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Trump's Health Care Agenda: Expensive and Harmful

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Health care costs are rising—and patients are paying the price. While President Trump publicly promises lower costs, his administration has taken deliberate steps that make health care more expensive and harder to access. Under the Trump Administration, health care means less coverage, higher deductibles, and more barriers to getting care.

From Medicaid cuts to the loss of ACA tax credits, millions of working- and middle-class Americans are now paying more for less or being forced to go without coverage altogether. Now, new administrative actions will make things even worse.

Five Trump Actions Reshaping Health Care

Below are five ways the Trump Administration is raising health costs and making care harder to use.

Increasing Premiums. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services proposed a rule earlier this year that would add enrollment barriers, weaken provider networks, complicate plan selection, and increase the risk of fraud. ¹ The agency admits these changes will reduce enrollment and increase premiums for middle-class families in the coming years. ²

Increasing Out-of-Pocket Costs. The Trump Administration has promoted high-deductible plans with health savings accounts—meaning that patients must pay thousands of dollars on their own before coverage kicks in. These plans shift costs to patients, discourage the use of lower-cost preventive care, and increase reliance on expensive emergency services. ³ Decades of such policies haven't made patients better shoppers. Instead, they risk creating more medical debt for patients, higher rates of underinsurance, and reduced access to needed care.

Decreasing Access to Doctors. Under the Trump Administration, visas for health care workers cost \$100,000, and processing of work authorization cards has been paused for workers from 39 countries. ⁴ With an existing nationwide workforce shortage and strained budgets from Republican Medicaid cuts, these policies will further reduce staffing and make it harder for patients to get care, especially in rural and underserved areas.

Risking Access to Lifesaving Drugs. Trump Rx—Trump's direct-to-consumer pharmacy—leaves patients with high out-of-pocket costs, no protection from costs through insurance, and the burden of navigating purchases themselves. While it may lower prices of some name-brand drugs, it overlooks cheaper generics. Patients will end up paying more without knowing about cheaper alternatives.

Making Americans Sicker. At the direction of Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., the Department of Health and Human Services slashed the number of recommended vaccines for children.⁵ These changes could limit coverage for working-class families with Medicaid, increase higher out-of-pocket costs, and lower vaccination rates. The result will be more preventable illness, more expensive care, and more pressure on families already struggling to make ends meet.⁶

Conclusion

These actions by the Trump Administration will compound with Republicans' devastating cuts to Medicaid and failure to extend Advanced Premium Tax Credits, eroding access to health care for millions more Americans. If the nation's leaders are serious about a plan to bring down costs and make health care affordable, they should look to the work of Democrats in the House and Senate.⁷ From the minority, Democrats are crafting a more comprehensive agenda to address these pressing issues and build a health care system that lowers costs and covers everyone.

President Trump may talk about lowering costs and propose vague plans, but his reckless agenda will continue to make health care more expensive and harder to use.

ENDNOTES



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