



Trump Executive Orders Emphasize Healthcare Issues

Christopher Furlong / Staff / Getty Images

President Donald Trump issued a record-breaking number of executive orders in his first months back in office, with 15 focusing on healthcare issues.

BY KATIE KING

President Donald Trump has signed roughly 150 executive orders since taking office on Jan. 20, 2025. In comparison, Trump signed less than half that number (55) during the first year of his initial term in 2017, Joe Biden signed 77 total in 2021, and Barack Obama signed about 40 in 2009.

Trump signed more executive orders in his first 100 days in office than any other president, surpassing President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s previous record of 99 during his first 100 days in 1933.

An executive order is a written directive that manages the operations of the federal government. Executive orders do not change U.S. law or regulations but rather outline the administration’s priorities and direct federal policymakers to act. They are not subject to congressional approval but can be legally challenged, and many of Trump’s orders have already drawn lawsuits.

CONTINUED >>

JANUARY 20

Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government (14168)

Establishes a policy that recognizes two biological sexes and directs federal agencies to use language and comply with policies based on this distinction, including blocking the use of federal funds to promote gender ideology in educational settings. The order could impact coverage for gender-affirming care in government-regulated programs, but has already faced several legal challenges.

JANUARY 20

Withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization (14155)

The United States will stop being a member of the World Health Organization (WHO) on Jan. 22, 2026, after a one-year withdrawal period mandated by Congress when it voted to join the WHO in 1948. The exit has the potential to disrupt global health data sharing and disease surveillance systems.

JANUARY 20

Delivering Emergency Price Relief for American Families and Defeating the Cost-of-Living Crisis (Memorandum)

Directs executive departments and agencies to implement emergency price relief measures, including reducing housing costs, cutting unnecessary healthcare expenses and rent-seeking practices, lowering the costs of home appliances, creating job opportunities, and eliminating climate policies that raise food and fuel prices. In the context of healthcare, reducing administrative expenses could mean eliminating excessive paperwork, billing complexity, and redundant systems. Rent-seeking behavior refers to companies profiting without adding real value, such as intermediaries inflating drug prices.

JANUARY 20

Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions (14148)

Rescinds 78 executive actions from the Biden administration, including the federal government’s response to combat COVID-19, LGBTQI+ access to care, longer enrollment periods for Affordable Care Act (ACA) plans in most states and extra funding for ACA plan enrollers, and the Department of Health and Human Service (HHS) directive to assess certain healthcare payment and delivery models that may lower drug costs and promote access to innovative drug therapies.

JANUARY 20

Regulatory Freeze Pending Review (Memorandum)

Government-wide regulatory freeze that prevents all new federal rules from going into effect until a department or agency head appointed or designated by the president after Jan. 20, 2025, reviews and approves the rule. It also calls for the withdrawal of unpublished rules for review and a 60-day postponement of the effective date of recently published or issued rules for further evaluation. Rules in question include proposed Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act security provisions and payment model adjustments for Medicare and Medicaid.

JANUARY 24

Enforcing the Hyde Amendment (14182)

Prohibits the use of federal taxpayer dollars for elective abortions and revokes previous executive orders that mandated such funding. Abortion access for Medicaid enrollees could be targeted.

JANUARY 28

Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation (14187)

Establishes a policy to not fund or support the transition of a child from one sex to another by restricting insurance coverage for gender-affirming procedures and treatments for minors. On March 4, a federal judge issued a nationwide preliminary injunction that blocks enforcement of this executive order. However, some providers have already stopped providing some or all gender-affirming care to young people under age 19.

FEBRUARY 13

Establishing the President’s Make America Healthy Again Commission (14212)

Founds a new commission focused on reversing chronic disease, transparency in health research, and improving food and healthcare systems. Priorities include enhancing health coverage flexibility to support lifestyle changes and disease prevention.

FEBRUARY 18

Expanding Access to In Vitro Fertilization (14216)

Aims to make in vitro fertilization (IVF) more accessible and affordable by reducing statutory and regulatory burdens. Establishes a 90-day deadline to provide policy recommendations on protecting IVF access and reducing out-of-pocket and health plan costs for treatment. This may prompt health insurers to reevaluate the availability and scope of coverage for IVF treatments, although it does not mandate coverage.

FEBRUARY 19

Commencing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy (14217)

Calls for the elimination or reduction of specific governmental entities, and the termination of several advisory committees tasked with providing guidance on emerging health issues, such as the Advisory Committee on Long COVID and Health Equity Advisory Committee. This will also reduce the scope and functions of several key health-related agencies, including HHS, the Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and National Institutes of Health.

FEBRUARY 25

Making America Healthy Again by Empowering Patients with Clear, Accurate, and Actionable Healthcare Pricing Information (14221)

The Departments of Treasury, Labor, and Health and Human Services must update enforcement policies to ensure hospitals and insurers disclose actual healthcare prices rather than estimates, as well as issue guidance to ensure pricing information is standardized across providers and plans. In addition, Treasury is directed to issue guidance expanding access to health savings accounts (HSAs) and flexible spending accounts (FSAs), including improving HSA compatibility among health plans and allowing funds to cover more preventive care services.

FEBRUARY 26

Implementing the President’s “Department of Government Efficiency” Cost Efficiency Initiative (14222)

Aims to overhaul federal spending practices by reviewing, potentially terminating, or modifying existing contracts and grants. This initiative will impact HHS, which is charged with implementing a centralized system to record federal contract and grant payments and identifying opportunities for cost reduction or reallocation to promote efficiency.

>> CONTINUED FROM P. 61

Trump’s flurry of executive orders reflects on the pledges he made on the campaign trail: restructure the government, institute universal tariffs, overhaul immigration and border policies, chip away at the Affordable Care Act (ACA), examine Medicare’s ability to negotiate drug prices, prioritize domestic manufacturing, and generally undo the previous administration’s work on issues like diversity, equity, and inclusion and COVID-19. They could have sweeping economic, social, and health-related implications.

Leader’s Edge mapped out a timeline of all the executive orders (and a couple of memoranda) the president has issued with respect to healthcare coverage, costs, delivery, and federal oversight. **edge**

Tariffs’ Impact on Healthcare Claims Costs

Although not a part of this timeline, President Donald Trump has issued at least 15 executive orders instituting, delaying, and pulling back new tariffs. The economic impact of those policies remains to be seen, but they have the potential to disrupt global supply chains. Tariff-related import expenses are expected to impact healthcare claims costs across three categories, according to a recent survey from healthcare research and analysis firm Black Book Market Research:

1. Facility costs, which include supplies and services provided by hospitals and other providers;
2. Professional billing, which focuses on outpatient and ambulatory services; and
3. Pharmaceuticals, encompassing drug production and ingredient costs.

