permitted to use step therapy, a process that requires seniors to try multiple cheaper medications to prove that they fail to work before the MA insurer will approve the use of the correct medication. During the Obama Administration, step therapy in Medicare Part B was prohibited. Unfortunately, the policy returned during the Trump Administration and is still permitted.

Research shows that prior authorization and step therapy for Part B—two care obstacles used in MA but not original Medicare—are associated with higher health costs, hospitalizations, office visits, and likelihood of hospitalization.<sup>xiv,xv</sup> The delay in care that prior authorization and step therapy cause irreparably harms seniors, leading to disease progression, worse health outcomes, and even death.<sup>xvi,xvii</sup> We are supportive of the proposed rule to address prior authorization issues and urge you to finalize it and vigorously monitor MA plans for compliance. This rule will remove obstacles that currently stand in the way of Medicare beneficiaries receiving the healthcare they need. We also urge you to return to the policy that prohibited step therapy in Medicare Part B, to ensure beneficiaries get the life-saving medications they need.

### **2. Require MA plans to cover services from any medical provider that accepts Medicare's approved rate:**

MA poses a threat to patient care by restricting access to medical providers. Unlike original Medicare, MA imposes a network of providers that beneficiaries must see in order for their care to be covered. If beneficiaries need care outside of the network, if they are in an HMO, they must often pay full price out of pocket. Worse, 40 percent of beneficiaries do not know that they must stay in-network to have their services covered, leading to surprise medical bills. Research has shown that Hispanic and Asian American beneficiaries are more likely to be enrolled in an MA plan with a narrow network. Of particular concern, MA plans restrict access to the top cancer centers in the country. Consequently, there is a significant decrease in the percentage of MA beneficiaries who get care at top-ranked cancer hospitals compared to original Medicare beneficiaries.<sup>xviii</sup>

### **3. Stop overpayments by developing a more accurate risk scoring model and prohibiting unscrupulous methods of increasing care costs:**

Despite the risk of inferior care, in 2019, payments to MA organizations from the Medicare Trust Fund were \$321 higher per patient compared to original Medicare after adjusting for differences in health status and demographics.<sup>xix</sup> This resulted in an additional \$7 billion in Medicare spending.

Another driver of increased costs of MA is through risk scoring. CMS currently uses the Hierarchical Condition Category (HCC) method of risk scoring which uses a patient's diagnosis codes and other demographics to calculate a risk score. Although mortality data, prescription drug claims, and demographic data demonstrate that MA beneficiaries are initially healthier than traditional Fee-for-Service (FFS) beneficiaries, MA organizations have taken advantage of this risk scoring system to make their beneficiaries appear sicker to get larger payments from the government, a practice known as upcoding. MA organizations also use unscrupulous methods to increase purported care costs such as conducting unsolicited home health visits to add diagnosis codes to a patient's chart without providing medical care for those diagnoses and use algorithms to search electronic medical



chart data and add additional diagnosis codes. Sadly, patients with these codes added to their charts through this practice are too often not treated for the new diagnoses; the codes are simply used to increase payment from the government to the MA plan. Upcoding is so prevalent in the MA sector that the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, the Congressional Budget Office, the Government Accountability Office, and the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget all incorporate it into their Medicare cost models.

CMS's proposal to use the statutory minimum coding intensity adjustment of 5.9 percent for 2023 is inadequate to keep up with increased upcoding by MA plans. Researchers estimate that the true coding intensity adjustment is over 15 percent.<sup>xx</sup> An alternative risk scoring method, Demographic Estimate of Coding Intensity (DECI), would address upcoding. The DECI method assumes that after correcting for demographics, MA beneficiaries are no sicker than FFS beneficiaries—an assumption backed up by the data.<sup>xxi</sup> It also corrects for differences between diagnosis-related risk scores and demographic-related risk scores attributed to upcoding. This calculation can also be applied in a more targeted manner to crack-down on the bad actor plans that participate in intense risk score gaming. Previous corrections to the coding intensity adjustment have not resulted in decreased benefits or increased costs to seniors.<sup>xxii</sup> CMS would save over \$465 billion over the next decade by enacting this mathematical change.<sup>xxiii</sup>

#### **4. Reinvest the \$46.5 billion annual savings from MA profiteering into improvements to traditional Medicare:**

Reinvesting savings from Medicare profiteering could include lowering Medicare premiums, eliminating deductibles, expanding benefits to include dental, vision, and hearing, or otherwise improving medical care for all Medicare beneficiaries. For example, reinvesting savings would allow CMS to reduce Medicare Part B premiums by 42 percent to under \$100 per month for all Medicare beneficiaries.<sup>xxiv</sup> Alternatively, the savings could be used to eliminate the Medicare Part D deductible for everyone enrolled in Medicare. Savings could also fund comprehensive dental, vision, and hearing benefits with \$15 billion left over per year to lower costs of other care.<sup>xxv</sup> In fact, America's Health Insurance Plans found that it could provide comprehensive dental, vision, and hearing benefits with no increase in government funding and still have money left over.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Medicare is a foundational piece of the U.S. healthcare system and must be protected. We urge you to eliminate the barriers caused by MA care delays and denials and restricted provider networks, stop overpayments to MA, and reinvest the savings of time and money into care for Medicare beneficiaries. We also respectfully request a response to this letter, detailing actions being taken towards these reforms, by February XX, 2023. We thank you for your attention to this vital issue and stand ready to work with you to improve the health and well being of America's seniors and people with disabilities.

Sincerely,

[[SIGNATURES]]

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<sup>iii</sup> [https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/medicare-advantage-in-2022-enrollment-update-and-key-trends/#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20more%20than%2028,spending%20\(net%20of%20premiums\).](https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/medicare-advantage-in-2022-enrollment-update-and-key-trends/#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20more%20than%2028,spending%20(net%20of%20premiums).)

<sup>iiii</sup> <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/OMH/Downloads/2019-National-Level-Results-by-Race-Ethnicity-and-Gender.pdf>

<sup>iiiii</sup> Medicare Payment Access Commission, Report to Congress: Medicare Payment Policy (Mar. 2022).

[iv] <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/higher-and-faster-growing-spending-per-medicare-advantage-enrollee-adds-to-medicare-solvency-and-affordability-challenges/>

[vi] <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/usc-brookings-schaeffer-on-health-policy/2022/07/13/profits-medical-loss-ratios-and-the-ownership-structure-of-medicare-advantage-plans/>

[vi] Grimm, Christi. *Some Medicare Advantage Organization Denials of Prior Authorization Requests Raise Concerns About Beneficiary Access to Medically Necessary Care*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General. April 28, 2022.

[vii] <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-17-393>

[viii] <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-106026>

[ix] <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.121.008762>

[xi] <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/problems-getting-care-due-to-cost-or-paying-medical-bills-among-medicare-beneficiaries/>

[xii] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29309215/>

[xiii] <https://www.federalregister.gov/public-inspection/2022-26956/medicare-program-contract-year-2024-policy-and-technical-changes-to-the-medicare-advantage-program>

[xiii] Grimm, Christi. *Some Medicare Advantage Organization Denials of Prior Authorization Requests Raise Concerns About Beneficiary Access to Medically Necessary Care*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General. April 28, 2022.

[xvi] <https://www.ajmc.com/view/formulary-restrictions-on-atypical-antipsychotics-impact-on-costs-for-patients-with-schizophrenia-and-bipolar-disorder-in-medicaid?page=3>

[xvi] <https://www.ajmc.com/view/aug98-1103p1105-1113>

[xvii] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21642686/>

[xviii] <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/prior-authorization/cancer-killed-kathleen-valentini-prior-auth-shares-blame>

[xviii] <https://www.ajmc.com/view/comparison-of-the-use-of-top-ranked-cancer-hospitals-between-medicare-advantage-and-traditional-medicare>

[xix] <https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/higher-and-faster-growing-spending-per-medicare-advantage-enrollee-adds-to-medicare-solvency-and-affordability-challenges/#:~:text=Higher%20Medicare%20payments%20per%20Medicare,additional%20spending%20in%20that%20>

[xx] Reducing Medicare Advantage Overpayments. Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (February 23, 2021).

[xxi] Reducing Medicare Advantage Overpayments. Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget (February 23, 2021).

[xxii] Skopec Lauren, Aarons Joshua, Zuckerman Stephen. Did Medicare Advantage Payment Cuts Affect Beneficiary Access and Affordability? American Journal of Managed Care (August 30, 2019).

[xxiii] <https://www.crfb.org/papers/reducing-medicare-advantage-overpayments>

[xxiv] <https://www.medicare.gov/basics/get-started-with-medicare/medicare-basics/what-does-medicare-cost>

[xxv] [https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2019-12/hr3\\_complete.pdf](https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2019-12/hr3_complete.pdf)

<sup>[xxvii]</sup> <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payer/ahip-adding-dental-vision-and-hearing-benefits-could-boost-medicare-advantage-costs-without>

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**Sent:** 4/11/2024 2:55:58 PM +0000  
**Subject:** FW: FW: outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS  
**Attachments:** Rapfogel\_Resume\_Sept\_2023\_PMF.pdf

---

**From:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 3, 2024 1:34 PM  
**To:** Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA) <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>; Newlin, Manda (CMS/OL) <Manda.Newlin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS

Just talked to this person. She is in the PMF pool – comes highly recommended. Wanted to share.

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**To:** Ritter, Christina (CMS/CM) <Christina.Ritter@cms.hhs.gov>; Strawbridge (she/her), Lara (CMS/CM) <Lara.Strawbridge@cms.hhs.gov>; Brock, Janet (CMS/CM) <janet.brock2@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS

Someone in the PMF pool.

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**From:** Emily Gee <eggee@americanprogress.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 25, 2024 12:56 PM  
**To:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS

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I don't know whether you might still be hiring for the IRA drug office, but if you or someone else at CMS might have time to speak with her, even just for an informational chat, I'd appreciate it. Her resume is attached and she's (b)(6) I've been encouraging her to consider roles in the federal government as a way to grow her expertise. Anyone who hires her will be very lucky to have her.

Best,  
Emily

**Emily R. Gee, PhD**  
Senior Vice President, Inclusive Growth

Center for American Progress  
202-682-0326

---

**From:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA)" (b)(6)  
(b)(6)  
(b)(6)  
(b)(6)  
**Sent:** 4/11/2024 2:56:05 PM +0000  
**To:** "Boulanger, Jennifer (CMS/OL)" <Jennifer.Boulanger@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: FW: outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS  
**Attachments:** RapfogeI\_Resume\_Sept\_2023\_PMF.pdf

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**From:** Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 3, 2024 1:37 PM  
**To:** Boulanger, Jennifer (CMS/OL) <Jennifer.Boulanger@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS  
**Importance:** High

---

**From:** Martin, Kristi (CMS/CM) <Kristina.Martin@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 3, 2024 1:34 PM  
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**Subject:** FW: outstanding PMF interested in careers at HHS/CMS

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Emily

**Emily R. Gee, PhD**

Senior Vice President, Inclusive Growth

Center for American Progress

202-682-0326

---

**From:** Benedic Ippolito <Benedic.Ippolito@AEI.org>  
**Sent:** 8/22/2022 7:20:03 PM +0000  
**To:** Loren Adler <LAdler@brookings.edu>  
**Subject:** Sept 8 Health Policy Happy Hour

Hi All,

I hope everyone is enjoying a relatively relaxing August!

In an effort to ease the transition out of summer, Loren and I will be hosting the next health policy happy hour on **Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup> from 5-8:30pm at AEI (1789 Massachusetts Ave. NW)**. Hopefully the weather is accommodating and we can comfortably use the outdoor portion of the roof.

Feel free to pass along this invitation to colleagues and please let Loren or I know if you (or others) plan to attend.

Hope to see you there!

Ben

Benedic Ippolito

American Enterprise Institute

Senior Fellow | Economic Policy Studies



---

**From:** Benedic Ippolito <Benedic.Ippolito@AEI.org>  
**Sent:** 9/6/2022 1:27:59 PM +0000  
**To:** Loren Adler <LAdler@brookings.edu>  
**Subject:** Sept 8 Health Policy Happy Hour

The weather for Thursday is shaping up nicely for an evening on AEI's roof (fingers crossed). If you haven't yet, please let Loren or I know if you plan to attend this week's happy hour. Details are below. And thanks to all those who have already let us know!

Ben

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**From:** Benedic Ippolito <Benedic.Ippolito@AEI.org>  
**Date:** Monday, August 22, 2022 at 3:19 PM  
**To:** Loren Adler <LAdler@brookings.edu>  
**Subject:** Sept 8 Health Policy Happy Hour

Hi All,

I hope everyone is enjoying a relatively relaxing August!

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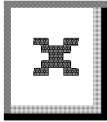
American Enterprise Institute

Senior Fellow | Economic Policy Studies

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**From:** AEI Economics <aeieconomics@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 9/9/2022 11:00:39 AM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OL)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Has "Bidenomics" been worth the risk?

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

**James Pethokoukis** [analyzes](#) whether the record-high fiscal spending of “Bidenomics” is worth the risk, considering that it has contributed substantially to inflation. **James C. Capretta** [argues](#) that the Republican party should not embrace populist economic policies and should reclaim the pro-free trade, anti-populist policies of the Reagan-Bush era instead. **Pethokoukis** [reflects](#) on the rejection of housing reform policy by the nationalist-populist wing of the Republican Party and notes how this does not reflect the party’s history.

**Paul H. Kupiec** and **Alex J. Pollock** [forecast](#) the impact of the Federal Reserve’s losses on the broader federal budget and the deficit. **Sita Nataraj Slavov** [explains](#) her recent finding that young people shouldn’t necessarily save for retirement and this finding’s implications for automatic enrollment programs. **Desmond Lachman** [breaks down](#) the importance of the August jobs report and how

it could predict additional interest-rate hikes from the Federal Reserve.

**Pethokoukis** and **Alex Trembath** discuss how the recently signed Inflation Reduction Act affects the emerging nuclear renaissance, whether that renaissance has staying power, and “ecomodernism.” Intel has embarked on a high-risk, high-payoff mission aiming to reemerge as the world’s leading semiconductor chip manufacturer, but the company faces serious challenges, says **Claude Barfield**. **Pethokoukis** investigates what caused the Great Stagnation of the early 1970s and considers the application of these findings today.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**The Myth of American Inequality: A Conversation with Phil Gramm and John Early**

Monday, September 12 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

**Men Without Work in the Post-Pandemic Era**

Monday, September 19 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

**US Health Policy and Market Reforms: A Book Event with James C. Capretta**

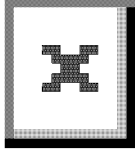
Wednesday, September 21 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

**Price Transparency in Health Care: A Report from the Field**

Monday, October 17 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

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## WHAT WE'RE READING



### ***US Health Policy and Market Reforms: An Introduction***

**By James C. Capretta | AEI Press**

This book provides an overview of the major features of US health care and an outline of the reforms required to impose more discipline on costs without compromising quality and innovation. A major theme is the need for building a regulatory structure around the choices available to consumers to allow them to find higher-value and lower-cost options for the services they need.

**[Pre-order here.](#)**



### ***The Myth of American Inequality: How Government Biases Policy Debate***

**By Phil Gramm, Robert Ekelund, and John Early | Rowman & Littlefield**

Everything you think you know about income inequality, poverty, and other measures of economic well-being in America is wrong. In this provocative book, a former United States senator, eminent economist, and a former senior leader at the Bureau of Labor Statistics challenge the prevailing consensus that income inequality is a growing threat to American society.

*The Myth of American Inequality* provides clear and convincing evidence that the American dream is alive and well.

[Pre-order here.](#)

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## POLITICAL ECONOMY

### **Has “Bidenomics” Been Worth the Risk?**

James Pethokoukis | [@JimPethokoukis](#) | [AEIdeas](#)

Thus far, President Joe Biden’s economic policy platform has featured exorbitantly high fiscal stimuli. James Pethokoukis says the American Rescue Plan was a historic economic gamble, and this spending has been a substantial inflation driver and thus a substantial driver of the Federal Reserve’s monetary response. And if that response leads to a recession, then “Bidenomics” will have been a substantial cause.

