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HEALTH CARE IN CRISIS • JUNE 2026

Trump and Republicans Are Making Health Care *Unaffordable* for Wisconsinites

*A manufactured crisis: 270,000 Wisconsinites set to lose coverage,
premiums up 148%, and Badger State hospitals on the brink.*

DEFEND AMERICA ACTION
PROTECT OUR CARE *Wisconsin*

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Trump and Republicans Are Making Health Care Unaffordable for Wisconsinites

At the start of the year, Donald Trump declared one of his top priorities would be to “make America affordable again” and “put more money into the pockets of American consumers.” Trump promised to lower costs for Wisconsinites; instead, working families, children, seniors, and small business owners across the state are paying more than ever for healthcare. Trump and Republicans in Congress are the reason health care is becoming less affordable by the minute. They launched an all-out assault on the health care system when they slashed \$1 trillion from Medicaid and allowed life-saving ACA tax credits to expire last year. The result? A deliberate, manufactured health care crisis that is forcing Wisconsin families off coverage, pushing premiums to historic highs, driving Badger State hospitals and clinics toward closure, and leaving rural communities without access to care.

Now, Wisconsin residents are suffering under an unprecedented disaster that is the direct result of Trump's failed policies, as tens of thousands lose coverage and hundreds of thousands watch their premiums more than double this year – all while Trump and his billionaire buddies cash in with some of the biggest tax breaks in history.

— BY THE NUMBERS

Wisconsin's Health Care *Affordability* Crisis

270K

270,000 Wisconsinites stand to lose their health care coverage through Medicaid or the ACA entirely because of Trump and the GOP's health care cuts.

Source: Wisconsin DHS

25K

Around 25,000 Wisconsinites on Medicaid or ACA coverage have already lost or dropped their health care since the cuts: nearly 12,000 fewer ACA enrollees; over 13,000 lost Medicaid since July.

Source: KFF · CMS

+148%

Premiums are increasing by an average of 148 percent this year for over 270,000 Wisconsinites who buy health insurance through the ACA and receive tax credits.

Source: Center for American Progress · KFF

90%

90 percent of Wisconsin voters are at least somewhat concerned about health insurance – with nearly two-thirds “very concerned” – a majority across party lines.

Source: Marquette Law School Poll, March 2026

\$264.6M

Wisconsin hospitals are estimated to lose \$264.6 million a year due to Medicaid cuts alone.

Source: Third Way

9

Nine Wisconsin hospitals, wards, and clinics are closed or closing, have already announced cuts, or are at risk of closure in the wake of Trump and the GOP's health care cuts.

Source: Protect Our Care – Hospital Crisis Watch

3/5

Medicaid covers **three in five Wisconsin nursing home residents, two in five Wisconsin births, one in three Wisconsin kids, and one in five Wisconsinites.**

Source: Wisconsin DHS

SECTION 01

Wisconsinites Are Deeply Concerned About Rising Health Care Costs

— *Health Care Affordability Is A Top Issue For Wisconsin Voters.*

90% of Wisconsin voters are [at least somewhat concerned](#) about health insurance in the latest Marquette Law School poll conducted in March 2026. Nearly two-thirds (63%) [said](#) they are “very concerned” about health insurance, including a majority across party lines. An RMG Research poll conducted in April 2026 [found](#) that 72% of Wisconsin voters rated health care as “very important,” the second-highest issue behind inflation and the cost of living. Overall, 66% of Americans [worry about affording health care](#) – more than utilities, food, housing, or gas. 80% of ACA enrollees [say](#) their 2026 costs are higher, and 55% are cutting back on food or basic household items to afford health care.

— *Wisconsinites Wanted Trump And Republicans In Congress To Extend ACA Tax Credits.*

Trump and Republicans' refusal to extend ACA tax credits that make health care affordable has created a [living nightmare](#) for hundreds of thousands of Wisconsin residents. A recent KFF Health Tracking Poll [found](#) 67% of Americans say Congress did the “wrong thing” by not extending the credits. As many as [1 in 4 people](#) enrolled in ACA coverage said they were “very likely” to go without insurance in 2026 if premiums more than double in cost.

SECTION 02

Trump and the GOP Cut Medicaid and the ACA For Working Wisconsinites

— *Trump And Republicans Enacted The Largest Medicaid Cuts In The Program's 60-Year History.*

Last year, Trump and Republicans in Congress slashed [over \\$1 trillion](#) from Medicaid and the ACA, imposing sweeping Medicaid work requirements, mandating Medicaid eligibility renewals every six months, and sharply restricting how states like Wisconsin fund Medicaid. As a result of the Trump-GOP cuts, [270,000 Wisconsinites](#) will lose health care coverage entirely, including many currently relying on Medicaid. [Over 13,000](#) Wisconsinites have lost their Medicaid coverage [since last July](#).

— *Wisconsin Kids Rely On Health Care Programs Trump And The GOP Gutted.*

Wisconsin kids are disproportionately impacted by Trump and the GOP's massive cuts to health care. [One in three](#) Wisconsin kids relies on Medicaid or CHIP for health care coverage, and Medicaid [covers](#) two in five Wisconsin births.

— *Premiums Doubled Overnight After Republicans Killed ACA Tax Credits.*

After Trump and Republicans refused to extend critical ACA tax credits, Wisconsin ACA enrollees faced an estimated [average premium increase of 148%](#) to keep their coverage. A 60-year-old couple in Wisconsin making \$85,000 a year, for example, [saw](#) their average annual ACA premium costs rise by \$23,916 to hit \$31,141 this year – costing them nearly 37% of their annual income before taxes and nearly \$2,600 a month.

