

Bi-monthly Publication

CMS Scraps Contracts To Upgrade Online Medicare system And Hands Over Control To DOGE, Agency Says

By: Noha Tong as seen in Fierce Healthcare

Contractors working to modernize a provider enrollment system have been shown the door, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced.

Instead, CMS will work with the highly influential advisory group Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to complete a system overhaul that will be far less costly and time-consuming, the agency said.

“Two contractors spent nine years and \$200M working on a modern provider enrollment system at CMS,” the agency said in an X post. “After 14 missed deadlines, zero usable output was produced. CMS has now cancelled these two contracts (saving \$17.8M annually), has hired multiple software engineers, and, working with DOGE, are accelerating this project.”

As of March 12, DOGE's wall of receipts highlighting terminated contracts did not include the contracts mentioned by CMS in the post. The website was last updated March 11 and is supposed to be refreshed weekly.

The online Medicare enrollment system PECOS, or Provider Enrollment, Chain and Ownership System, is likely the system targeted by DOGE in this instance, Fierce Healthcare has learned. PECOS was established as the central electronic system to process payments for every physician accepting Medicare and indicates whether providers are eligible to be paid out in Medicare

CMS has long promised to modernize the system, which frustrates providers and companies in the space, by implementing PECOS 2.0. [Read More Here...](#)



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Aetna Alleges Conspiracy Among Generic Pharmaceutical Manufacturers

By Thomas Sullivan, as seen in Policy & Medicine

More than 31 million Americans borrowed money last year to pay for health care, a new survey found.

Those Americans borrowed about \$74 billion, despite most of them have some form of health insurance, the West Health-Gallup survey found.

Most of the borrowers were ages 18-29, 30-39 and 40-49. Just two percent of Americans who borrowed were over 65 years old.

“Too many Americans are racking up medical debt whether they have health insurance or not,” Tim Lash, West Health Policy Center president, said in a statement. “A high-priced healthcare system that requires Americans to take out loans or make painful tradeoffs just to stay healthy is in desperate need of policy reform or things will get even worse.”

The survey found that Black and Hispanic Americans were “significantly” more likely to have borrowed than white adults.

Twenty-three percent of Black respondents said they borrowed for health care over the last year, while 16 percent of Hispanic adults borrowed. Just 9 percent of white adults borrowed funds for healthcare.

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Trump Administration Proposes ACA Program Integrity Rule That Would Decimate Enrollment

By: Rebecca Pifer, As seen in *Healthcarediver*

The rule is like “making people crawl through broken glass” for health insurance, one expert said.

Dive Brief:

New Trump administration policies meant to tackle fraud and abuse in Affordable Care Act plans would make it significantly harder for Americans to enroll in the coverage, experts say.

On Monday, the CMS proposed a rule that would require ACA enrollees to provide more information to prove they’re eligible for subsidies and special enrollment periods, and charge people automatically re-enrolled in subsidized coverage a monthly premium until they confirm their eligibility.

The rule would also shorten the annual open enrollment period for ACA plans by one month, and reduce opportunities for people with very low incomes to sign up for coverage. Between 750,000 and 2 million people will lose ACA coverage if the regulation is implemented as proposed, the CMS estimates. [Read More Here...](#)



Thought Inflation Was Bad? Health Insurance Premiums Are Rising Even Faster

By: Phillip Reese, As Seen In KFF Healthnews

Kirk Vartan pays more than \$2,000 a month for a high-deductible health insurance plan from Blue Shield on Covered California, the state's Affordable Care Act marketplace. He could have selected a cheaper plan from a different provider, but he wanted one that includes his wife's doctor.

"It's for the two of us, and we're not sick," said Vartan, general manager at A Slice of New York pizza shops in the Bay Area cities of San Jose and Sunnyvale. "It's ridiculous."

Vartan, who is in his late 50s, is one of millions of Californians struggling to keep up with health insurance premiums ballooning faster than inflation.

Average monthly premiums for families with employer-provided health coverage in California's private sector nearly doubled over the last 15 years, from just over \$1,000 in 2008 to almost \$2,000 in 2023, a KFF Health News analysis of federal data shows. That's more than twice the rate of inflation. Also, employees have had to absorb a growing share of the cost.

