

United States Senate

April 2, 2026

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

As President Trump prepares to send Congress his Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Presidential Budget Request later this week, I request that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) conduct a full and thorough cost analysis of rising out-of-pocket health care costs for Americans. Washington Republicans' \$1 trillion cut to Medicaid through their One Big, Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) (P.L.119-21) and their failure to extend the Affordable Care Act (ACA) enhanced premium tax credits (e-PTCs) have caused millions of Americans to lose their health care coverage, pay for costly health insurance plans with less coverage, and face higher overall costs for their health care. Ahead of the Congressional appropriations process for FY 2027, Congress therefore must know the full extent of the cost increases for American families caused by OBBBA's Medicaid cuts and the Republican-caused expiration of ACA e-PTCs.

The Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans' devastating cuts to health care are negatively affecting patients' access to quality, affordable care. Many hospitals – especially in rural areas or locations where underserved patients are treated – had already been struggling financially prior to the Trump Republican health care cuts. Nearly 200 rural hospitals have closed or stopped providing inpatient care since 2005.¹ Instead of providing support to these lifelines for millions of Americans, President Trump and Washington Republicans made it even more difficult for hospitals to continue operations. With the ACA e-PTCs now expired, it is expected that more than \$32.1 billion will be lost in revenue for hospitals, physicians, and other health care providers.² Medicaid cuts and provider taxes from the OBBBA are also anticipated to force losses in revenue, hospital closures, service reductions, and reimbursement cuts. Medicaid federal financing is estimated to decrease spending by \$911 billion over the next 10 years.³

¹ Sheps Center, <https://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/programs-projects/rural-health/rural-hospital-closures/>

² Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, <https://www.rwjf.org/en/insights/our-research/2025/09/how-expiration-of-aca-tax-credits-will-affect-healthcare-spending.html>

³ Kaiser Family, Foundation, <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/medicaid-financing-the-basics/#a22eb71c-7430-4f33-9736-4fa655793e28>

As of March 2026, nearly 800 hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and other critical providers have already closed, are at a risk of closing, or have been forced to cut essential services,⁴ leaving entire communities without access to care – especially those in rural areas. This harmful combination of cuts will force health care professionals to pull back on services and staffing, which will further cause patients to lose their care and experience longer waiting periods. Furthermore, the closure of a rural hospital leads to a 3.6 percent increase in average prices for patients when their care is transferred to a nearby hospital.⁵

Loss of health care coverage is surging above pre-Trump levels, driving up costs even higher. Republicans' Medicaid cuts are projected to increase the number of people without health insurance by 7.5 million in 2034.⁶ Just this year alone, a projected 4.8 million adults may become uninsured due to the expiration of the ACA e-PTCs.⁷ Even for patients who choose to opt into coverage for health care, they are now paying twice as much for their premium payments with an average of \$1,904 a month.⁸ This figure alone still does not reflect out-of-pocket and cost sharing expenses patients will pay as the cost of health care rises across the country. These high premiums may further force patients to forgo their health insurance coverage in the future as they choose between rent, food, and health coverage. For patients in rural areas, the loss of Medicaid and ACA e-PTCs is projected to cause nearly four million people to lose their health insurance. The loss of critical health care coverage will force individuals to pay full out-of-pocket costs for care, delay medically necessary care, and potentially accrue medical debt for even the simplest health care treatments.

The impact of Medicaid cuts and the loss of ACA e-PTCs extend far beyond even those families who directly rely on these programs and tax credits. When a hospital closes, it closes to everyone in the surrounding communities. When hours are reduced, it is harder for every patient to get the care they need. Community health centers are being pushed to a breaking point as well. The drastic cuts to health care coverage therefore impact everyone.

These numbers are only a fraction of the new average cost of spending in health care for Americans without Medicaid and ACA e-PTCs. As Congress awaits the President's FY 2027

⁴ Protect Our Care, <https://www.protectourcare.org/hospital-crisis-watch-trump-and-gop-cuts-leave-rural-health-care-in-a-code-red-as-communities-are-left-without-care/>

⁵ Health Affairs,

<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2024.00700#:~:text=We%20found%20that%20hospital%20closures,hospital%20options%20from%20rural%20markets.>

⁶ Kaiser Family Foundation, <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/medicaid-what-to-watch-in-2026/>

⁷ Urban Institute, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/48-million-people-will-lose-coverage-2026-if-enhanced-premium-tax-credits>

⁸ Kaiser Family Foundation, <https://www.kff.org/affordable-care-act/aca-marketplace-premium-payments-would-more-than-double-on-average-next-year-if-enhanced-premium-tax-credits-expire/#:~:text=Premium%20Payments%20in%202026%20Will,previously%20estimated%20for%20two%20reason>

Budget, we anticipate more reckless cuts to the nation's public health to be proposed. It is now more important than ever that Americans have the full data in front of them to make important and consequential decisions regarding their health care. Americans are feeling the burden of health care costs, and it is HHS' responsibility to assess the economic impacts of these new and severe health care cuts and provide their findings to Congress so that we may make the necessary policy and funding decisions to address the Trump Republican health care crisis.

I request the following to be included in this analysis of rising health care costs:

1. The average direct costs of an uninsured patient who is seeking primary care and the average direct costs for an insured patient who receives care in a rural or underserved area location, including the average cost of health insurance premiums.
2. The average out-of-pocket and cost sharing expenses for an uninsured patient who receives primary care.
3. The average increase in health coverage costs for a family of four who lost coverage due to the expiration of the ACA e-PTCs, including the costs to these families in January 2025 and the costs to these families in January 2026 without the tax credits.
4. The increase since January 2025 in emergency department visits by uninsured patients and the cost of those visits.
5. The estimated financial loss to local economies when hospitals close in rural areas and the direct cost impact on rural patients, including the actual losses since January 2025.
6. The estimated number of Americans who are currently uninsured or underinsured due to the expiration of ACA e-PTCs, and the difference between this number and the same statistic from January 2025.
7. The estimated number of Americans who are currently uninsured due to the drastic cuts to Medicaid under OBBBA, and the difference between this number and the same statistic from January 2025.

Congress must be focused on finding solutions to lowering costs and increasing coverage and access to critical health care. Americans and their representatives must therefore know the full economic impact of the health care crisis Washington Republicans have caused. I look forward to your response no later than May 1, 2026.

Sincerely,



Jacky Rosen
U.S. Senator