### **Republicans Should Push Back on Economic Populism, Not Embrace It**

James C. Capretta | Dispatch

Forces in the Republican Party have recently pushed toward economic populism, particularly supporting anti-free trade actions. James Capretta explains that this is a mistake, and the GOP is unlikely to ever outdo the Democrats in this area. Instead, Republicans should embrace the anti-populist economics of the Reagan-Bush era — and the country will be better off if they do.

## **Republican Reversal: The Worst Economic Idea from What Used to Be the “Party of Ideas”**

James Pethokoukis | [@JimPethokoukis](#) | Faster, Please!

Of all the bad policy ideas coming out of the Trump-era GOP and the nationalist-populist variant of American conservatism, their stand on housing reform is among the most disappointing, says James Pethokoukis. It’s also worth noting that despite what politicians and pundits are saying, Republicans on the ground may feel differently. Republicans used to embrace state-level policymaking; that bit of old-fashioned GOP thinking may yet make a comeback.

---

## **AMERICAN ECONOMY**

### **Federal Reserve Operating Losses and the Federal Budget Deficit**

Paul H. Kupiec and Alex J. Pollock | American Institute for Economic Research

The Federal Reserve remits most of its operating profits to the US Treasury, and these remittances are government revenues that directly reduce the federal budget deficit. In 2023, the Federal Reserve will likely report tens of billions of dollars in operating losses as it raises interest rates to combat raging inflation. Paul H. Kupiec and Alex J. Pollock analyze whether these losses will increase the budget deficit as logic dictates they should, or whether they will be treated as an off-budget expenditure.

## **Second Thoughts on Automatic-Enrollment Retirement Plans**

Sita Nataraj Slavov | [@SitaSlavov](#) | [RealClearPolicy](#)

In a recent *Journal of Retirement* article, Sita Nataraj Slavov and her research collaborators show that saving for retirement may not be in the best interest of many, if not most, young people, who have more pressing spending needs. This finding suggests that automatic enrollment programs that boost saving across the board may do more harm than good.

## **The Strong Jobs Report Means Another Big Fed Interest-Rate Hike**

Desmond Lachman | [19fortyfive.com](#)

This week's long-awaited jobs report has even more than the usual significance, says Desmond Lachman. By indicating that the labor market remains strong, it paves the way for another 75-basis point interest-rate hike at the Federal Reserve's policy meeting later this month. It also bolsters President Joe Biden's claim that the country is not in the midst of an economic recession even though the economy contracted in the first two quarters of the year.

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## EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

### **What's Next for the Emerging Nuclear Renaissance?**

James Pethokoukis | [@JimPethokoukis](#) | [Faster, Please!](#)

James Pethokoukis and Alex Trembath discuss how the recently signed Inflation Reduction Act affects the emerging nuclear renaissance, whether that renaissance has staying power, the concept of "œcomodernism," and much more. Trembath is deputy director at the Breakthrough Institute, a think tank dedicated to promoting technological solutions to environmental and human development challenges, with a pro-progress approach.

### **Intel's High-Wire Act, Part I**

Claude Barfield | [AEIdeas](#)

Intel has embarked on a high-risk, high-payoff mission to reemerge as the world's leading semiconductor chip manufacturer after falling behind its two chief competitors, Samsung and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation, a few years ago. Claude Barfield explains the key challenges and trade-offs Intel faces, starting on the technological frontier.

### **The Flying Cars We Never Got: Are We Wrong About What Caused the Great Stagnation?**

James Pethokoukis | [@JimPethokoukis](#) | [Faster, Please!](#)

Why don't we have flying cars yet? James Pethokoukis investigates what caused the Great Stagnation, the slowing of measured US productivity and economic growth since the early 1970s, and considers the application of these findings today. Perhaps the problem is not that

good ideas became harder to find but that we got worse at turning them into good and useful innovations.

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## FEATURED PODCASTS



### **What is Going On with Biden™s Student Loan Forgiveness? Michael R. Strain Explains the Moral, Legal and Economic Policy Fiasco**

Even for those with little background in economics, President Joe Biden™s student loan forgiveness plan is a case of the inverse Robin Hood: a regressive act that takes from the poor and gives to the much less poor. Michael R. Strain joins Danielle Pletka and Marc A. Thiessen to unpack the student loan handout.

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)

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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

### **“Hello, I Must Be Going”: Another Look at the Pandemic-Era Productivity Boom”Then Bust**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

### **China™s Property Market Party Is Over**

Desmond Lachman | *National Review*

**The One Where I Offer Numerous Insights and Opinions**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

**What's Missing from Empathy**

Arthur C. Brooks | *Atlantic*

**Future Schlock: Hollywood's Addiction to Dystopia Is Really Bad for Us**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

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Read more at [www.aei.org/policy/economics](http://www.aei.org/policy/economics).

Tips? Comments? Questions? Email Catriona Fee at [Catriona.Fee@aei.org](mailto:Catriona.Fee@aei.org).

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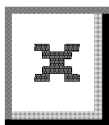
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**Sent:** 10/7/2022 11:00:24 AM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OL)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Where did COVID-19 come from? (The Ledger)

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

**Scott Gottlieb** reviews David Quammen's book *Breathless: The Scientific Race to Defeat a Deadly Virus* (Simon & Schuster, 2022), a deep dive into the origin of the COVID-19 virus and the features that made it so menacing. **Kirsten Axelsen** reflects on the key takeaways from a recent panel at AEI on the progress of obesity science, the evolution of policy, and improvements to obesity care in the US. Many Americans are facing high health care costs due to inflation. **Joseph Antos** explains three policies that could help reduce health care costs without compromising the quality of care.

**James Pethokoukis** observes that increased access to real-time home value in conjunction with the volatility of the housing market could make housing prices a key indicator to watch as the November midterm elections get closer. As a hard economic landing appears more and more likely, **Desmond Lachman** predicts that

policymakers will look to blame COVID and the war in Ukraine when they should be taking responsibility for their own poor policy mistakes. **Andrew G. Biggs** [explains](#) why so many Social Security recipients live below the poverty line and how the Social Security Administration can effectively address this issue.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**International Corporate Taxation: Present and Future**

Wednesday, October 12 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

**Price Transparency in Health Care: A Report from the Field**

Monday, October 17 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

**The Federal Reserve's Big Inflation Fight**

Tuesday, October 25 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

## HEALTH CARE

### **Breathless Review: In Pursuit of a Pathogen**

Scott Gottlieb | [@ScottGottliebMD](#) | *Wall Street Journal*

Where did COVID-19 come from? Scott Gottlieb reviews David Quammen's book *Breathless: The Scientific Race to Defeat a Deadly Virus* (Simon & Schuster, 2022), which seeks to shed more light on this pertinent question. Ultimately, Quammen concludes that COVID jumped from one species to another and entered the human population. Even so, he acknowledges that critical questions remain unanswered, and says the pandemic could have been the result of a lab accident, although that is far less likely.

## **Obesity Care Policy for an Era of New Treatments**

Kirsten Axelsen | [@kjacny](#) | AEIdeas

Forty-two percent of people in the US are obese, costing the country roughly \$173 billion per year. Obesity is a leading cause of poor health and early mortality, and it is a significant cost driver in the US health system. A recent AEI panel discussion compared the progress of obesity science to the evolution of policy and practice to provide access to obesity care. Kirsten Axelsen explains the key takeaways from the discussion.

## **Americans Are Exhausted from Dealing with Inflation. Six Experts Offer Ideas for Helping Them Cope.**

Joseph Antos | [@joeantos](#) | CNN

Due to inflation, Americans are facing sharply higher costs for everything, including health care. Joseph Antos offers some ideas for how to reduce future health care costs while maintaining, and ideally improving, value to patients. He explains why simplifying price posting, moving away from a fee-for-service system, and lowering regulatory barriers would achieve this goal and help reduce the burden of inflation on American families.

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## **US ECONOMY**

### **Housing Prices and Elections**

James Pethokoukis | [@JimPethokoukis](#) | AEIdeas

There's been considerable media attention on how gas prices might affect the 2022 midterm elections, but what about housing prices? Given the advent of sites such as Zillow and Redfin, you can now get a real-time estimate of your home value. James Pethokoukis

observes that this newfound ability and the current volatility of the housing market may align for a considerable impact in the November midterm elections.

## **Policymakers Caused the Coming Recession.** **Donâ€™t Let Them Blame COVID and Ukraine.**

Desmond Lachman | *New York Post*

Considering the current state of the global economy, a hard economic landing in the near future is likely. Although many policymakers will blame COVID and Russiaâ€™s invasion of Ukraine as the primary causes of our economic woes, Desmond Lachman says the truth of the matter is different. He argues that if it wasn't for a series of consequential policy missteps by several major economies, the world could have avoided a hard economic landing.

## **Social Security and the Poverty Line**

Andrew G. Biggs | [@biggsag](#) | *Washington Examiner*

Contrary to popular claims, the average Social Security benefit takes a retiree well above the poverty line. But why are about 7 to 9 percent of seniors living in poverty, if the average Social Security benefit is between 1.6 and 2.5 times the poverty threshold? Andrew G. Biggs explains the answer: Seniors most in danger of poverty receive much lower Social Security benefits. He also outlines some ways the Social Security Administration could reform to better accommodate these individuals.

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## **FEATURED PODCASTS**



### **Kyle Pomerleau: A Tax Policy Primer**

When voters and politicians discuss tax policy, the rates Americans have to pay and the revenue the government will raise are front of mind. But what about the other economic effects of the tax code? Kyle Pomerleau joins his AEI colleague James Pethokoukis to discuss whether taxes can affect savings and investment, economic growth, and more.

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)



### **How America's™ Tech Companies Create Jobs**

*Faster, Please!™ The Podcast*

Technology and e-commerce companies have a reputation for being drivers of creative destruction, but it's worth remembering that tech companies are also a major source of high-wage job growth in the US economy. On this episode of *Faster, Please!™ The Podcast*, James Pethokoukis is joined by Michael Mandel of the Progressive Policy Institute to consider the role of tech companies in the American economy.

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)

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## **MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK**

### **More on The Trade-offs of Rejecting Nuclear Energy**

James Pethokoukis | AEIdeas

### **Federal Reserve Ignores the Stock Market at Its Peril**

Desmond Lachman | *Boston Herald*

### **How Close Are We to Nuclear War?**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

### **You Say "Trickle-Down Economics"; I Say "Net Positive Spillovers"**



**From Cultivating Upper-Tail Human Capitalâ€”**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

**Why We Do Things We Know Weâ€™ll Regret**

Arthur C. Brooks | *Atlantic*

**The Stories We Tell About Mental Illnessâ€”Othersâ€™ and Our Own**

Sally Satel | *Washington Post*

**Renewables Subsidies and the Institutionalization of Irresponsibility**

Benjamin Zycher | *RealClearEnergy*

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**From:** AEI Health Policy <aeihealthpolicy@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 9/20/2022 4:30:22 PM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OL)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Vital Signs: Two Upcoming Events This Week and New Research on Medicare Advantage Spending



# Vital Signs

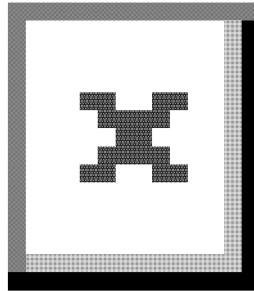
Your regular health policy checkup from the American Enterprise Institute

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS FROM AEI HEALTH POLICY

AEI's health policy scholars have been writing on Medicare Advantage plans, the implications of the Inflation Reduction Act on drug pricing, and more. On September 21, AEI's James C. Capretta will discuss his new book, *US Health Policy and Market Reforms: An Introduction* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), in a virtual event with Senior Fellow Stan Veuger. On September 22, AEI will host leading obesity treatment experts to discuss Medicare Part D coverage of obesity treatment drugs in a virtual event with AEI's Kirsten Axelsen and Joseph Antos.

For more analysis on the future of health reform and other developments in health policy, read on below.

## Upcoming Events



## Upcoming Virtual Event

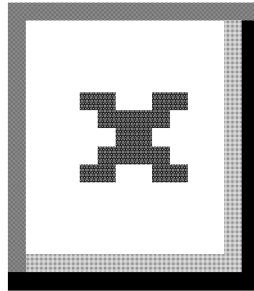
### **US Health Policy and Market Reforms: A Book Event with James C. Capretta**

Wednesday, September 21, 2022 | 11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m. ET

In his new book, *US Health Policy and Market Reforms: An Introduction* (AEI Press, 2022), AEI's James C. Capretta provides a framework for reform that emphasizes greater cost discipline and more robust consumer choice without compromising quality of care and innovation.

Join Capretta and AEI's Stan Veuger for an online discussion on the key topics of the book and the issues that animate policy reform conversations.

REGISTE  
R



## Upcoming Virtual Event

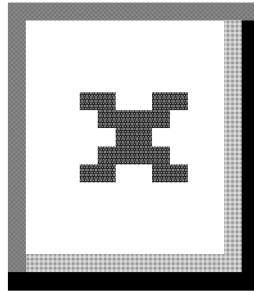
### **Access to Obesity Care in the US: Coverage in a New Era of Treatment**

Thursday, September 22, 2022 | 10:00â€“11:30 a.m. ET

A moderated panel will consider how treatment for obesity has evolved and what that means for patientsâ€™™ well-being and health system finances. They will also discuss the historical foundation for Medicare Part D not covering obesity drugs and how other classes of treatments or drugs have been removed from exclusion as the science of treatment has evolved.

Please join AEI as leading physicians in obesity treatment and Medicare experts discuss the implications of coverage for obesity management in major federally funded insurance programs.

REGISTE  
R



## Upcoming Virtual Event

### **Price Transparency in Health Care: A Report from the Field**

Monday, October 17, 2022 | 12:00–12:45 p.m. ET

Cofounder and CEO of Turquoise Health Chris Severn, who is among the nation's foremost experts on how drug pricing transparency efforts are playing out in the industry, will join AEI's James C. Capretta for a conversation on what Americans can expect to see unfold from this initiative in the coming years.

REGIS  
TER

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## Featured Reports and Research

### **Comparing Spending Across Medicare Programs**

Brian J. Miller, Stephen T. Parente, and Gail R. Wilensky | *American Journal of Managed Care*

As Medicare Advantage increasingly becomes the dominant form of Medicare, meaningful and accurate comparisons with traditional fee-for-service Medicare will be increasingly important for both beneficiaries and policymakers. [Read more.](#)

## **Customized Care for Complex Conditions in Medicare Advantage**

Brian J. Miller, Steven C. Zima, and Gail R. Wilensky | AEI Economic Perspectives

Medicare beneficiaries frequently select suboptimal Medicare Advantage plan products or elect traditional fee-for-service Medicare due to choice paralysis, cognitive impairments, and consumer health insurance illiteracy. Medicare Advantage Chronic Condition Special Needs Plans (C-SNPs) offer an opportunity to tie disease to both plan design and marketing, simplifying consumer choice architecture. This report explores additional refinement in the C-SNP program to help unlock this potential, examining programmatic regulatory requirements, qualifying diseases, and marketing rules with an aim to improve care for multimorbid Medicare beneficiaries. [Read more.](#)

## **Response to Acute Monotherapy for Major Depressive Disorder in Randomized, Placebo-Controlled Trials Submitted to the US Food and Drug Administration: Individual-Participant Data Analysis**

Brian J. Miller et al. | *British Medical Journal*

This report characterizes individual participant-level response distributions to acute monotherapy for major depressive disorder in randomized, placebo-controlled trials submitted to the US Food and Drug Administration from 1979 to 2016. [Read more.](#)

---

## **The Future of Health Reform**

### **US Health Policy and Market Reforms: An Introduction**

James C. Capretta | AEI Press

The book provides an overview of the major features of US health care and an outline of the reforms required to impose more discipline on costs without compromising quality and innovation. A major theme is the need for building a regulatory structure around the choices available to consumers to allow them to find higher-value and lower-cost options for the services they need. [Read more.](#)

## **An Update on the Disputes Leading the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and Georgia to Court**

James C. Capretta | State of Reform

Two disputes between Georgia and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services over the state's Trump-era waiver plans remain unsettled after 18 months of legal and political wrangling. [Read more.](#)

## **Will the Inflation Reduction Act Make Drugs More Affordable?**

Kirsten Axelsen | AEIdeas

The Inflation Reduction Act includes some major departures from the US policy on drug pricing intended to reduce drug costs in Medicare, with benefits for older and disabled people accounting for nearly one-third of all US drug spending. [Read more.](#)

## **The Uncertain Effects of Medicare Drug Negotiation**

Benedic N. Ippolito | NBC Think

Legal, political, and economic uncertainties make it very difficult to predict what the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' new authority to set the prices of some drugs will ultimately mean for drug prices and consumers. That is why Americans should be wary of politicians' promises about how this will affect our wallets and our health. [Read more.](#)

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**More from AEI Scholars**

## **The Rich Are Using Long-Term Care Funds Meant for the Poor**

Mark J. Warshawsky | *Hill*

Read more at [www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care/](http://www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care/)  
Tips? Comments? Questions? Email Cameron Tarbell at [Cameron.Tarbell@AEI.org](mailto:Cameron.Tarbell@AEI.org)

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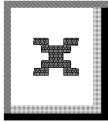
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**Sent:** 9/16/2022 11:00:30 AM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OL)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** How to Fight the Inflation Tax (The Ledger)

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

Despite victory laps from the White House, inflation is still burdensome for most Americans. **Sita Nataraj Slavov** considers the impact of inflation on fiscal policy, federal debt, and individual well-being and how to fight the transfer of wealth from consumers to the government caused by inflation. Although the record-high inflation under Joe Biden's watch has invited comparisons between Biden and Jimmy Carter, **James Pethokoukis** hopes Biden will take a page from the Carter economic handbook and embrace deregulation. **Desmond Lachman** predicts that due to the disappointing August Consumer Price Index numbers, the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates by another 75 basis points next week.