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Trump Proposes Cutting ACA Enrollment Period, Ending ‘Dreamer’ Coverage

By: Nathaniel Weixel, As seen in Tje Hill

The Trump administration is proposing to shorten ObamaCare’s annual open enrollment period by a month, a move the administration said is aimed at helping consumers pick the right plan.

According to a proposed rule released Monday, open enrollment would run from Nov. 1 through Dec. 15, instead of through Jan. 15.

“This proposal aims to reduce consumer confusion, streamline the enrollment process, align more closely with open enrollment dates for many employer-based health plans, encourage continuous coverage, and reduce the risk of adverse selection from consumers who otherwise may wait to enroll until they need health care services,” the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) said in a fact sheet.

The sweeping rule gives a glimpse of how the Trump administration will handle the signature health law.

The move mirrors one made during President Trump’s first term, when he shortened open enrollment to seven weeks. He also slashed funding for advertising and outreach and allowed “skippy” short-term plans on the market after he tried and failed to repeal the law. Open enrollment numbers dropped significantly.

Under former President Biden, there were a record number of people enrolling in Affordable Care Act plans. Last year, 24 million people chose plans during the most recent open enrollment period, mainly due to expanded tax credits that made plans available to people for little or no monthly premiums.

[Read More Here...](#)

Another Reprieve? Proposed Budget Bill Includes Telehealth, HaH Extensions

By: Eric Wicklund, As seen in Healthleaders

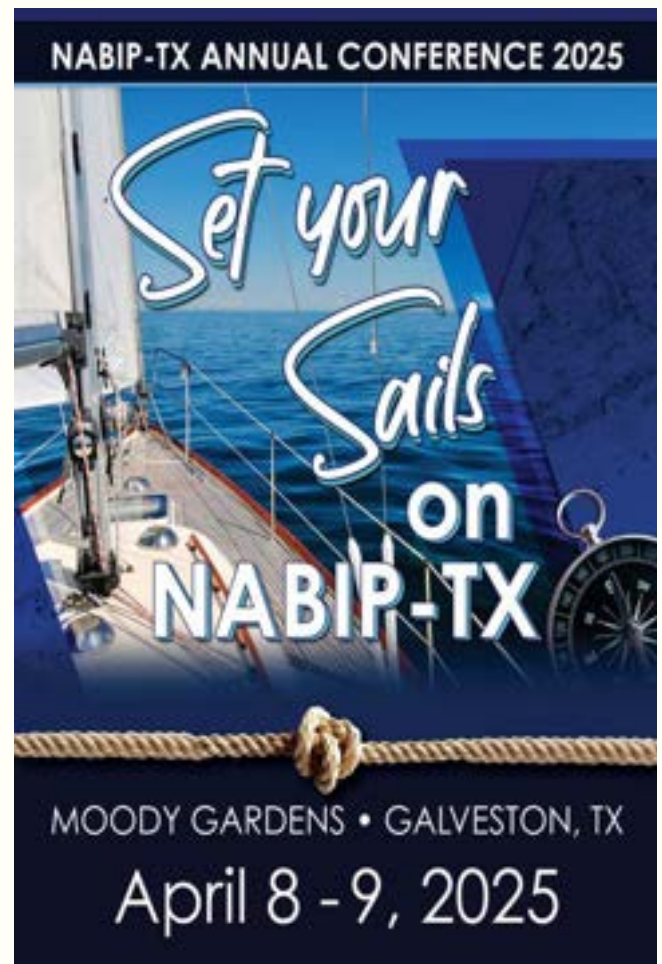
A continuing resolution now before Congress would extend pandemic-era telehealth and Hospital at Home waivers for six months.

The up-and-down battle over Medicare telehealth and Hospital at Home waivers is on the upswing again, as a proposed bill to fund the government through September includes extensions for both.

But in typical good news-bad news fashion, those proposed extensions would only run to September, leaving health systems and hospitals wondering whether to keep those programs going or shut them down.