— *Thousands Of Wisconsinites Have Already Lost Or Dropped Their Health Coverage Due To Spiking Costs.*

According to data [released by](#) the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on Open Enrollment 2026, [thousands](#) of Wisconsinites dropped their ACA coverage for 2026 after Trump and Republicans ripped away tax credits. Compared to Wisconsin's 2025 effectuated enrollment data, [nearly 12,000](#) fewer Wisconsinites [signed up](#) for ACA coverage for 2026 after Trump and Republicans ripped away tax credits.

— *Local Small Businesses Are Losing Health Care.*

The Trump-GOP plan to rip away ACA tax credits is hitting Wisconsin small businesses especially hard. 55,300 small business owners and 34,300 self-employed workers in the state rely on the ACA for coverage – more than one in six ACA enrollees in Wisconsin. 87% of small business owners wanted Congress to permanently extend ACA tax credits. According to the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce survey, “mak[ing] health care more affordable” was the top state policy priority named by Wisconsin business owners.

SECTION 03

Wisconsin Hospitals Are Closing & Rural Health Care Is At Risk

— *Wisconsin Will Lose Over \$500 Million In Federal Medicaid Funding As GOP Slashes Critical Hospital Funding.*

The Trump-GOP cuts include caps to the provider taxes that Wisconsin hospitals rely on in order to stay afloat. The Commonwealth Fund estimates that, by 2029, the state will [lose \\$501 million](#) in federal Medicaid funding – a nearly 6% reduction – in addition to Wisconsin communities losing some \$55 million in state and local tax revenue. Wisconsin hospitals alone are [estimated to lose \\$264.6 million](#) a year in critical funding.

— *Nine Wisconsin Hospitals And Clinics Are Already Closed, Cutting Services, Or Are At Risk.*

Protect Our Care's Hospital Crisis Watch has [indicated](#) that nine health care facilities in Wisconsin have already been severely impacted since Trump and the GOP passed their cuts to health care last July:

- **AT RISK:** Holy Family Memorial, Mayo Clinic Health System – Oakridge, and Aspirus Stanley Hospital.
- **WARD CLOSED:** Aurora Medical Center's Inpatient Psychiatric Care Ward.
- **CLOSING:** ThedaCare Physicians – Weyauwega.
- **CLOSED:** Tellurian Detoxification Center, Red Oak Counseling, Bellin Health Two Rivers, and City on a Hill Clinic.

— *Rural Wisconsin Hospitals Are Most At-Risk.*

Wisconsin's rural hospital network was already operating on razor-thin margins even before Trump and the GOP ever passed their massive cuts to critical hospital funding. [Nearly a quarter](#) of Wisconsin's rural hospitals were operating at a loss in 2024. Now, Becker's Hospital Review estimates that the Trump-GOP Medicaid cuts could threaten the closure of [nearly one in eight rural hospitals](#) statewide. Ten rural hospitals in Wisconsin are [already moving to join forces](#) to explore shared contracts with insurers in a clinically integrated network known as the Wisconsin High Value Network.

— *Trump's Pity Rural Health Fund Won't Cover His Massive Cuts To Wisconsin's Rural Health Care Infrastructure.*

In response to concerns from Wisconsin state officials about cuts to Medicaid, the Trump administration doled out a [pitiful](#) rural health care grant that will not make up for the massive federal budget cuts, [falling over \\$60 million short](#) of lost annual hospital funding ripped away by the Trump-GOP bill – even after Wisconsin [moved aggressively](#) to mitigate lost federal Medicaid funds. The grant also [offers no guarantees](#) that the money will go to the hospitals that need it the most.

SECTION 04

Out-of-Pocket Costs Are Rising In Wisconsin, Despite Trump's Promises

— *Trump Is Protecting Big Pharma's Profits While Wisconsin Seniors Pay More.*

While Trump has [publicly declared](#) that drug prices are dropping, his health care cuts carved out an [expanded orphan drug exemption](#) shielding nearly one-third of high-priced drugs from the Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program passed by President Biden and Democrats in Congress. The carve-out gives Big Pharma [\\$8.8 billion over 10 years](#) at the expense of taxpayers and seniors, raising out-of-pocket costs for Wisconsin's [1 million](#) prescription drug beneficiaries on Medicare. Meanwhile, Medicare premiums [rose](#) to \$202.90 a month in 2026 (up \$17.90), and the annual deductible rose to \$283. Last year, monthly out-of-pocket costs for brand-name drugs under Medicare Part D [jumped 26%](#) to \$108 a month.

— *688 Drug Prices Have Gone Up Since Trump Took Office.*

A September 2025 [Senate HELP Committee report](#) found that 688 prescription drugs have increased in price since Trump took office, with a median increase of 5.5% and 25 drugs more than doubling. Of the 17 pharmaceutical companies Trump personally asked to lower prices, [15 raised prices regardless](#). The companies that signed deals with Trump also [made huge profits](#) during the first full year of Trump's second term, raking in a combined \$177 billion in profits – an explosive 65% increase in profits from 2024.

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+ *Protect Our Care Wisconsin*

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Wisconsin families can't afford another year of manufactured crisis.

Defend America Action is a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization, and Protect Our Care Wisconsin is the state arm of Protect Our Care – both dedicated to standing up for the working families, children, seniors, and small business owners Donald Trump's policies are leaving behind.

This report draws exclusively on publicly reported sources. Every link in this PDF is clickable and leads to the original reporting.