Although many Republicans firmly opposed many of the large spending bills recently passed by Congress, **James C. Capretta** unveils the role Trump administration officials and pharmaceutical companies had in paving the way for these landmark

pieces of legislation. **Stan Veuger** explains the reasoning behind the Dutch farmers'™ revolt and analyzes the movement's™ populist ties. **Capretta** argues that the GOP should resist the lurch of some fractions of the right towards economic populism. Instead, Republicans should embrace the pro-free trade mentality of the Bush-Reagan era.

The last thing the world economy needs right now is a debt crisis in Europe, but **Lachman** forecasts that such a crisis could be on the near horizon for Italy. **Pethokoukis** reflects on Mikhail Gorbachev's™ role in the fall of the Soviet Union and ponders what the world would look like if things had gone differently. **Lachman** analyzes the differences between the 2008 economic crisis and the current state of the world economy and considers what we can learn from the 2008 crisis to protect the global financial system now.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Men Without Work in the Post-Pandemic Era**

Monday, September 19 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

### **US Health Policy and Market Reforms: A Book Event with James C. Capretta**

Wednesday, September 21 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

### **Access to Obesity Care in the US: Coverage in a New Era of Treatments**

Thursday, September 22 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

### **The Fiscal Impact of Immigration**

Monday, October 3 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

## FEATURED RESEARCH

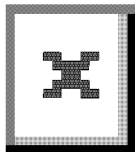
### **Section 199A and Tax Parity**

Kyle Pomerleau | American Enterprise Institute

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act included a new deduction for pass-through business income (Section 199A), allowing taxpayers to deduct up to 20 percent of qualifying business income from their taxable income. Central to the debate over Section 199A is the concept of neutrality, as violations of neutrality across income and business forms can encourage reclassification of income, distort investment decisions, and affect the choice of legal form of organization. Kyle Pomerleau explains that under current policy, pass-through business income and investment generally face a lower effective tax rate than other forms of income and investment. After 2025, lawmakers will have an opportunity to revisit Section 199A and should consider alternative reforms to the tax treatment of business income outlined in this report.

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## BOOKS



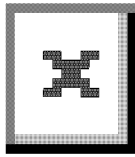
**US Health Policy and Market Reforms: An**

**US Health Policy and Market Reforms: An Introduction**

**James C. Capretta | AEI Press**

This book provides an overview of the major features of US health care and an outline of the reforms required to impose more discipline on costs without compromising quality and innovation. A major theme is the need for building a regulatory structure around the choices available to consumers to allow them to find higher-value and lower-cost options for the services they need.

**[Order your copy here.](#)**



**The Myth of American Inequality: How Government Biases Policy Debate**

**Phil Gramm, Robert Ekelund, and John Early | Rowman & Littlefield**

Everything you think you know about income inequality, poverty, and other measures of economic well-being in America is wrong. In this provocative book, a former United States senator, an eminent economist, and a former senior leader at the Bureau of Labor Statistics challenge the prevailing consensus that income inequality is a growing threat to American society.

*The Myth of American Inequality: How Government Biases Policy Debate* provides clear and convincing evidence that the American dream is alive and well.

**[Order your copy here.](#)**

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## INFLATION

### **Mad Money: How to Fight the Inflation Tax**

Sita Nataraj Slavov | [@SitaSlavov](#) | Peter G. Peterson Foundation

For more than a decade, policymakers have downplayed the risk of inflation, with the Federal Reserve keeping interest rates low and the federal government racking up unprecedented levels of debt. Now sky-high inflation is forcing policymakers to reckon with the consequences of their choices. Sita Nataraj Slavov considers the impact of the current macroeconomic environment on fiscal policy, federal debt, and individual well-being.

### **Why We Should Hope Joe Biden, at Least in One Way, Is the Next Jimmy Carter**

James Pethokoukis | [@JimPethokoukis](#) | AEIdeas

For a generation, seemingly every Democratic president and presidential wannabe has been labeled “the next Jimmy Carter”—a reference meant to be highly unflattering. The zinger started to lose its zing until prices started surging and Republicans hurled the Carter insult at President Joe Biden with renewed zeal. James Pethokoukis says we should hope Biden takes a page from the Carter economic handbook and embraces deregulation.

### **New Inflation Numbers Mean the US Economy Is Destined for a Hard Landing**

Desmond Lachman | [19fortyfive.com](#)

More inflation means more interest rate increases, and the disappointing August consumer price numbers show stubborn inflation that won't dissipate. This now leaves the Federal Reserve with little option but to raise interest rates by another 75 basis points at its policy meeting next week, explains Desmond Lachman. That heightens the chances of a hard economic landing by early next year.

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## **PUSHING BACK ON POPULISM**

### **The Democrats' Favorite Offset**

James C. Capretta | [RealClearPolicy](#)

Several major spending bills have passed through Congress in recent months, increasing federal spending significantly. However, few have noticed that Trump administration officials and pharmaceutical companies unwittingly created a large and illusory funding pool that Congress tapped to pass three major spending bills: the Inflation Reduction Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.

### **The Dutch Farmers' Revolt Isn't Brexit or MAGA**

Stan Veuger | [@stanveuger](#) | [UnPopulist](#)

Since June, Dutch farmers have blocked their nation's highways and vigorously protested plans to cut the country's nitrogen emissions in half by 2030. One might expect such protests to complement seamlessly the anti-EU, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigration impulses that have animated European populism over the past two decades. Stan Veuger explains that while there are elements of truth to this theory, the full story is both different and more complicated.

## **Republicans Should Push Back on Economic Populism, Not Embrace It**

James C. Capretta | Dispatch

Forces in the Republican Party have recently pushed towards economic populism, particularly supporting anti-free trade actions. James C. Capretta explains that this is a mistake, and the GOP is unlikely to ever outdo the Democrats in this area. Instead, the Republican party should resist economic populism and embrace the belief that widespread economic prosperity is the result mainly of market incentives, not government policies and programs.

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## **INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS**

### **The Last Thing the World Needs Is an Italian Debt Crisis**

Desmond Lachman | *Barron's*™s

The last thing that a fragile world economy needs right now is another round of the European sovereign-debt crisis. Yet judging by recent Italian economic and political developments, that could happen as early as this winter, says Desmond Lachman. These dynamics will constitute a major challenge for a European Central Bank that is working to keep the eurozone together and spell trouble for the world financial markets.

### **Gorbachev, Idealism, and the End of the Soviet Union**

James Pethokoukis | [@JimPethokoukis](#) | AEIdeas

What would Russia be like today if Mikhail Gorbachev's project had succeeded? Perhaps a reimagining of "Finlandization," in which the core of the former Soviet empire became the core of a Scandinavian-style alliance of social democracies. James Pethokoukis reflects on the fall of the Soviet Union, the role of Gorbachev, and "what if" speculations for the end of the Cold War.

## **A Perfect World Economic Storm**

Desmond Lachman | AEIdeas

Unlike the 2008 economic crisis, when serious economic weaknesses were largely confined to the US housing and credit markets, today every major part of the world economy is seemingly prone to trouble. Desmond Lachman says the Federal Reserve should be more mindful of the serious woes facing the rest of the world economy and prepare accordingly.

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## **FEATURED PODCASTS**



### **The State of Labor on Labor Day**

*Words Matter*

Michael R. Strain joins Norman Ornstein and Kavita Patel on the *Words Matter* podcast to discuss where the labor market is and what the recent reports tell us about the economy overall.

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)



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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

### Did Slavery Make the West Rich?

James Pethokoukis | [Faster, Please!](#)

### Higher Inflation Means a Larger Adjustment to Most Income Tax Provisions

Kyle Pomerleau | [AEIdeas](#)

### Don't Take the Emerging Nuclear Renaissance for Granted

James Pethokoukis | [Faster, Please!](#)

### Reforming Supplemental Security Income the Sensible Way

Mark J. Warshawsky | [RealClearPolicy](#)

### Dragon Fire and Steam Engines: Why Wasn't There an Industrial Revolution in Westeros?

James Pethokoukis | [Faster, Please!](#)

### 11 Ancient Solutions for Modern Malaise

Arthur C. Brooks | [Atlantic](#)

### Five Quick Questions for Economist Carl Benedikt Frey on the Future of Remote Collaboration, Productivity Growth, and More

James Pethokoukis | [Faster, Please!](#)

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**From:** The Commonwealth Fund <rn@cmwf.org>  
**Sent:** 1/12/2022 11:10:35 PM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OL)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** New State-by-State Report: For Working Families, the Costs of Employer Health Insurance Keep Rising

Dear colleague,

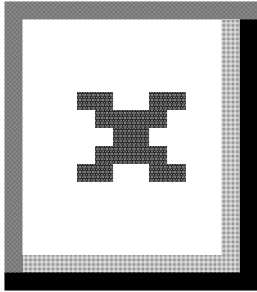
We are pleased to share a new Commonwealth Fund report, *State Trends in Employer Premiums and Deductibles, 2010–2020*, which provides a state-by-state analysis of how much employer health insurance has cost workers in premiums, deductibles, and as a share of income from 2010 to 2020. The analysis finds that over the last decade, U.S. median family incomes haven't kept pace with rising health plan costs and deductibles, which are largely driven by high prices for drugs and health care services.

Key findings from the report include:

- Premium contributions and deductibles in employer health plans accounted for 11.6 percent of median household income in 2020, up from 9.1 percent a decade earlier.
- In a growing number of states, workers are at risk of spending 10 percent or more of their earnings on health insurance premiums and deductibles. In 2020, workers in 37 states passed that threshold, up from 10 states in 2010.
- In nearly half of states, middle-income households faced average deductibles that left them underinsured and exposed to high out-of-pocket costs — up from only one state in 2010.
- Workers in lower-wage companies contribute more to family premiums than workers in higher-wage firms do. Workers in companies with lower average wages paid a larger share of their overall premium for family coverage, on average — and consequently a larger dollar amount — than workers in companies with higher average wages.

See the [full report](#) for complete findings and our state fact sheets. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss these findings in further detail.

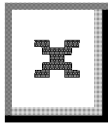
Many thanks,  
Rachel Nuzum  
Vice President of Federal and State Health Policy  
[The Commonwealth Fund](#)  
202-360-2519



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**From:** AEI Economics <aeieconomics@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 9/23/2022 11:00:16 AM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OL)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Another Interest Rate Hike (The Ledger)

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

The Federal Reserve announced yesterday that it would hike interest rates again by 75 basis points. **Desmond Lachman** predicted that this move will be disastrous for the US economy and may even trigger a recession. **Lachman** also remarked that an aggressive monetary policy in the United States could come at a high cost for the rest of the world economy. **Steven B. Kamin** explains that a key driver of surging inflation may be product markets, as opposed to labor markets, and summarizes the findings of his recent research paper that supports this argument.

For many years, the UK has adopted a strikingly ungenerous approach to capital cost recovery, and now the government is considering a variety of reforms. In a new research paper, **Kyle Pomerleau**, Daniel Bunn, and Tom Clougherty analyze each of the reform proposals and advocate that the British government should be as bold as possible in permanently reforming capital allowances. While most of the 43 million

Americans receiving student loan forgiveness will collect the assistance tax-free, **Alex Brill** and Grant M. Seiter show how those who are residents of certain states could see significantly higher income tax bills. As lawmakers will soon address several business tax provisions in a “tax extenders” package, including a limitation on the deductibility of business net interest expense, **Pomerleau** considers how policymakers should proceed.

**Benedic N. Ippolito** examines recently released data from the Congressional Budget Office that carry implications for the likely upper bound of price controls for prescription drugs in Medicare authorized by the Inflation Reduction Act. In the first piece of two-part series, **Thomas Miller** explores two federal court rulings issued last month that underscore the inherently malleable legal boundary lines for interpreting, enforcing, and evading Obamacare’s overreaching edicts. In the second part, Miller investigates how executive branch agencies can overreach in reversing regulatory decisions too quickly and arbitrarily.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### The Fiscal Impact of Immigration

Monday, October 3 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

### Revisiting the Tax Treatment of Pass-Through Businesses: A Panel Discussion

Monday, October 3 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

### The Future of Cryptocurrency Regulation

Tuesday, October 4 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

### Administering Social Security: A Conversation with Mark J. Warshawsky and Andrew Saul

Thursday, October 6 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

## FEATURED RESEARCH

### **An Expanded and Updated Analysis of the Federal Debt's Effect on Interest Rates**

Mark J. Warshawsky and John Mantus | AEI Economic Perspectives

This report expands on a standard empirical estimation of the relationship between federal deficits and debt and long-term interest rates. Using data from September 1981 to May 2022, this report finds that a 1 percentage point increase in the federal debt-to-gross-domestic-product ratio is associated with an increase of nearly five basis points in the long-term interest rate. This is a larger effect than generally found in the literature and double what the Congressional Budget Office uses in its budget projections.

### **Tight Product Markets, Not Tight Labor Markets, Are Pushing Up Inflation Around the World**

Steven B. Kamin and John Kearns | AEI Economic Perspectives

Soaring job vacancies have been widely cited as an indication of overheated labor markets pushing up wages and inflation. But have tight labor markets and rising wage rates been the main drivers of the recent surge in inflation? The US evidence for this is mixed at best. This report examines the international evidence and asks: Have economies with larger increases in wage growth since the beginning of the pandemic experienced larger increases in core inflation? The report finds that the answer is no: Rising job vacancies are proxies for rising aggregate demand, which has pushed up prices of intermediate inputs and markups over cost.

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# INFLATION AND THE FEDERAL RESERVE

## **The Federal Reserve Is the Rest of the World's Problem**

Desmond Lachman | *Hill*

The Federal Reserve raising interest rates again might serve the US economy well in its fight against inflation, but this is also a massive risk. Desmond Lachman explains how this aggressive monetary policy could come at a substantial cost for the rest of the world economy.

## **Don't Blame Labor for Today's High Inflation**

Steven B. Kamin | *Hill*

Is higher inflation the result of tight labor markets that in turn lead to higher wage growth and thus higher price inflation? Steven B. Kamin examines the evidence and finds that product markets, rather than labor markets, are driving up inflation. Job vacancies reflect excess demands for goods and services, and these could be driving up corporate markups as well as costs of doing business.

## **The Federal Reserve's Big Interest Rate Hike Could Spark an Economy Crisis**

Desmond Lachman | [19fortyfive.com](https://19fortyfive.com)

Last year, the Federal Reserve's overly easy monetary policy contributed to a historic soar in inflation. Now, the Fed continues to hike interest rates, driving the nation closer to a recession. The Fed might have been better served by a 50-basis point interest rate hike, and



waiting to see the delayed impact of its monetary policy tightening to date, says Desmond Lachman.