According to the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and several others, the proposed Continuing Resolution unveiled on March 8 keeps in place pandemic-era waivers on key telehealth coverage and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Acute Hospital Care at Home (AHCAH) program through September 30. Advocates say this would give Congress more time to negotiate a long-term deal, such as a five-year extension supported by the ATA and others.

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The One-Of-A-Kind Cottage Farms In Texas Serves Up Fresh Homemade Pie To Die For

By: Katie Lawrence, As Seen in Only In Texas

If your sweet tooth is half as big as mine, you can't pass up the chance to visit Cottage Farms in Sumner. One of the best farm bakeries in Texas, this family-run farm and cafe offers all sorts of delicious treats, including the most incredible homemade pies you'll ever have. The setting is idyllic, the treats are mouthwatering, and the owners are sweet as can be.

Located just outside of Paris in the tiny town of Sumner, Cottage Farms is a family farm with an on-site bakery and cafe. Johnny and Yolanda Harder and their three kids are always thrilled when folks stop by for lunch or a freshly-baked sweet treat.

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This Texas Dining Experience Has Been Called One Of The Best Restaurants In The u.s.

By: Katie Lawrence, As Seen in Only In Texas

As a lifelong Southeast Texas resident, Southern cuisine has a special place in my heart. I have fond and vivid memories of spending every Thanksgiving at my aunt's house, the aromas of stuffing and fresh-baked pies buried in my subconscious, ready to be pulled to the surface any time my soul could use a little dose of warmth. When memories aren't enough, I can always count on Gatlin's Fins & Feathers in Houston to deliver those same cozy feelings. Not only one of the best restaurants in Texas, but in all of America, Gatlin's serves up elevated soul food that's comparable, if not - dare I say, better - than the meals I enjoyed in childhood.

Upon entering the restaurant, you'll feel right at home in the elegant, yet friendly atmosphere. It's upscale without being stuffy, with mahogany chairs, old newspaper advertisement clippings for tablecloths, and the nicest waitstaff you'll ever meet. To me, Gatlin's has a very New Orleans vibe, and I can't get enough.

[Read More Here...](#)

The Off-The-Beaten-Path Restaurant In Texas That Is Worth The Day Trip

By: Katie Lawrence, As Seen in Only In Texas

I've never been very good at multitasking, but the same can't be said about The Sentinel. In fact, this nondescript, white adobe building in the quirky West Texas town of Marfa wears more hats than I ever thought possible of a single business. Not only a restaurant, coffee shop, bar, and event venue, The Sentinel is also home to two local newspapers — The Big Bend Sentinel and Presidio International, so visitors can feel proud knowing every cup of coffee or locally-inspired meal they purchase is supporting independent journalism.

The interior of the restaurant gives off a vibe somewhere between Bohemian and Southwestern, and it couldn't fit in more perfectly with the surrounding desert landscape. You'll see a sizable collection of ceramics and other one-of-a-kind items displayed in one section of the shop, and fancy coffee machines and an impressive liquor collection can be seen behind the counter.

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NABIP-TX ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

A promotional graphic for the NABIP-TX Annual Conference 2025. The background features a sailboat on the ocean under a blue sky. A large, stylized white text overlay reads "Set your Sails on NABIP-TX". A compass is visible in the lower right corner, and a rope with a knot is at the bottom. The text "Set your Sails" is in a cursive font, while "on NABIP-TX" is in a bold, blocky font.

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March Chapter Agendas


AUSTIN


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NABIP Austin: March 27 2025 CE-Th HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules



 March 27, 2025
3:30 PM - 5:00 PM
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 Link to login will be emailed to you separately

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[The HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules 1-Hour Virtual CE Session!](#)

The HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules

Provider: StanleyKup Data Services, d/b/a StanleyKup Consulting
Provider No: 201108

Presenter: Jennifer Stanley

Course ID: 140213

This Continuing Education course is designed to equip insurance professionals with the knowledge and tools necessary to implement best practices regarding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability

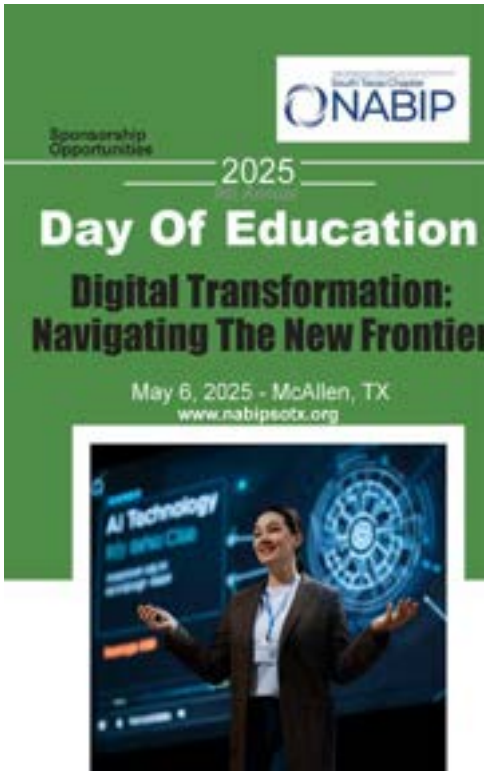
Tickets

\$0.00 Member Registration- Free

\$0.00 Guest Registration -Free

Documents

 [Jennifer Stanley Bio](#)



NABIP-ETX March Monthly Luncheon - Vision Benefit Basics →

When March 28, 2025
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM (CST)

Location Heartland Security Insurance Group, 501 Shelley Drive, Tyler, TX 75701 - Main Floor Conference Room

[Register](#)



[Show details >>](#)

2025 NABIP-ETX Annual Symposium →

When May 09, 2025
7:30 AM - 3:30 PM (CST)

Location Studio Movie Grill, 8954 S. Broadway Ave., Tyler, TX 75703

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Details
TO FOLLOW

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CE Symposium: A Full Day of Learning

March 20 @ 7:00 am - 7:00 pm

MEET THE GUEST EXPERT SPEAKERS

- MIKE SMITH - The Brokerage
- DAVID J SLEPAK - VP, Angel Health
- JASON DIXON - Trinity Cognitive Group
- ERIC JOHNSON - ComedyCE.com
- SHARON ALT - Allflex | AM COBRA
- AUDRA SULLIVAN - Yogurt Insurance - Panel
- MIKE PAPUC - The Brokerage - Panel
- JOSH SLATTERY - The Brokerage - Panel

Register Here: <https://givebutler.com/RVIZyY>

MARCH 20, 2025 | WWW.NABIP-FW.ORG/EVENTS

NABIP Houston March Luncheon



March 18, 2025 | 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM
[Add to Calendar](#)

Saltgrass Steak House | 1803 Shepherd Dr. Houston, TX 77007
<https://www.saltgrass.com/location/saltgrass-houston-shepherd/>
[Directions](#)

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NABIP-FW Sales Symposium - March 20th, 2025 Lone Star Park, Grand Prairie Texas

The Ultimate Sales Symposium

Please join us for the 2025 NABIP Fort Worth Sales Symposium as we welcome agents from around the metroplex for an information-packed exhibition day focused on the Senior Market, Individual Sales, and Group Health Insurance.

[More info and register here.](#)



NABIP-FW Annual Golf Tournament - April 2, 2025 Texas Rangers Golf Club

Annual Golf Tournament

Join us in benefiting Gill Children's Services in Fort Worth with a day of spectacular golf, unparalleled networking opportunities, and unforgettable fun at the prestigious Texas Rangers Golf Club. The NABIP-FW Annual Golf Tournament isn't just a game - it's an experience! This isn't just a golf tournament. It's a celebration of sport, community, and the spirit of the NABIP-FW. Every swing you take supports our mission and connects you deeper with the local business community.

Please join us for the 2025 NABIP Fort Worth Sales Symposium as we welcome agents from around the metroplex for an information-packed exhibition day focused on the Senior Market, Individual Sales, and Group Health Insurance.

[More info and register here.](#)



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Future Meetings

NABIP San Antonio Poker Night-THE BIG BLIND

 March 20, 2025

 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM

 The Big Blind
19314 US HWY 281 N #116
San Antonio, TX 78258
[Venue website](#)

NABIP San Antonio Poker Night-THE BIG BLIND

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