---

## TAX POLICY

### **After the UK Super-Deduction: Assessing Proposals for Reforming Capital Allowances**

Kyle Pomerleau, Daniel Bunn, and Tom Clougherty | [@kpomerleau](#) | Tax Foundation

For many years, the UK has adopted an ungenerous approach to capital cost recovery, coinciding with consistently low business investment. In a new report, Kyle Pomerleau, Daniel Bunn, and Tom Clougherty analyze proposals to accelerate cost recovery in the UK. Through their analysis, they make the case that the British government should be as bold as possible in permanently reforming capital allowances.

### **President Biden's Student Loan Forgiveness: The Impact on State Tax Revenues**

Alex Brill and Grant M. Seiter | [@AlexBrillDC](#) | AEIdeas

More than 43 million Americans will receive student loan debt relief under President Biden's recently announced plan. For most, this gift will arrive tax-free. But for those residing in a handful of states, their state income tax bills might be significantly higher, and their state's coffers might end up several hundred million dollars richer.

## **Lawmakers Should Not Increase Tax Subsidies for Borrowing**

Kyle Pomerleau | [@kpomerleau](#) | AEIdeas

Lawmakers will soon address several business tax provisions in a “tax extenders” package, including a provision on the limitation on the deductibility of business net interest expense introduced in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. This year, the limitation tightened as scheduled and further limited interest deductions. Although imperfect, a limit is a good policy, and lawmakers should avoid increasing the ability of firms to deduct interest expense.

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## **HEALTH CARE**

### **Estimating Maximum Prices Under Medicare Negotiation in Part D**

Benedic N. Ippolito | [@ben\\_ippolito](#) | AEIdeas

The recently passed Inflation Reduction Act gives the Secretary of Health and Human Services significant flexibility to set the prices of some drugs in Medicare. Benedic Ippolito investigates recently released data from the Congressional Budget Office that can shed light on the likely upper bound of these price controls relative to current prices.

### **A Tale of Two Legal Tangles Part I: Why It’s Hard to Keep Every Affordable Care Act Exit Door Locked**

Thomas P. Miller | AEIdeas

Two federal court rulings issued last month in long-running legal sagas underscore the inherently malleable legal boundary lines for interpreting, enforcing, and evading Obamacare™s overreaching edicts. Thomas P. Miller explains the significance of these rulings and the impact they will have on the health care system.

## **A Tale of Two Legal Tangles, Part II: No Exit or Just More Narrow Escape Routes?**

Thomas P. Miller | AEIdeas

Expanding on part one, Thomas P. Miller says the back story of these cases suggests how executive branch agencies can overreach in reversing regulatory decisions too quickly and arbitrarily. He explains that some Affordable Care Act policies remain both easier and harder to rewrite than first imagined, depending on how one does it.

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## **FEATURED PODCASTS**



### **Strain™s New Respect**

*Remnant*

Michael R. Strain joins Jonah Goldberg to explore the state of inflation, provide commentary on *House of the Dragon*, discuss whether economics really is a dismal science, and mix in some thoughts on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.

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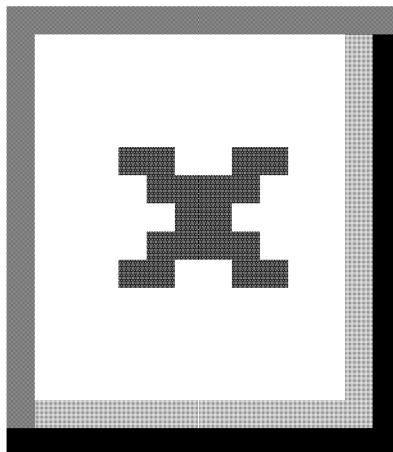
### ***Faster, Please!™The Podcast #8***

When does economic policy become industrial policy, and has the Biden administration crossed that line? In this episode, Jim Pethokoukis chats with industrial policy skeptic Scott Lincicome about the CHIPS and Science Act, how competition

with China complicates the argument for free markets, and more.  
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## GRAPHIC OF THE WEEK



[Read the full piece  
here.](#)

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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

### **Imagining a Better Future Is Easy If You Try. But You Have to Try.**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

### **The Federal Reserve's Extreme About-Face Threatens a Hard Landing**

Desmond Lachman | *New York Post*

### **Intel's High-Wire Act, Part II: Soaring Capital Costs**

Claude Barfield | *AEIdeas*

### **The US Wants to Build a Fleet of Space Stations. What Will We Do with Them?**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

### **Don't Objectify Yourself**

Arthur C. Brooks | *Atlantic*

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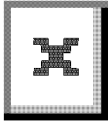
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**Sent:** 9/30/2022 11:00:27 AM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OL)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** America's Education Emergency (The Ledger)

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

Newly released test scores confirm what most parents could tell you from their own experience: Pandemic-related school closures negatively affected their children's educational progress. **Michael R. Strain** asserts that the extent of pandemic learning loss is an educational, economic, and moral failure, and politicians must do everything they can to get students back on track. Looking to higher education, **Alex Brill** and Grant M. Seiter analyze the potential state income tax increases for those who received relief under President Joe Biden's student loan forgiveness program. **James Pethokoukis** investigates the Congressional Budget Office's predictions that Biden's plan could cost an additional \$400 billion in the long run, on top of the \$400 billion "ticket price" of the loan forgiveness program.

Last week at the Reagan Library, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey remarked that the Republican party should not embrace policies, particularly economic policies,

motivated by grievance. **Strain** reflects on the current state of the GOP and says the governor's comments are as refreshing as they are correct. **Paul H. Kupiec** and Alex J. Pollock investigate how the federal government is not only spending trillions but also losing trillions of taxpayer dollars to fraud and Federal Reserve losses.

**Desmond Lachman** explains how the market reacted to the Federal Reserve's decision to hike interest rates by 75 basis points and why this hawkish monetary policy could spell trouble for the global economy.

With the imminent expiration of the COVID-19 public health emergency, the insurance status of people who have been able to stay on Medicaid or CHIP without reverification is a top concern for the Biden administration. However, **James C. Capretta** shows that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' plan to solve this problem could come at a sizable cost to the taxpayer. **Andrew G. Biggs** explains the issue of why so many Social Security recipients live below the poverty line and how the Social Security Administration can effectively address this issue. **Thomas P. Miller** examines how small employers continue to search for ways to find more affordable health insurance options and the legal action that has resulted from it.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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Monday, October 3 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

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Monday, October 3 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

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Tuesday, October 4 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

### Administering Social Security: A Conversation with Mark J. Warshawsky



and Andrew Saul

Thursday, October 6 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

## FEATURED RESEARCH

### **How Important Are Minimum Wage Increases in Increasing the Wages of Minimum Wage Workers?**

Michael R. Strain and Jeffrey Clemens | [@MichaelRStrain](#) | Cato Institute

What drives wage trajectories among individuals at the lowest end of the wage distribution? The determinants of wage growth have become a subject of considerable controversy. Economists and commentators alike are increasingly debating the importance of competitive market forces, employer power, and institutions in determining wages. New research from Michael R. Strain and Jeffery Clemens contributes to this conversation by examining the relative importance of the minimum wage in increasing the wages of minimum wage workers, using the outgoing rotation groups of the Current Population Survey from 2010 to 2019.

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## EDUCATION AND STUDENT LOANS

### **America's Education Emergency**

Michael R. Strain | [@MichaelRStrain](#) | Project Syndicate

Newly released test scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress show a dramatic reduction in nine-year-olds' math and reading abilities. This confirms that pandemic-era school closures resulted in a disturbing loss of learning for millions of American schoolchildren. The extent of pandemic learning loss is an educational, economic, and moral failure, says Michael R. Strain. It is not too late to reverse some of the damage, but politicians must address this national emergency immediately.

## **President Biden's Student Loan Forgiveness: The Impact on Individuals' State Taxes**

Alex Brill and Grant M. Seiter | [@AlexBrill DC](#) | AEIdeas

For borrowers in some states, President Joe Biden's student loan forgiveness plan could cause state income tax bills to increase. Using data from the Department of Education's Federal Student Loan Portfolio and the 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances, Alex Brill and Grant M. Seiter estimate that 8.2 million borrowers across seven states are eligible for debt forgiveness. Additionally, they provide insight into how much borrowers could see their taxes increase.

## **Think About Student Loan Reforms Rather Than Forgiveness**

James Pethokoukis | [@JimPethokoukis](#) | AEIdeas

Spending \$400 billion to solve a particular problem is one thing, but spending \$400 billion and actually making the problem worse—that's a predicament only Washington could create. Unfortunately, the latter circumstance could be closer to reality. According to the Congressional Budget Office, President Joe Biden's plan to cancel student debt for some borrowers could cost the federal government an additional \$400 billion. James Pethokoukis ponders this dilemma and more efficient reforms to the student loan system.

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## AMERICAN ECONOMY

### **Gov. Ducey Rejects “Grievance-onomics”**

Michael R. Strain | [@MichaelRStrain](#) | *National Review*

In a speech at the Reagan Library last week, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey observed that it’s harder to answer the question “What does the Republican Party stand for?” today than it was during Ronald Reagan’s presidency. Reflecting on the current state of the Republican party, he asserted that the GOP must reject an economics and mindset of grievance. Michael R. Strain says Gov. Ducey’s remarks are as refreshing as they are correct, and nationalist-populist policies motivated by a grievance mentality won’t help American workers.

### **The Government Is Not Only Spending Trillions; It’s Losing Trillions**

Paul H. Kupiec and Alex J. Pollock | *Hill*

A bit of investigating reveals that in addition to spending trillions of dollars, the US government is losing trillions of taxpayers’ hard-earned dollars. Tens of billions of the \$4.6 trillion allocated for COVID-19 relief spending has been siphoned off by fraud. The Federal Reserve’s second-quarter mark-to-market losses totaled \$720 billion, and they are on track to increase even more. Paul H. Kupiec and Alex J. Pollock calculate that losses tallied at the Federal Reserve and Department of Education together will top \$2 trillion.

### **Markets Give Thumbs Down to the Federal Reserve**

Desmond Lachman | *Hill*

Last week, the Federal Reserve raised interest rates for the third time by 75 basis points and strongly hinted that there would be two further large interest rate hikes before the end of the

year. Markets both at home and abroad reacted adversely to this policy choice. At home, all three major stock market indexes slumped towards or beyond their June lows while bond yields rose to decade-long highs. Desmond Lachman explains why a surging dollar and high interest rates will significantly complicate an already-troubled world economy.

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## HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY

### **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Servicesâ€™™**

### **Postâ€™“Public Health Emergency Plan for Medicaid and CHIP**

James C. Capretta | State of Reform

With the imminent expiration of the COVID-19 public health emergency, the insurance status of people who have been able to stay on Medicaid or the Childrenâ€™™s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) without having to comply with reverification rules is a primary concern for the Biden administration. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is planning to restrict statesâ€™™ review process to determine who remains eligible to stay on these programs, substantially increasing both federal and state costs for Medicaid and CHIP.

### **Social Security and the Poverty Line**

Andrew G. Biggs | AEIdeas

Contrary to popular claims, the average Social Security benefit takes a retiree well above the poverty line. But why are about 7 to 9 percent of seniors living in poverty, if the average Social Security benefit is between 1.6 and 2.5 times the poverty threshold? Andrew G. Biggs explains the answer: Seniors most in danger of poverty receive much lower Social Security

benefits. He also outlines some ways the Social Security Administration could reform to better accommodate these individuals.

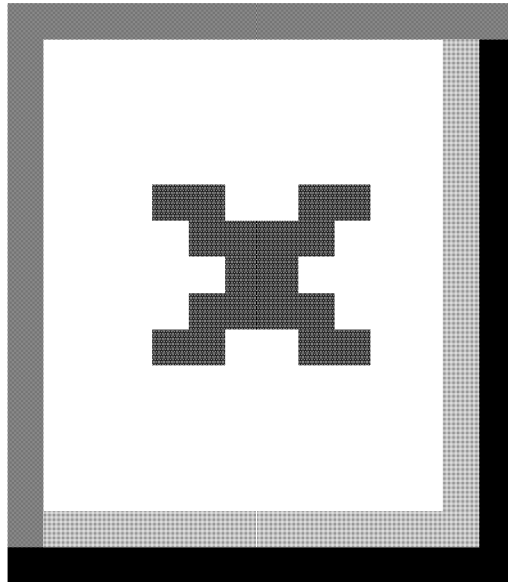
## **A Tale of Two Legal Tangles, Part III: Looking for the Next Way Out**

Thomas P. Miller | AEIdeas

Two federal court rulings issued last month in long-running legal sagas underscore the malleable legal boundary lines for the interpretation, enforcement, and evasion of Obamacare's overreaching edicts. In the third edition of a series on this legal debacle, Thomas P. Miller examines how small employers and their advocates continue to search for ways to bypass the extra costs of regulation under the Affordable Care Act to find more affordable health insurance options, resulting in legal action.

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## **FIGURE OF THE WEEK**



[Read the full article.](#)

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**MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK**

**So Far, the Retirement Crisis is a No-Show**

Andrew G. Biggs | *401K Specialist*

**We Donâ€™t Need Exponential Growth for a Fantastic Future**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

**The UK Is Veering Toward a Full-Blown Currency Crisis**

Desmond Lachman | *Barronâ€™s*

**How Culture Wars Undermine Americaâ€™s Future**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

**The Economic Consequences of Jerome Powell**

Desmond Lachman | *InsideSources*

**Technology Can Make Your Relationships Shallower**

Arthur C. Brooks | *Atlantic*

**The Absurd Attacks on Joe Manchinâ€™s Permitting Bill**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

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**From:** Benedic Ippolito <Benedic.Ippolito@AEI.org>  
**Sent:** 4/4/2022 2:37:41 PM +0000  
**To:** Loren Adler <LAdler@brookings.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: Re: April 4th Health Policy Happy Hour

Looking forward to seeing folks tonight! If you are planning on joining but haven't RSVPed, please just let Loren or I know.

Ben

**From:** Loren Adler <LAdler@brookings.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 8, 2022 2:05 PM  
**To:** Benedic Ippolito  
**Subject:** April 4th Health Policy Happy Hour

Hope everyone enjoyed yesterday's tease of summer!

Ben Ippolito and I are hosting another health policy happy hour, on **Monday, April 4** starting at **5 pm**, hopefully with the weather back in the 70s by then. As usual, we'll host on AEI's roof deck, which has both great indoor and outdoor spaces, and there'll be beer, wine, and snacks available. AEI has a vaccine mandate to be in the building, so please plan on bringing a photo of your vaccine card (or the real thing).

Feel free to forward the invite along to friends and colleagues. And please let us know if you're planning to join.

**When:** Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 5-8pm  
**Where:** AEI's Roof Deck, 1789 Massachusetts Ave. NW

Best,

Loren Adler  
Associate Director  
USC-Brookings Schaeffer Initiative for Health Policy  
(202) 238-3511

---

**From:** Benedic Ippolito <Benedic.Ippolito@AEI.org>  
**Sent:** 3/29/2022 6:27:22 PM +0000  
**To:** Loren Adler <LAdler@brookings.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: Re: April 4th Health Policy Happy Hour

Hey all,

Just a quick reminder about our April 4<sup>th</sup> happy hour on AEI's roof. Just let Loren or I know if you plan to attend! We can only assume the weather will be better than today!

Details are below.

Ben

---

**From:** Loren Adler <LAdler@brookings.edu>  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 2:05 PM  
**To:** Benedic Ippolito <Benedic.Ippolito@AEI.org>  
**Subject:** April 4th Health Policy Happy Hour

Hope everyone enjoyed yesterday's tease of summer!

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Feel free to forward the invite along to friends and colleagues. And please let us know if you're planning to join.

**When: Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 5-8pm**

**Where: AEI's Roof Deck, 1789 Massachusetts Ave. NW**

Best,

Loren Adler

Associate Director

USC-Brookings Schaeffer Initiative for Health Policy

(202) 238-3511

**From:** AEI Health Policy <aeihealthpolicy@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 5/10/2022 12:00:34 PM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OL)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Vital Signs: New report on factors related to preventive care usage and more



# Vital Signs

Your regular health policy checkup from the American Enterprise Institute

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS FROM AEI HEALTH POLICY

AEI's health policy scholars have been writing on the growing burden of medical debt in the US, reforms to pharmaceutical pricing, the long-term implications of COVID-19, and more. Kirsten Axelsen published a report on factors such as patient-provider sex concordance related to increased preventive care usage, and Mark J. Warshawsky published a report on the increasing retirement age in the US.

For more analysis on the future of health reform and other developments in health policy, read on below.

## Featured Reports and Research

### **Use of Preventive Care Services Associated with Patient-Provider Sex Concordance in the US**

Kirsten Axelsen, Kieran Allsop, and Cameron Tarbell | American Enterprise Institute

Despite expanded coverage from the Affordable Care Act, the use of preventive care services increased insignificantly for some services and decreased for others. To encourage preventive care usage, the authors looked at patient-provider sex concordance and found that it is linked to greater use of multiple preventive services for women. [Read more.](#)

## **The Average US Retirement Age Increased over the Past 30 Years**

Mark J. Warshawsky | American Enterprise Institute

Over the past 30 years, the average retirement age has increased by about three years, from 62 to 65. Ages in Social Security, Medicare, retirement tax, and other areas of government policy should be adjusted to reflect these increases now and in the future, as these trends will likely continue. [Read more.](#)

---

## **Federal Health Reform**

### **Comments to the Federal Trade Commission on the Impact of Prescription Benefit Managers Business Practices**

Benedic N. Ippolito | American Enterprise Institute

The substantial divergence between the list and net prices of branded pharmaceuticals in recent years largely reflects the increased use of negotiated rebates that flow from drug manufacturers to drug purchasers, including prescription benefit managers. [Read more.](#)

## **Medicare and Inflation**

James C. Capretta | State of Reform

Planning for the impacts of inflation on Medicare beneficiaries and physicians should begin now to ensure the negative consequences are minimized. [Read more.](#)

---

**More from AEI Scholars**

## **The Limits of DSM-5**

Sally Satel | *National Review*

## **How Much Attention Is the Public Paying to Abortion?**

Karlyn Bowman | AEIdeas

## **Representative Clinical Studies Are Needed for Health Equity**

Kirsten Axelsen | AEIdeas

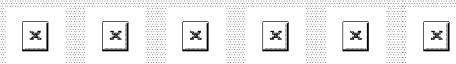
## **Biopharmas: Digitizing, But Not Quite Digital**

David Shaywitz | Timmerman Report

Read more at [www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care/](http://www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care/)  
Tips? Comments? Questions? Email Cameron Tarbell at [Cameron.Tarbell@AEI.org](mailto:Cameron.Tarbell@AEI.org)

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**From:** Benedic Ippolito <Benedic.Ippolito@AEI.org>  
**Sent:** 5/19/2022 5:59:55 PM +0000  
**To:** Loren Adler <LAdler@brookings.edu>  
**Subject:** June 2 Health Policy Happy Hour

Hey All—I hope everyone is having a nice spring!

Loren Adler and I will be hosting our next health policy happy hour on **Thursday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> starting at 5pm**. Hopefully the weather cooperates and we can use the large outdoor portion of AEI's roof. You no longer need to register your vaccine status before coming to AEI (though I don't think we need to worry about vaccine status from this group).

As always, feel free to extend this invitation to friends or colleagues who would like to join. Please let Loren or I know if you plan to attend.

**When: Thursday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5-8 pm**

**Where: AEI's roof deck, 1789 Massachusetts Ave. NW**

Hope to see many of you soon,

Ben

Benedic Ippolito

American Enterprise Institute

Senior Fellow | Economic Policy Studies

**From:** AEI Health Policy <aeihealthpolicy@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 9/13/2023 5:00:19 PM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Vital Signs: Medicare's Price Regulations: How the Government Determines What It Pays for Medical Care



# Vital Signs

Your regular health policy checkup from the American Enterprise Institute

## Featured Reports

### **Medicare's Price Regulations: How the Government Determines What It Pays for Medical Care**

James C. Capretta and David N. Bernstein | AEI Economic Perspectives

Properly designed competitive pricing could be used to tether more Medicare payments to the rates that will incentivize efficiency and innovation. Medicare's regulated prices should not be given unquestioned status as the best available options. [Read more.](#)

### **Improving Health Care Quality Measurement to Combat Clinician Burnout**

Brian J. Miller, Anthony M. DiGiorgio, and Jesse M. Ehrenfeld | *JAMA Network*

A living system of quality metrics with a ceiling on their quantity, as well as a metric life cycle with continuous assessment and improvement, would significantly reduce burdens on clinicians and administrators alike. [Read more.](#)

## Featured Articles



## **Intellectual Property and Emergencies: Policy for Medicines and Vaccines**

Kirsten Axelsen | AEIdeas

In this article, Kirsten Axelsen summarizes her recent event that centered on the idea that there are ways to make drugs more affordable, but removing or reducing intellectual property protections to do so lacks legal precedent and would reduce investment in the American academic centers and biotechnology companies that have led advances in health care treatments. [Read more.](#)

## **Medicare Drug Negotiation and the Risk to Innovation**

James Pethokoukis | AEIdeas

As the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services begins to prepare negotiations on pharmaceuticals, James Pethokoukis outlines the dangers this poses to innovation and how innovation is vital to decreasing patient costs while increasing outcomes. [Read more.](#)

## **Sterile Information: Early Forecasting Is Not the Answer to Research and Development Productivity Woes**

David Shaywitz | Timmerman Report

Developing new pharmaceutical innovations, particularly new drugs, is not only expensive and difficult but entails a high number of failed investments. David Shaywitz's recent article explains how pharmaceutical companies examine ongoing research and how they should interpret the information to determine a project's viability. [Read more.](#)

## **The Expansion of Home Care Benefits in Medicaid Does Not Save Money on Long-Term Care**

Mark J. Warshawsky | AEIdeas

Advocates claim that states' provision and expansion of home- and community-based services care through Medicaid will save the federal and state governments lots of money on nursing home care, because the average nursing home daily cost is triple that of average home care. But policymakers should assume that a dollar change costs a dollar. [Read more.](#)

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## Upcoming Events

### **The Continued Conundrum of Drug Pricing**

Thursday, September 14, 1:30–3:00 p.m. ET

Join AEI's Kirsten Axelsen and Brian J. Miller as they host a panel of experts to discuss how to balance drug pricing innovation with fiscal prudence by deploying the principles of managed care.

RSVP  
TODAY

### **Preparing for the Federal Legalization of Cannabis**

Wednesday, October 25, 3:00–4:30 p.m. ET

Join a panel of experts who will discuss how cannabis policy could and should tackle key questions of product regulation, advertising, distribution, and taxation.

RSVP  
TODAY

## More from AEI Scholars

### **Responses to Questions for the Record on “Innovation Saves Lives: Evaluating Medicare Coverage Pathways for Innovative Drugs, Medical Devices, and Technology”**

Brian J. Miller | House Committee on Energy and Commerce

### **Comment Letter on the Short-Term Plan Rule**

Thomas P. Miller | Comment Letter

### **Lessons for Biopharma from a Health Care AI Pioneer**

David Shaywitz | Timmerman Report

Read more at [www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care](http://www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care)  
Tips? Comments? Questions? Email Jack Rowing at [Jack.Rowing@AEI.org](mailto:Jack.Rowing@AEI.org)

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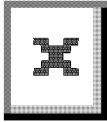
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**From:** AEI Economics <aeieconomics@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 9/15/2023 11:00:41 AM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** How the Government Determines What It Pays for Medical Care (The Ledger)

[View as a web page](#)



## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

As the campaign trail for 2024 continues, GOP candidates have found themselves trying to figure out where they fall among the competing ideologies within the Republican Party. **Michael R. Strain** writes on this state of affairs and discusses a recent CNN-SSRS poll that shows only one candidate currently beating President Joe Biden: former Gov. and US Amb. Nikki Haley of South Carolina. How much protectionist trade tariffs should become the driving force behind GOP economic policy remains a prominent talking point on the road to next year's presidential election. Former President Donald Trump has maintained a vocal defense of his proposed 10 percent tariff on all imported foreign goods, citing his administration's prior protectionist policies as an apparent success. **Phil Gramm** and Donald Boudreaux take an in-depth look back at how the Trump administration's previous trade policies panned out and find that they had a net negative effect on overall manufacturing jobs in the US. Away from the campaign trail

and back to the White House, **Claude Barfield** discusses the internal disagreements that have plagued the Biden administration's conversations on how the US should handle digital trade rules and policies. Diverging viewpoints in the administration have complicated Biden's goal to develop a unified position on digital trade negotiations in time for the upcoming meeting of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation nations, which will take place in San Francisco in just a few weeks.

On the subject of important meetings of influential people, this week, the US Senate hosted a closed-door gathering of a few dozen important leaders in artificial intelligence (AI) to discuss the future of AI rules and regulations. **James Pethokoukis** writes on the financial boom that many AI stocks are enjoying and considers whether we are in the midst of an AI financial bubble. **Kirsten Axelsen** discusses recent calls from a few members of Congress to rethink how the federal government intervenes in certain drug patents. **James Pethokoukis** rounds off this week's AI conversations by exploring the questions people should ask about AI. **Pethokoukis** suggests AI's economic capabilities should be the major consideration in debates on AI development and emerging studies.

## FEATURED RESEARCH

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### **Medicare's Price Regulations: How the Government Determines What It Pays for Medical Care**

James C. Capretta and David N. Bernstein | AEI Economic Perspectives

In a new report in the AEI Economics Perspective series, James C. Capretta and David N. Bernstein analyze the rules for how Medicare determines prices for medical care. This report

explains the empirical bases for the rates set by the government and suggests that Medicare's current system for determining prices should not be given unquestioned status as the best available option.

## **A Mere Fan Effect on Home-Court Advantage**

Scott Ganz and Kieran Allsop | *Journal of Sports Economics*

In a new paper published in the *Journal of Sports Economics*, Scott Ganz and Kieran Allsop explore how much fans influence home-team performance. Using data from the attendance restrictions in place during the 2020-21 NBA regular season, this paper finds that the presence of home fans contributes significantly to the overall impact of home-court advantage.

## **Appropriate for the Protection of the Public Health: Why We Need Electronic Nicotine Delivery System Product Standards**

Brian J. Miller, Brian F. Yagi, and Boris Lushniak | *Food and Drug Law Journal*

In a new report for the *Food and Drug Law Journal*, coauthors Brian J. Miller, Brian F. Yagi, and Boris Lushniak discuss the process behind reviewing and granting market authorization for tobacco products. The report suggests that electronic nicotine delivery systems products should be held to certain objective product standards, which would elevate harm reduction and provide a consistent regulatory framework for industry experts and policymakers alike.

---

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Digital Trade Rules and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity**

Thursday, September 21 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

### **Has the Fed Produced a Soft Landing?**

Thursday, September 21 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

### **Methodologies in Fiscal, Economic, and Health Spending Projections**

Friday, September 22 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

### **The Two-Parent Privilege: A Book Event with Melissa Kearney**

Tuesday, September 26 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

### **Streamlining the Immigration Bureaucracy: A Conversation with Rep. Tony Gonzales (R-TX)**

Thursday, September 28 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

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## **POLITICAL ECONOMY AND TRADE**

### **An Off-Ramp from Trump's Road to Ruin**

Michael R. Strain | Project Syndicate

Amid the ongoing GOP campaign trail, marking posts are beginning to emerge for where candidates fall in relation to fellow candidate and former president Donald Trump. Michael R. Strain reports on this and discusses the implications of a recent CNN-SSRS poll that reported Nikki Haley as the only current GOP candidate who would beat President Joe Biden

in a nationwide vote. Strain discusses how Haley falls on the right side of the “unbridgeable” divide in the Republican Party and suggests that she is the best alternative to Trump and any other candidate who appears enamored with a Trumpian and populist approach to politics.

## **Trump’s Trade War Was a Loser**

Phil Gramm and Donald J. Boudreaux | *Wall Street Journal*

Protectionist tariff policies remain looming over GOP debates on international trade. Former President Donald Trump recently defended his proposed 10 percent tariff on all imported goods, arguing that his protectionist policies were “historically successful.” Phil Gramm and Donald J. Boudreaux discuss the numbers behind the Trump administration’s record, which reveal that by raising the prices of steel and aluminum, Trump’s tariffs destroyed more manufacturing jobs than they created.

## **The Biden Administration’s Crippling Divide over Vital Digital Trade Rules**

Claude Barfield | *AEIdeas*

The United States was once the leading nation in crafting rules and regulations for global technology and data policy. Now, it lags behind, in part due to internal debates in the Biden administration on vital digital trade policies. Experts in the White House cannot seem to agree on whether the US should maintain its prior market-friendly stance on digital trade. Claude Barfield writes that these internal disagreements could disrupt President Joe Biden’s goal of finishing negotiations in time for November, when the US will host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation nations in San Francisco.

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# TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

## **Are We Experiencing an AI Bubble?**

James Pethokoukis | [Faster, Please!](#)

The global strategy team at Goldman Sachs recently released a new analysis titled “Why AI Stocks Aren’t in a Bubble.” James Pethokoukis takes a look back at historical examples of radical technological innovation and discusses how artificial intelligence (AI) might fit into the framework. While the emergence of new technologies has often been coupled with financial bubbles, Pethokoukis suggests that AI is still in its early stages of affecting important economic factors such as productivity, output, and efficiency.

## **Intellectual Property and Emergencies: Policy for Medicines and Vaccines**

Kirsten Axelsen | [AEIdeas](#)

AEI Nonresident Fellow Kirsten Axelsen recently hosted former Chief Judge of the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit Paul Michel and DLA Piper’s Lisa A. Haile for a conversation on recent proposals to reduce intellectual property protection for medicines and vaccines in the name of lowering costs. Certain members of Congress have recently revived interest in US Code Section 1498, which would prevent patent holders of a medicine from seeking damages if the government decided to allow others to manufacture and sell their invention. Axelsen writes that invoking Section 1498 would seriously threaten investment and innovation in drug companies that could produce the next groundbreaking or lifesaving drug.

## **The Big Questions About AI Have Nothing to Do with Killer Machines**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

Despite the persistence of certain cultural phenomena, such as *Terminator*, James Pethokoukis writes that the real points of discussion about artificial intelligence (AI) have much more to do with AI's economic importance and impact. Pethokoukis discusses AI's economic potential and questions to consider when examining new AI developments and emerging studies.

---

### **FEATURED PODCASTS**



#### **Explaining Why There Is No Retirement Crisis**

Andrew G. Biggs on the 401(k) Specialist Podcast

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)

---

### **MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK**

**Biden Administration Continues Its Antidemocratic "Sue and Settle" Masquerade**

Benjamin Zycher | *Hill*

**The Supreme Court Should Not Enshrine the Realization Tax Principle in the Constitution**

Alan D. Viard | AEIdeas

**Was the Shale Revolution a Missed Opportunity?**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

**Don't Bet the Rent Money on Nuclear Power**

Benjamin Zycher | RealClearEnergy

**Sterile Information: Early Forecasting Not the Answer to Research and Development Productivity Woes**

David Shaywitz | Timmerman Report

**Please, Gen Z Aren't "Doomed to be the First Generation of Americans Who Will Grow Up with a Lower Standard of Living Than Their Parents"**

James Pethokoukis | AEIdeas

**Comment Letter on the Short-Term Plan Rule**

Thomas P. Miller | Comment Letter

**Comment to the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission: Draft Merger Guidelines**

Benjamin Zycher | Comment Letter

Tips? Comments? Questions? Email Jack Rowing at [Jack.Rowing@aei.org](mailto:Jack.Rowing@aei.org).

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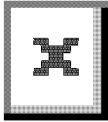
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**From:** AEI Economics <aeieconomics@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 12/2/2022 12:00:23 PM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OL)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Will Congress Ever Reform Social Security? —The Ledger

[View as a web page](#)



## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

When will Congress reform Social Security? **Andrew G. Biggs** says you shouldn't hold your breath; the reform of Social Security and other long-term programs are in the hands of citizens and politicians who benefit precisely from not reforming them. **Mark J. Warshawsky** explains why reform and modernization of Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income is long overdue, as abuse of these programs unnecessarily burdens taxpayers. **James C. Capretta** examines the Kaiser Family Foundation's annual survey of employer-sponsored insurance and explains the significance of the trends unveiled in the data.

**Steven B. Kamin** advises that, although a strong dollar creates serious challenges for the global economy, these challenges should not be overstated or dramatized. **Paul H. Kupiec** and Alex J. Pollock warn that increased coordination between the world's central banks has resulted in widespread risks in the global banking system.

**Desmond Lachman** recommends that Brazil look to recent examples of unsuccessful fiscal policy experiments before repeating the same mistakes.

**Lachman** forewarns of stock market troubles in the coming year, as the world's major central banks warn of the increased probability of a worldwide recession.

**Biggs**, Anqi Chen, and Alicia H. Munnell unpack new data indicating that stimulus checks during the pandemic helped low- and middle-income US households make ends meet and improved resiliency for future economic shocks. **Lachman** predicts that the Federal Reserve will continue to hike interest rates, all while global economic indicators foreshadow that this may be imprudent.

---

## NEW RESEARCH

### **Policy Solutions for Hospital Consolidation**

Brian J. Miller and Jesse M. Ehrenfeld | [@DrBrian4Health](#) | American Enterprise Institute

In recent years, there has been a significant uptick in hospital consolidation, which has directly contributed to higher prices for services, insurance premiums, and consumer cost sharing; lack of quality gains; and decrements in the patient experience. In a new report, Brian J. Miller and Jesse M. Ehrenfeld assess the problem of increased monopolization of the hospital industry and explore how policymakers can promote competition and market growth for hospital care.

---

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Reforming the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

Monday, December 5 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

**Surprised Again!—The COVID Crisis and the New Market Bubble**

Wednesday, December 7 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

**How Will the Inflation Reduction Act Affect the Cost of Medicines for Patients?**

Friday, December 9 | [RSVP HERE>>](#)

---

## **HEALTH INSURANCE AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

### **Why Congress Will Never Reform Social Security**

Andrew G. Biggs | [@biggsag](#) | Dispatch

The idea of reforming Social Security has been kicked around for decades as the solvency of the program falters. Yet policymakers have done little to improve the program's stability.

Andrew G. Biggs says this is due to a game of chicken between Congress and older Americans, who refuse to support additional taxes needed to fund the program while daring representatives to cut their benefits when Social Security's trust fund runs out in 2035.

### **Modernization of the Age-Related Eligibility Standards in Disability Insurance**

Mark J. Warshawsky | [AEIdeas](#)

In the US, it is considerably easier for middle-aged people than younger people to get federal disability benefits through Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income. Mark J. Warshawsky explains why reform and modernization of these programs is long overdue, as research now shows that the current rules in these programs inappropriately subsidize early retirement, creating an unnecessary burden on taxpayers.

## **Employer-Sponsored Insurance in 2022**

James C. Capretta | *RealClearPolicy*

James C. Capretta analyzes the results of the Kaiser Family Foundation's annual survey of employer-sponsored insurance. Overall, the data show that employer-sponsored insurance has remained resilient and popular with both firms and employees, despite increased financial pressure over the past two decades.

---

## **INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS**

### **Will the Strong Dollar Trigger a Global Recession?**

Steven B. Kamin | *Hill*

Pundits have increasingly promoted the narrative that US interest rates are boosting the dollar, forcing cheaper currencies and higher import costs onto already-weakened economies. This alarm has more than a grain of truth, but Steven B. Kamin says the challenges for the global economy that are caused by a strong dollar should not be overstated.

### **Profligacy in Lockstep**



Paul H. Kupiec and Alex J. Pollock | *Law and Liberty*

Due to increased uncertainty in the international economic outlook, large central banks have been coordinating their approach to monetary policy. Paul H. Kupiec and Alex J. Pollack explain why this has led to widespread risks in the global banking system. In many cases, the losses accumulated will exceed central bank capital, and the cost will eventually be placed on the taxpayer.

## **Brazil's Liz Truss Moment**

Desmond Lachman | *AEIdeas*

Following his election to the Brazilian presidency, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva remarked that one should think not about fiscal responsibility but primarily about social responsibility when formulating economic policy. Desmond Lachman warns that this is imprudent and Brazil should learn from the mistakes of others whose fiscal policy experiments ended badly—particularly Liz Truss's recent failed attempts to revive the British economy.

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## **US ECONOMY**

### **Stock Market Trouble Ahead?**

Desmond Lachman | *Hill*

The world's central banks, particularly the Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank, are warning of heightened risks to the world financial system. This comes as no surprise, given the rapid synchronous monetary policy tightening of the world's central banks in a desperate attempt to bring down inflation. However, this does not bode well for stock market investors, as indicators foreshadow market troubles in the near future.

## **Did the Stimulus Checks Improve Household Balance Sheets?**

Andrew G. Biggs, Anqi Chen, and Alicia H. Munnell | [@biggsaq](#) | Center for Retirement Research at Boston College

Did federal stimulus checks actually help households make ends meet during the pandemic? New data show that these payments particularly assisted low- and middle-wealth households and enabled them to better weather financial shocks. These results are significantly different from the experiences of households after the Great Recession in 2008, and they reinforce the importance of a quick labor market recovery and fiscal support.

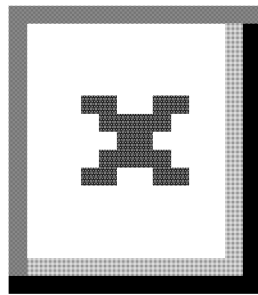
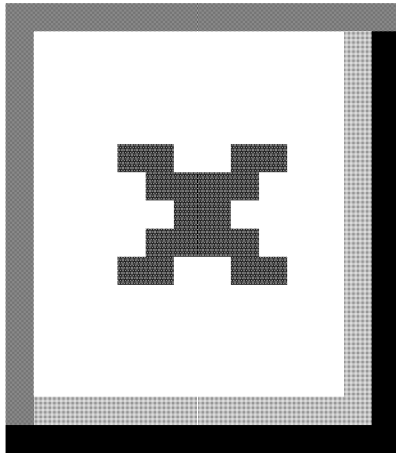
## **The Fed Is Making the Same Mistake in a Whole New Way**

Desmond Lachman | *Barron's*

One would hope the Federal Reserve would learn from its past mistakes, but unfortunately it seems the opposite is true. Desmond Lachman predicts that the Federal Reserve will continue its aggressive campaign against inflation, all while global economic indicators—particularly the housing market and a faltering Chinese economy—foreshadow that this may be an imprudent choice.

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**TWEET OF THE WEEK**

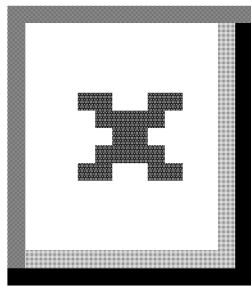


Reweeet This



## **American Renewal: A Conservative Plan to Save the Nation's Finances and Strengthen the Social Contract**

Edited by Paul Ryan and Angela Rachidi



The purpose of *American Renewal: A Conservative Plan to Save the Nation's Finances and Strengthen the Social Contract* (American Enterprise Institute, 2022) is to promote thoughtful and informed discussions, offer serious policy solutions, and demonstrate real reasons for hope. In the enormous economic challenges of our age lies an opportunity of renewal. If we stabilize our debt, revitalize our economy, and restore the promise of upward mobility, we will be the authors of a great new chapter in the remarkable American story.

AEI's economics and health care scholars tackle the issues of Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, the Social Security Disability Insurance Trust Fund disability insurance, and improving the tax code in this volume.

[Read here](#)

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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

### **Stop Hospital Consolidations to Lower Health Care Prices for All Americans**

Brian J. Miller and Jesse M. Ehrenfeld | *Hill*

### **Has the Fed Seen Enough to Slow Rate Hikes?**

Desmond Lachman | *Wall Street Journal*

### **Public Health Is Local**

Brian J. Miller et al. | *Health Affairs*

### **The Use of Evidence to Control Access to and Cost of Pharmaceuticals**

Kirsten Axelsen | *AEIdeas*

### **Sticky Rules for Medicare Enrollment, Part III: Back in the Briar Patch**

Thomas P. Miller | *AEIdeas*

### **Does Overindulgence Make You Happy?**

Arthur C. Brooks | *Atlantic*

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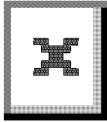
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**Sent:** 9/22/2023 11:00:16 AM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Jerome Powell and The Federal Reserve (The Ledger)

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

At this week's Federal Open Market Committee meeting, Jerome Powell announced that the Fed would maintain its course on interest rates and keep its monetary policy unchanged for the time being. **Desmond Lachman suggests** the Fed should take heed and draw lessons from financial market history when charting course on monetary policy. Whatever the future may hold, it will be of the utmost necessity for the Fed to pay careful attention to the fluctuations of the credit cycle and the commercial real estate market to avoid another financial crisis, which **Lachman writes** could happen much faster than many experts predict.

Back on the campaign trail, the time is approaching for GOP candidates to start releasing policy proposals and tax plans. **Kyle Pomerleau reports** on Sen. Tim Scott's (R-SC) economic plan, released this week. **Pomerleau writes** that Sen. Scott's proposal mostly fits the conventional Republican framework, which

comes with both positives and negatives. Meanwhile, **James Pethokoukis** suggests that the Biden administration's push for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 has caused widespread fear among autoworkers regarding the labor market implications of an industry-wide shift toward electric vehicle manufacturing.

On the health care front, **Benedic Ippolito** and **Amitabh Chandra** discuss the prescription drug measures of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). While these price measures' effect on future out-of-pocket costs has been well-documented, **Ippolito** and **Chandra** present one of the first serious discussions on how the IRA will affect individual patients and physicians. **Scott Gottlieb** discusses the future role large language model AI may play in certain routine health care tasks. **Joseph Antos** and **Ge Bai** write that any government price controls on drugs and pharmaceuticals will only worsen America's drug shortage. **Antos** and **Bai** argue that, despite federal policymakers' intentions, these price controls are the wrong tool to address the nation's drug shortage. **Brian Miller** writes on an ongoing debate among Republicans regarding whether GOP members of Congress are tapping into Medicare funds to cover costs in other areas of federal health care spending.

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## FEATURED RESEARCH

### Estimating the Cost of New Treatment for Diabetes and Obesity

Benedic N. Ippolito and Joseph F. Levy | AEI Economic Perspectives



In a new report published in AEI Economic Perspectives, Benedic Ippolito and Joseph Levy explore the costs of emerging drugs and medications to treat obesity and diabetes. They find that the net prices drugmakers received for these drugs were on average 48 percent to 78 percent lower than the drug's list prices.

## **An Investigation Into the Uncertainty Revision Process of Professional Forecasters**

Joseph S. Tracy, Michael P. Clements, and Robert Rich | AEI Economic Policy Working Paper Series

In a new working paper, Joseph Tracy, Michael Clements, and Robert Rich analyze how professional forecasters implement their forecasts for uncertainty. Their paper discusses how financial market conditions influence forecasts in the US and Europe. Their findings support the Bayesian learning prediction about decreasing patterns in the variance of fixed-event density forecasts.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Methodologies in Fiscal, Economic, and Health Spending Projections**

Friday, September 22 | [\*\*RSVP HERE >>\*\*](#)

**The Two-Parent Privilege: A Book Event with Melissa Kearney**

Tuesday, September 26 | [\*\*RSVP HERE >>\*\*](#)

**Streamlining the Immigration Bureaucracy: A Conversation with Rep. Tony Gonzales (R-TX)**

Thursday, September 28 | [\*\*RSVP HERE >>\*\*](#)

**The Conservative Futurist: A Book Event with James Pethokoukis**

Tuesday, October 10 | [\*\*RSVP HERE >>\*\*](#)

## **Are We Looking for Health Care Competition in All the Wrong Places?**

Wednesday, October 11 | [\*\*RSVP HERE >>\*\*](#)

## **POLITICAL ECONOMY**

### **Is the Fed Ignoring Signs of Another Financial Collapse?**

Desmond Lachman | *Hill*

As Jerome Powell articulated earlier this week, the Fed remains committed to maintaining its monetary policy course. Desmond Lachman discusses how the Fed's decision to stick to high interest rates to handle inflation could open the door for a financial crisis and economic recession next year. Lachman suggests the Fed pay attention to the signals of the credit cycle, which historically have served as accurate indicators of upcoming economic decline.

### **America's Growing Electrification Has Electrified the United Auto Workers Strike**

James Pethokoukis | *AEIdeas*

The United Auto Workers union went on strike against US automakers Ford Motor Company, General Motors, and Stellantis. James Pethokoukis highlights these strikes' economic context. President Joe Biden's goal of reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 has significantly affected the automobile manufacturing industry. Automobile workers nationwide view the production implications of a market-wide shift toward electric vehicle (EV)

manufacturing”namely, that EVs require fewer assembly hours and often are produced in nonunion plants”as an existential threat.

## **A Financial Crisis Foretold**

Desmond Lachman | *National Review*

Desmond Lachman raises concerns about the banking crisis involving First Republic Bank and Silicon Valley Bank earlier this year and the malaise surrounding America’s commercial real estate market. In the wake of ongoing discussions regarding the Fed’s monetary policy strategy, Lachman encourages Jerome Powell to look back at the harsh lessons of 2008 when considering how to approach the Fed’s actions. After all, economic crises tend to happen much quicker than most people expect.

## **Sen. Tim Scott's (R-SC) New Plan to Cut Taxes**

Kyle Pomerleau | *AEIdeas*

As momentum builds in anticipation of next year’s presidential election, GOP candidates have begun to release their economic policy proposals and tax plans. Kyle Pomerleau takes a deep dive into Sen. Tim Scott’s (R-SC) proposal and considers the balance it strikes between tax cuts and tax reform. Pomerleau writes that, from reforming certain elements of business tax law to expanding “opportunity zones,” Scott’s plan leans heavily on the 2017 tax law and focuses on tax cuts rather than tax reform.

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## **HEALTH CARE**

## **What Does the Inflation Reduction Act Mean for Patients and Physicians?**

Benedic N. Ippolito and Amitabh Chandra | *NJEM Catalyst*

Much has been written on how the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) will lower out-of-pocket costs for many prescription drugs. Much less has been written on how the IRA will affect individual patients and physicians. Benedic Ippolito and Amitabh Chandra discuss this question and present compelling evidence for how the IRA will affect the day-to-day operations of physicians and patients alike—and how policymakers should navigate these effects to promote value-based health care.

## **How to Safely Integrate Large Language Models into Health Care**

Scott Gottlieb and Lauren Silvis | *JAMA Network*

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has already authorized over 500 artificial intelligence–based products. One key question remaining is how the FDA should implement large language models (LLMs) in standardized health care. Scott Gottlieb and Lauren Silvis write that while LLMs currently require human oversight for ordinary tasks, future developments in LLMs could mean certain routine health care tasks could be overseen entirely by LLMs.

## **Price Controls Worsen America's Drug Shortage**

Joseph Antos and Ge Bai | *Hill*

The US is in a significant and potentially record-breaking drug shortage crisis. One response to this crisis has been federal policies that enact price controls for prescription drugs paid for by Medicaid and Medicare. Joseph Antos and Ge Bai discuss these federal price controls

and argue that their real effect is antithetical to their intended outcome. Federal price controls for drugs are an ineffective and counterintuitive tool for addressing the drug shortage crisis.

## **Combating Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in the Medicare Program**

Brian J. Miller | AEIdeas

Recent comments on GOP proposals to implement site-neutral payment reform have suggested that Republicans intend to tap into Medicare to fund programs created by the Affordable Care Act. Brian J. Miller responds to these comments and discusses why congressional Republicans are not in fact “raiding” Medicare.

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## **FEATURED PODCASTS**



### **Cities as Centers of Progress | *Political Economy***

The Cato Institute's Chelsea Follett joins AEI's James Pethokoukis on the newest episode of *Political Economy* to tell the story of how cities throughout history have contributed to civilizational and economic progress.

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)

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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

### **Germany's Weakness Darkens the Global Economic Outlook**

Desmond Lachman | *Barron's*

### **A Mistake-Prone European Central Bank**

Desmond Lachman | *AEIdeas*

### **The War Against Benefit-Cost Analysis**

Benjamin Zycher | *National Review*

### **How Zero-Sum Thinking Undermines American Progress**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

### **NASA's Space Launch System Rocket Program Simply Makes No Sense**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

### **How Will AI Help Us, Exactly?**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

### **Comment to the Council on Environmental Quality: National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Regulations Revisions Phase 2 Proposed Rule**

Benjamin Zycher | *Comment Letter*

### **Comment to the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, US Department of Energy: Proposed Rule on Energy Conservation Standards for Consumer Water Heaters**

Benjamin Zycher | *Comment Letter*

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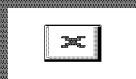
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**Subject:** Vital Signs: What Does the Inflation Reduction Act Mean for Patients and Physicians?



# Vital Signs

Your regular health policy checkup from the American Enterprise Institute

## Featured Reports

### **What Does the Inflation Reduction Act Mean for Patients and Physicians?**

Amitabh Chandra and Benedic N. Ippolito | *NEJM Catalyst*

Benedic Ippolito and Amitabh Chandra discuss and present compelling evidence for how the Inflation Reduction Act will affect the day-to-day operations of physicians and patients alike—and how policymakers should navigate these effects to promote value-based health care. [Read more.](#)

### **Estimating the Cost of New Treatments for Diabetes and Obesity**

Benedic N. Ippolito and Joseph F. Levy | AEI Economic Perspectives

A new report explores the costs of emerging drugs and medications to treat obesity and diabetes. The report finds that the net prices drugmakers received for these drugs were on average 48 percent to 78 percent lower than the drugs' list prices. [Read more.](#)

### **The Value of Improving Insurance Quality: Evidence from Long-Run Medicaid Attrition**

Boris Vabson and Ajin Lee | Social Science Research Network



The US government increasingly provides public health insurance coverage through private firms. This paper examines associated welfare implications for beneficiaries, using a “revealed preference” framework based on beneficiaries’ program attrition rates. [Read more.](#)

## Featured Articles

### **Doing Better and Still Feeling Worse**

Thomas P. Miller | *National Affairs*

In 1977, Aaron Wildavsky wrote an article called “Doing Better and Feeling Worse: The Political Pathology of Health Policy,” which remains a relevant text in the study of health care, as it detailed how, even then, Americans were receiving more care and experiencing worse outcomes. This article reexamines that text and highlights how Wildavsky’s lessons can be applied today. [Read more.](#)

### **How to Safely Integrate Large Language Models into Health Care**

Scott Gottlieb and Lauren Silvis | *JAMA Network*

As artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies continue to expand their reach into all aspects of the economy, Scott Gottlieb and Lauren Silvis look at how to properly integrate large language models into health care to increase efficiency by automating some routine tasks in the medical field. [Read more.](#)

### **Price Controls Worsen America’s Drug Shortage**

Joseph Antos and Ge Bai | *Hill*

The Inflation Reduction Act’s recent implementation of penalties on manufacturers (if prices increase faster than inflation) will likely add to an already-increasing problem of drug shortages. Rather than trying to fine-tune drug rebate policies to account for shortages, Congress should develop policies to promote effective competition and realistic pricing in the pharmaceutical market. [Read more.](#)

## **The Likely Effects of Removing Medical Bills from Credit Reports**

Benedic N. Ippolito | AEIdeas

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau announced that it will begin a process that could result in removing medical debt from credit reports. Benedic Ippolito looks at various studies to examine how the new policy could impact credit outcomes, lenders, and access to medical care. [Read more.](#)

## **Combating Fraud, Waste, and Abuse in the Medicare Program**

Brian J. Miller | AEIdeas

A recent opinion piece questioned the Republican health care plan for cutting Medicare. Brian J. Miller responds with skepticism, describing how the plan focuses on reducing fraud and waste without harming patients. [Read more.](#)

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## **Upcoming Events**

### **Are We Looking for Health Care Competition in All the Wrong Places?**

Wednesday, October 11, 10:00â€“11:30 a.m. ET

AEIâ€™s Thomas P. Miller hosts a group of experts to discuss why certain pro-competition policy reforms have fallen short and which old and new ideas could decrease consolidation.

RSVP  
TODAY

### **Preparing for the Federal Legalization of Cannabis**

Wednesday, October 25, 3:00â€“4:30 p.m. ET

Join a panel of experts who will discuss how cannabis policy could and should tackle key questions of product regulation, advertising, distribution, and taxation.

RSVP  
TODAY

## More from AEI Scholars

### **Harvard-Inovalon Medicare Study: Utilization and Efficiency Under Medicare Advantage vs. Medicare Fee-for-Service**

Boris Vabson et al. | Inovalon

### **Medicare's Price Regulations: How the Government Determines What It Pays for Medical Care**

James C. Capretta and David N. Bernstein | AEI Economic Perspectives

### **Harvard-Inovalon Medicare Study: Who Enrolls in Medicare Advantage vs. Fee-for-Service**

Boris Vabson et al. | Inovalon

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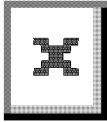
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**Subject:** Did Pandemic Unemployment Benefits Increase Unemployment? (The Ledger)

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

In 1977, political scientist Aaron Wildavsky famously wrote that the political pathology of health care policy can largely be described as “doing better and feeling worse.” **Thomas Miller**, inspired by Wildavsky, takes up the mantle of articulating the unique reasons American health care policy seems to follow a cycle of “do better, feel worse.” **Benedic Ippolito** discusses a recent proposal from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that could result in the removal of medical debt from all credit reports. This alteration in the equation for how credit reports are calculated could spell disaster for patients and providers alike. Medical care consumers will face a smaller incentive to pay medical bills in a timely manner, and medical care providers will respond accordingly, leading to a decrease in overall access to care. **Kyle Pomerleau** suggests that Nikki Haley’s proposal to eliminate all federal tax on gas and diesel could likewise carry unintended consequences. **Pomerleau** writes that this proposal is misguided, as it would shift the cost of road and highway

spending onto all taxpayers, regardless of their road use, and decrease the federal government's ability to fund interstate transportation projects.

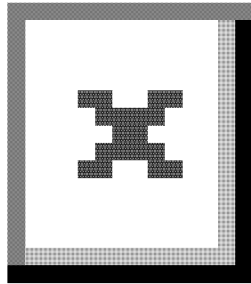
**Phil Gramm** and coauthor **Donald Boudreaux** pen a compelling response to former US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer's outspoken defense of former President Donald Trump's call for a universal 10 percent import tariff. **Gramm** and **Boudreaux** suggest Lighthizer's claims are grounded in a flawed understanding of the real impact of past tariff policies. **Paul Kupiec** reports on the Fed's ongoing attempt to cover over \$100 billion in losses with taxpayer money. Increased transparency and greater attention to federal budget and debt statistics may be the only way to ensure that the Fed does not continue this cycle of losing a fortune without being held accountable. **James Pethokoukis** considers how the American economy of today compares to that of the 1990s and suggests that the differences between the two economies can help explain the contrasting public opinions of each era.

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## UPCOMING BOOK

**The Conservative Futurist: How to Create the Sci-Fi World We Were Promised**

**James Pethokoukis | Center Street**



With groundbreaking ideas and sharp analysis, James Pethokoukis provides a detailed road map to a fantastic future filled with incredible progress and prosperity that is both optimistic *and* realistic. Through an exploration of culture, economics, and history, ***The Conservative Futurist*** tells the fascinating story of what went wrong in the past and what we need to do today to finally get it right. Using the latest economic research and policy analysis, as well as insights from top economists, historians, and technologists, Pethokoukis reveals that the failed futuristic visions of the past were totally possible. And they still are. If America is to fully recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, take full advantage of emerging tech from generative artificial intelligence to CRISPR to reusable rockets, and launch itself into a shining tomorrow, it must again become a fully risk-taking, future-oriented society. It's time for America to embrace the future confidently, act boldly, and take that giant leap forward.

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## FEATURED TESTIMONY

## **Medicare Forever: Protecting Seniors by Making the Wealthy Pay Their Fair Share**

James C. Capretta | Senate Committee on the Budget

James C. Capretta spoke to the Senate Budget Committee on Medicare solvency and ensuring the program can fund itself.

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## **FEATURED RESEARCH**

### **Did Pandemic Unemployment Benefits Increase Unemployment? Evidence from Early State-Level Expirations**

Michael R. Strain, R. Glenn Hubbard, and Harry Holzer | *Economic Inquiry*

In a new paper, Michael Strain, Glenn Hubbard, and Harry Holzer examine the extent to which pandemic-era unemployment benefits affected employment levels across different states. This paper uses data from states that exited federal unemployment insurance (UI) programs at different intervals to determine whether expanded UI benefit eligibility affected employment levels independent of expanded benefit generosity. The paper finds that the expiration of expanded generosity and expanded eligibility lowered state unemployment levels.

## **Drug Pricing Decisions and Insurance Coverage: Evidence from Medicare Part D**

Benedic N. Ippolito and Joseph F. Levy | *Health Management, Policy and Innovation*

In a new paper, Benedic N. Ippolito and Joseph F. Levy explore whether the pricing of drugs relative to their clinical value affects the drugs'™ insurance coverage and usage under Medicare Part D. The paper finds that lower generic drug prices stimulate greater and more generous insurance coverage, while no relationship was found for branded drugs with varying levels of cost-effectiveness.

## **Reducing Intergenerational Poverty**

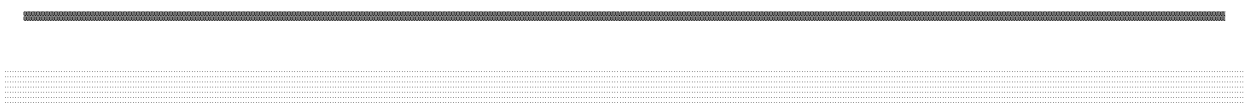
Michael R. Strain et al. | National Academies Press

In a new report released by the National Academies of Sciences, Michael Strain and other experts consider public policy reforms to reduce intergenerational poverty.

## **The Value of Improving Insurance Quality: Evidence from Long-Run Medicaid Attention**

Boris Vabson and Ajin Lee | Social Science Research Network

The US government increasingly provides public health insurance coverage through private firms. This paper examines associated welfare implications for beneficiaries, using a "revealed preference" framework based on beneficiaries'™ program attrition rates.





## UPCOMING EVENTS

**The Conservative Futurist: A Book Event with James Pethokoukis**

Tuesday, October 10 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

**Are We Looking for Health Care Competition in All the Wrong Places?**

Wednesday, October 11 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

**The Identity Trap: A Book Event with Yascha Mounk**

Monday, October 16 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

**Preparing for the Federal Legalization of Cannabis**

Wednesday, October 25 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

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## HEALTH CARE AND TAX POLICY

### **Doing Better and Still Feeling Worse**

Thomas P. Miller | *National Affairs*

The problems facing health care policy outcomes are nothing new. Nor can they be resolved with new policies. Thomas P. Miller offers a thoughtful reflection on the American health care system. Through a careful look back on the writings of Aaron Wildavsky, Miller provides a helpful path for reexamining health care politics.

### **The Gas Tax Should Not Be Eliminated**

Kyle Pomerleau | AEIdeas

With 2024 ever approaching, GOP candidate Nikki Haley released her tax plan last week, envisioning her economic plan for the nation if she is elected. Kyle Pomerleau writes on Haley's tax plan, which includes a proposal to eliminate all federal excise taxes on gas and diesel. Pomerleau suggests that this federal gas tax provides crucial funding for interstate transportation maintenance and should not be on the chopping block for any GOP economic plan.

## **The Likely Effects of Removing Medical Bills from Credit Reports**

Benedic N. Ippolito | AEIdeas

Last week, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau began a process to consider proposals that would help remove medical bills from Americans' credit reports. Benedic Ippolito discusses the potential implications of this fundamental shift in the calculation design of credit reports. He suggests this policy shift could carry some unintended consequences, such as decreasing overall access to ordinary care.

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## **THE FEDERAL RESERVE AND POLITICAL ECONOMY**

### **Lighthizer's Mistaken Claims About Trump's Tariffs**

Phil Gramm and Donald J. Boudreaux | *Wall Street Journal*

In the ongoing debate surrounding the efficacy of industrial trade policy, Phil Gramm and Donald J. Boudreaux respond to former US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer's defense of former President Donald Trump's proposed 10 percent tariff on all imported goods. Gramm and Boudreaux write that any success in stimulating manufacturing attributed to the previous administration was due to deregulation and tax cuts, not heightened tariffs.

## **The Fed's \$100 Billion Cash Losses Should Be a Far Bigger Story**

Paul H. Kupiec | *Hill*

By the end of the 2023 fiscal year, the Fed will have spent over \$100 billion to cover cash losses. Paul Kupiec writes that as long as interest rates remain at their current levels, the Fed's losses will continue to accrue. Not only has the Fed quietly continued losing a fortune, but the American taxpayer has been footing the bill to cover the Fed's losses.

## **Why Was There No Backlash Against Market Capitalism in the Boomy 1990s Amid Rising Inequality?**

James Pethokoukis | *AEIdeas*

Today's tendency to declare that we are living in "late-stage capitalism" manifests itself in various activist movements on both sides of the aisle. James Pethokoukis compares the economy today to that of the 1990s, when growth was high, technological progress was booming, and income inequality was simultaneously rising. Today's economy mirrors quite closely the economy of the 1990s, but there is a far greater number of market critics that look to the rise of inequality as evidence for the failure of capitalism. Pethokoukis explores what was different about the 1990s that might help explain why the economy did not attract the same level of backlash against capitalism that we see today.

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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

### **It Isn't Hopeless. We Can Fix Our Debt and Deficit Problems.**

Rob Portman and Kent Conrad | *Washington Post*

### **America Needs Better, Smarter Teachers. Generative AI Can Help.**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

### **Could AI Really Generate Explosive Economic Growth?**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

### **The Most Important Pro-Progress Event of the Year (So Far) Was a Tech Failure. But That's OK.**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

### **The Behavioral Foundations of Default Effects: Theory and Evidence from Medicare Part D**

Boris Vabson et al. | *American Economic Review*

### **Harvard-Inovalon Medicare Study: Utilization and Efficiency Under Medicare Advantage vs. Medicare Fee-for-Service**

Boris Vabson et al. | Inovalon

### **Harvard-Inovalon Medicare Study: Who Enrolls in Medicare Advantage vs Fee-for-Service**

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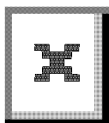
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**From:** AEI Economics <aeieconomics@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 10/6/2023 11:00:30 AM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** THE CONSERVATIVE FUTURIST (The Ledger)

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## The Ledger

Your line-by-line guide to economic policy this week

### THIS WEEK

An old financial saying coined by the late Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist Rudi Dornbusch warns that a financial crisis takes much longer to come than you expect, but then when it does come, it always happens much faster than you would have thought. **Desmond Lachman** suggests the Fed should remember this adage when determining its monetary policy strategy for addressing inflation. **Steven Kamin** uses comprehensive data from over a dozen nations around the world to discuss how central banks used monetary policy to respond to sharply increasing domestic and international inflation rates in the past several years. **Lachman** also reports on the distressing economic status of Italy, whose bloated sovereign debt exceeds its domestic annual gross domestic product. **Lachman** suggests things could get even worse for the Italian economy.

**James Capretta** responds to a *New York Times* article from this week that suggests the annual growth costs of federal spending on Medicare have been moderate.

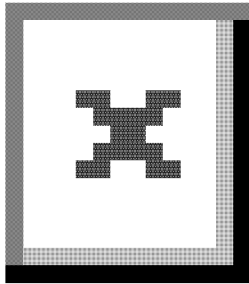
**Capretta** writes that this analysis fails to capture the whole picture and maintains that high-cost entitlement programs continue to threaten the United Statesâ€™ fiscal balance. **Brian Miller** and **Anthony DiGiorgio** discuss the physician burnout crisis and offer a substantive path for reform to alleviate this ongoing burden. **Thomas Miller** writes on a recent proposed rule change from the Biden administration that would fundamentally alter the status of short-term, limited-duration health insurance plans.

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## NEW BOOK

### The Conservative Futurist: How to Create the Sci-Fi World We Were Promised

James Pethokoukis | Center Street



With groundbreaking ideas and sharp analysis, James Pethokoukis provides a detailed road map to a fantastic future filled with incredible progress and prosperity that is both optimistic *and* realistic. Through an exploration of culture, economics, and history, ***The Conservative Futurist*** tells the fascinating story of what went wrong in the past and what we need to do today to finally get it right. Using the latest economic research and policy analysis, as well as insights from top economists, historians, and technologists, Pethokoukis reveals that the failed futuristic visions of the past were totally possible. And they still are. If America is to fully recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, take full advantage of emerging tech from generative artificial intelligence to CRISPR to reusable rockets, and launch itself into a shining tomorrow, it must again become a fully risk-taking, future-oriented society. It's time for America to embrace the future confidently, act boldly, and take that giant leap forward.

## See What Others Are Saying About It!

"James Pethokoukis has written an extraordinarily important book. He understands that the future is ours to create if we have the courage to dream and then work to make those dreams come alive. I hope every American—conservative, liberal, and moderate—will take his message to heart." — **Newt Gingrich, former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives**

"A guidebook to sort the good from the bad, and see how ingenuity can help take us to a better future" — **Arthur C. Brooks, Professor, Harvard University**



"We have it within our power to build a future of greater opportunity, greater prosperity, less suffering, and more human freedom. We always have â€” but what we don't have enough of right now is the confidence and imagination to make it so. It's time to build, and this book shares how progress and growth can also solve the very problems they may create" â€” **Marc Andreessen, Cofounder, Netscape and Andreessen Horowitz**

"James Pethokoukis' ***The Conservative Futurist*** is essential reading on what made America great, how we lost it, and how we might reach it once again. Students of history, technology, economics, and the American dream should all read this compelling vision of our possible future" â€” **Tyler Cowen, Economist, George Mason University**

Order Today!

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## FEATURED RESEARCH

### **Socioeconomic Vulnerability and the Differential Impact of Severe Weatherâ€™Induced Power Outages**

**Scott Ganz, Chuanyi Ji, and Chenghao Duan | *PNAS Nexus***

In a new paper, Scott Ganz, Chuanyi Ji, and Chenghao Duan evaluate the prevailing hypothesis that areas of lower socioeconomic status, on average, experience longer power outages following hurricanes. Using data from several hurricanes between 2017 and 2020, this paper finds that a significant relationship exists between socioeconomic index status and the time that elapses before power is restored.

## **Mobile Platform Preference: A Comparison of US, Indian, and Japanese Firms**

Mark Jamison, Janice Hauge, and Jakub Tecza | AEI Economic Policy Working Paper Series

In a new working paper, Mark Jamison and coauthors analyze the propensity of startups in 47 categories that are seeking external funding to use mobile platforms. The findings suggest that results across the US, India, and Japan were largely similar, except that in the US, more business categories exhibited platform preferences.

## **The Identification and Relevance of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Federal Crop Insurance**

Eric J. Belasco, Vincent H. Smith, and Benjamin J. Goren | American Enterprise Institute

In a new report, Eric Belasco, Vincent H. Smith, and Benjamin J. Goren analyze data on the distribution of federal crop insurance across racial and ethnic groups. The report finds that minority farmers are less likely to participate in crop insurance programs and operate midsize and large-scale farms than white farmers are.

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### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**The Conservative Futurist: A Book Event with James Pethokoukis**

Tuesday, October 10 | [\*\*RSVP HERE >>\*\*](#)

**Are We Looking for Health Care Competition in All the Wrong Places?**

Wednesday, October 11 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

**The Identity Trap: A Book Event with Yascha Mounk**

Monday, October 16 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

**Preparing for the Federal Legalization of Cannabis**

Wednesday, October 25 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

**Challenges to Growth in Latin America**

Thursday, October 26 | [RSVP HERE >>](#)

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## POLITICAL ECONOMY

### **A Gathering Storm**

Desmond Lachman | *Daily Courier*

Rudi Dornbusch, the late Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist, famously wrote that financial crises tend to take much longer coming, but then happen much faster, than anyone would have thought. Desmond Lachman ponders this curious financial phenomenon in the context of this past year's banking failures, which Lachman suggests bear a significant resemblance to the economic crisis of 2008. Lachman writes that the Fed should reverse its aggressive monetary policy to avoid an economic recession as early as next year.

### **A League Table for Central Bank Hawkishness**

Steven B. Kamin | *Central Banking*

Over the past several years, central banks around the globe expressed similar commitments to enacting monetary policy measures to bring inflation under control. Steven Kamin presents compelling evidence to suggest that not all central banks responded to inflation in the same way. Kamin finds that Latin American central banks, on average, responded to inflation more proactively, while central banks of more advanced economies tended to lag behind the curve in responding to inflation.

## **Is Italy Headed for a Debt Crisis?**

Desmond Lachman | *Hill*

Italy's sovereign debt is 145 percent of its annual gross domestic product. The Italian 10-year bond yield has remained relatively stagnant for years at 4.75 percent. Desmond Lachman reports on these distressing financial statistics and suggests an Italian financial crisis could be incoming. This crisis could even be worse than the historic financial recession that Italy's Mediterranean neighbor Greece suffered almost two decades ago.

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## **HEALTH CARE POLICY**

### **Has the Medicare Cost Problem Gone Away?**

James C. Capretta | *Dispatch*

A recent *New York Times* article claimed that overall annual Medicare costs have grown only moderately over the past decade, contradicting claims that Medicare spending growth is a

cause for concern. James Capretta suggests that this analysis misses the full story. The problem of high-cost entitlement programs has not gone away. Rather, these programs could outpace government revenue, increasing the risk of a fiscal crisis.

## **How to Keep a Promise to Put Patients over Paperwork**

Brian J. Miller and Anthony DiGiorgio | *Hill*

Two-thirds of all US doctors reported feeling burned-out during 2021. Widespread physician fatigue seriously threatens patients' quality of care. Brian J. Miller and Anthony DiGiorgio suggest that one way to begin addressing this problem is reforming the system of arbitrary quality metrics that burdens hospitals, increases costs, harms patients, and drives physician burnout.

## **Pulling the Plug (Again?) on Short-Term, Limited-Duration Health Plans, Part I**

Thomas P. Miller | *AEIdeas*

A recent proposed rule from the Biden administration contained plans to significantly decrease the maximum allowed length for short-term, limited-duration (STLD) insurance plans. Thomas P. Miller writes that this proposal is misguided and could drastically reduce affordable options for families and increase the number of uninsured individuals. Miller suggests this proposed rule change also contains significant power-grabbing and ideological motivations, grounded in its goal of reforming STLD to bring about near-universal compliance with sweeping uniform rules.

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## FEATURED PODCASTS



Don't Fear the Future | *The Remnant with Jonah Goldberg*

Featuring AEI's James Pethokoukis

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)



The Conservative Futurist | *Matt Lewis and the News*

Featuring AEI's James Pethokoukis

[LISTEN HERE >>](#)

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## MORE FROM AEI ECONOMICS THIS WEEK

**Five Questions for James Pethokoukis**

James Pethokoukis and Derek Robertson | *Politico*

**Five Quick Questions for... James Pethokoukis (me!) on His New Book,**

**"The Conservative Futurist: How to Create the Sci-Fi World We Were**

**Promised**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

**Do You Want to Build a Factory?**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

**The Fed Needs to Get Real About Banks and China. It's Risking a**

**Recession.**

Desmond Lachman | *Barron's*

**Unpleasant Italian Debt Arithmetic**

Desmond Lachman | AEIdeas

**Why the Fed's Unprecedented Losses Matter**

Paul H. Kupiec and Alex J. Pollock | *Wall Street Journal*

**The Migrant and Housing Crises Are Colliding, with Predictable Results**

Paul H. Kupiec | *Hill*

**Pulling the Plug (Again?) on Short-Term, Limited-Duration Health Plans,  
Part II**

Thomas P. Miller | AEIdeas

**American Capitalism and "Deaths of Despair," Again**

James Pethokoukis | *Faster, Please!*

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Read more at [www.aei.org/policy/economics](http://www.aei.org/policy/economics).

Tips? Comments? Questions? Email Thomas Gilmore at [Thomas.Gilmore@aei.org](mailto:Thomas.Gilmore@aei.org).

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**From:** Benedic Ippolito <Benedic.Ippolito@AEI.org>  
**Sent:** 10/10/2023 1:29:15 PM +0000  
**To:** Loren Adler <LAdler@brookings.edu>  
**Subject:** Health Policy Happy Hour -- Oct 25

Hey everyone,

In an effort to take full advantage of the fall weather, we are hosting another health policy happy hour on **Wednesday, October 25th from 5-8 pm on AEI's roof**. As usual, drinks and snacks will be provided and colleagues are welcome to join.

We've had great turnouts recently and hope to see many of you there. Please let Loren or I know if you are planning to attend.

Ben

p.s. In separate news, Morgan Romine and the folks at Duke-Margolis will be hosting a rooftop happy hour on Monday, October 16th. While we normally would prefer to suppress all happy hour competition, we'll make an exception in this case. They would like folks to [register](#) if they plan to attend (how fancy).

Benedic Ippolito

American Enterprise Institute

Senior Fellow | Economic Policy Studies



**From:** AEI Health Policy <aeihealthpolicy@aei.org>  
**Sent:** 10/11/2023 5:00:45 PM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OA)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Vital Signs: The Behavioral Foundations of Default Effects: Theory and Evidence from Medicare Part D



# Vital Signs

Your regular health policy checkup from the American Enterprise Institute

## Featured Reports and Testimony

### **Medicare Forever: Protecting Seniors by Making the Wealthy Pay Their Fair Share**

James C. Capretta | Senate Committee on the Budget

James Capretta spoke to the Senate Budget Committee on Medicare solvency and how to properly ensure the program can fund itself. He highlighted the key budgetary shortfalls facing the program. [Read more.](#)

### **The Behavioral Foundations of Default Effects: Theory and Evidence from Medicare Part D**

Boris Vabson et al. | *American Economic Review*

This article shows through two natural experiments that default rules in Medicare Part D have large, persistent effects on enrollment and drug use of low-income beneficiaries. The implications of this phenomenon for welfare and optimal policy depend on the sensitivity of passivity to the value of the default option. [Read more.](#)

## Reforming Care

## **Pulling the Plug (Again?) on Short-Term, Limited-Duration Health Plans, Part I**

Thomas P. Miller | AEIdeas

Recently, the Biden administration issued a proposed rule to substantially shorten the maximum length of short-term, limited-duration insurance plans. Thomas P. Miller argues this rule would limit insurance options and harm the industry and patients. [Read more.](#)

## **How to Keep a Promise to Put Patients over Paperwork**

Brian J. Miller and Anthony DiGiorgio | Hill

Two-thirds of all US doctors reported feeling burned-out during 2021. Brian J. Miller and Anthony DiGiorgio suggest that one way to begin addressing this problem is reforming the system of arbitrary quality metrics that burdens hospitals, increases costs, harms patients, and drives physician burnout. [Read more.](#)

## **Medicare Policy**

### **Has the Medicare Cost Problem Gone Away?**

James C. Capretta | Dispatch

A recent *New York Times* article claimed that overall annual Medicare costs have grown only moderately over the past decade, contradicting claims that Medicare spending growth is a cause for concern. James Capretta suggests that this analysis misses the full story. [Read more.](#)

### **Drug Pricing Decisions and Insurance Coverage: Evidence from Medicare Part D**

Benedic N. Ippolito and Joseph F. Levy | *Health Management, Policy & Innovation*

This paper, by Benedic Ippolito and Joseph Levy, examines whether the pricing of brand-name drugs, relative to estimates their value, reflects how insurers cover those products in Medicare Part D. [Read more.](#)

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## Upcoming Events

### **Preparing for the Federal Legalization of Cannabis**

Wednesday, October 25, 3:00–4:30 p.m. ET

Join a panel of experts who will discuss how cannabis policy could and should tackle key questions of product regulation, advertising, distribution, and taxation.

RSVP  
TODAY

## More from AEI Scholars

### **Doing Better and Still Feeling Worse**

Thomas P. Miller | *National Affairs*

### **Medicare's Price Regulations: How the Government Determines What It Pays for Medical Care**

James C. Capretta and David N. Bernstein | *AEI Economic Perspectives*

### **The Likely Effects of Removing Medical Bills from Credit Reports**

Benedic N. Ippolito | *AEI Ideas*

Read more at [www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care](http://www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care)  
Tips? Comments? Questions? Email Jack Rowing at [Jack.Rowing@AEI.org](mailto:Jack.Rowing@AEI.org).

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**Sent:** 12/7/2022 6:00:33 PM +0000  
**To:** "Woronoff, Arielle (CMS/OL)" <Arielle.Woronoff@cms.hhs.gov>  
**Subject:** Vital Signs: Policy Solutions for Hospital Consolidation



# Vital Signs

Your regular health policy checkup from the American Enterprise Institute

## Featured Reports and Research

### **Policy Solutions for Hospital Consolidation**

Brian J. Miller and Jesse M. Ehrenfeld | American Enterprise Institute

Robust research has documented the harms of hospital consolidation, including higher prices for services, insurance premiums, and consumer cost sharing; lack of quality gains; and decrements in the patient experience. Addressing consolidation in the market for health care services is an imperative. [Read more.](#)

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## Proposals for Fixing Medicare

### **Medicare Is Central to Fixing Health Care and the Federal Budget**

James C. Capretta | *Hill*

With health care costs on the rise and the federal government facing increased costs in Medicare, James C. Capretta analyzes why cost-saving options such as Medicare Advantage are increasingly vital. He encourages policymakers to consider including rewards for cost-saving measures. [Read more.](#)

## **Sticky Rules for Medicare Enrollment, Part I**

Thomas P. Miller | AEIdeas

Even more current and future Medicare beneficiaries could still be stuck with just a backward-looking traditional program that will approach future insolvency at only a slightly slower rate.

[Read more.](#)

## **The Future of Health Reform**

### **Congress Needs to Update the FDA's Ability to Regulate Diagnostic Tests and Cosmetics**

Scott Gottlieb and Mark B. McClellan | STAT

The FDA is working from an outdated regulatory playbook that has left gaps in its oversight of safety and effectiveness and makes it more difficult to introduce new innovations. New legislation would strengthen consumer and patient protections for diagnostic tests and cosmetics and make it easier for manufacturers to introduce better products. [Read more.](#)

### **Public Health Is Local**

Brian J. Miller et al. | *Health Affairs*

The article analyzes challenges facing local health departments to highlight the need for new data and technological standards and innovation. [Read more.](#)

### **The Use of Evidence to Control Access to and Cost of Pharmaceuticals**

Kirsten Axelsen | AEIdeas

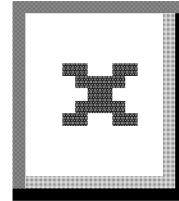
The article summarizes a recent AEI event that focused on the effect of the Inflation Reduction Act, the use of coverage with evidence development by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for FDA-approved indications, and state drug review boards. [Read more.](#)

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## The Passing of Our Friend and Colleague Bob Helms

Bob Helms became AEI's director of health policy studies in 1974. In that role, he pioneered AEI's research on health policy and in related areas. Bob conducted and supervised influential research on pharmaceutical economics and regulation, health care financing, hospital regulation, medical malpractice issues, and other key policy issues.

Although the list of Bob's accomplishments is long, it does not fully capture his contribution to health policy and to his colleagues' at AEI and elsewhere. He was a kind and gentle person and a leader in every sense of the term. He will be greatly missed.



## **Medicaid: The Forgotten Issue in Health Reform**

Robert B. Helms | American Enterprise Institute

This is one of Bob Helms's seminal works. Given the massive expansion of Medicaid enrollment during the public health emergency, his ideas remain important to improving Medicaid today.

[Read more.](#)



## **Upcoming Events**

### **How Will the Inflation Reduction Act Affect the Cost of Medicines for Patients?**

Friday, December 9, 2:30–4:00 p.m. ET

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), passed into law in August 2022, places considerable limits on the out-of-pocket costs that Medicare Part D beneficiaries pay for prescription drugs. How will the IRA's drug pricing provisions affect the prices patients pay in the nonsubsidized markets? Moreover, how will the IRA affect market entry for generic and biosimilar drugs?

RSVP  
TODAY

## More from AEI Scholars

### **Employer-Sponsored Insurance in 2022**

James C. Capretta | State of Reform

### **What Is (or Isn't) the Problem with Pharmacy Benefit Managers?**

Benedic N. Ippolito | American Enterprise Institute

### **Federal Unfunded Liabilities Are Growing More Rapidly Than Public Debt**

James C. Capretta | RealClearPolicy

Read more at [www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care/](http://www.aei.org/policy-areas/health-care/)  
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