

PROTECT OUR CARE

Top Ways Trump Has Sabotaged Seniors' Health Care In Florida

From the beginning of his presidency, Trump has [waged a war on seniors](#). As the nation is continuing to battle a once-in-a-generation health care crisis, it has never been more clear that President Trump's sabotage of seniors' health care is especially dangerous. [80 percent](#) of U.S. coronavirus deaths have been among people aged 65 and older, and more than [70,000 people](#) have died in nursing homes nationwide. Meanwhile, Trump has continued his attacks on Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) -- even as millions of seniors and older adults rely on these essential programs for care. Despite Trump's repeated promises to protect seniors, his actions speak louder than his words.

Coronavirus' Impact On Seniors In Florida

- Florida has [recorded](#) 668,846 cases and 12,787 deaths as of September 14.
- [82 percent](#) of coronavirus deaths in Florida have been among people aged 65 and older.
- As of September 14, the state has [reported](#) more than 43,612 cases and 4,807 deaths connected to long-term care facilities. Deaths connected to long-term care represent more than a third of the state's recorded deaths.

Trump Continues To Attack Medicare

Medicare is a lifeline for seniors in Florida and across the country. Despite promising to protect Medicare during his campaign, President Trump signed a tax bill that weakened the Medicare Trust Fund and repeatedly sought funding cuts for the program in his budget proposals. At the same time, he is refusing commonsense measures to lower drug prices for seniors.

Trump Has Repeatedly Made Clear That If He Wins Re-Election In 2020, He's Going To Cut Medicare. In January 2020, Trump [made it clear](#) he remained open to slashing benefits for vital programs like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security during an interview with CNBC at the World Economic Forum. In 2018, [4,515,510](#) Floridians relied on Medicare for coverage.

As Part Of His Failed Coronavirus Response, Trump Is Now Pursuing Permanent Payroll Tax Cuts That Experts Fear Could Decimate The Medicare Trust Fund. Trump signed an executive order that attempts to defer payroll tax payments from September through December for many workers, and he promised to make these cuts [permanent](#) if he wins re-election in November. While the legality of this proposal remains murky, it is clear that the impact on Medicare could be devastating if further tax cuts take effect. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget [estimates](#) that the pandemic could already cause the Medicare Part A trust fund to become insolvent by 2023. Other experts say this fund could run out of money as early as 2022 as a result of fewer people paying payroll taxes amid record levels of unemployment. An even bigger cut to payroll taxes would undoubtedly result in more uncertainty for millions of seniors relying on Medicare for health care. AARP [blasted](#) Trump's proposal, warning that "this approach exacerbates people's already-heightened fears and concerns about their financial and retirement security." David Shulkin, former Veterans Affairs Secretary and

health policy fellow at the University of Pennsylvania, [said](#) we “can’t afford” another crisis during the pandemic, adding that “if anything, we should be taking actions to shore up the solvency of Medicare and not be offering solutions that are going to make the problem much more critical.”

Trump Has Proposed Steep Cuts To Medicare In His Budget Requests. Despite [repeatedly promising](#) not to cut Medicare, Trump’s 2020 budget proposal would have cut more than \$800 billion from Medicare over a decade, or roughly [10 percent](#) of Medicare’s funding over the next ten years to help pay for tax cuts to insurance and big drug companies. Most recently, Trump’s 2021 budget would reduce Medicare spending by about [\\$500 billion](#), in addition to more than [\\$1 trillion](#) in cuts to the ACA and Medicaid.

President Trump And His Republican Allies In Congress Will Not Allow Medicare To Negotiate For Lower Drug Prices Even As The Cost Of Drugs Skyrocket. Though [88 percent](#) of Americans support allowing the federal government to negotiate drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries, Republicans refuse to let Medicare negotiate. In December 2019, House Democrats passed the [Lower Drug Costs Now Act](#) to reduce the price of drugs for every American family by allowing the government to directly negotiate for lower drug prices for people with private insurance as well as Medicare. The bill would save households [\\$158 billion](#) over seven years. Despite his multiple campaign promises to let Medicare negotiate, Trump opposes the House’s plan. According to AARP, [30 percent](#) of Florida residents stopped taking medication as prescribed due to cost in 2017.

Trump Signed A Tax Bill That Weakened Medicare Funding. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, Trump’s signature tax law [reduced](#) federal income tax rates, which lowers payroll tax revenues, and repealed the ACA individual mandate penalty, which increases Medicare spending -- “both of which adversely affected the solvency of the Medicare Hospital Insurance Trust Fund.”

Trump Is Fighting To Overturn The ACA

Trump is backing a lawsuit that would destroy the health care law and result in devastating coverage losses and higher costs for seniors and older adults. Trump’s effort to overturn the ACA threatens to raise seniors’ drug costs and impose an “age tax” that would make them pay more for care.

If The ACA Is Struck Down In Court:

More Than 2.1 Million Older Floridians With Pre-Existing Conditions Will Lose Protections. [8,443,600 Floridians](#) have a pre-existing condition, including 1,000,400 Florida children, 4,150,000 Florida women, and 2,118,400 Floridians between ages 55 and 64.

Floridians Over The Age of 50 Will Face A \$4,000 “Age Tax.” If the Republican lawsuit is successful, insurance companies could charge people over 50 more than younger people. The Affordable Care Act limited the amount older people could be charged to three times more than younger people. If insurers were to charge five times more, as was proposed in the Republican repeal bills, that would add an average “age tax” of [\\$4,124](#) for a 60-year-old in the individual market, including \$4,007 in Florida, according to the AARP.

Seniors Will Have To Pay More For Prescription Drugs. If the Republican lawsuit is successful, seniors will have to pay more for prescription drugs because the Medicare “donut” hole got reopened. From 2010 to 2016, “More than 11.8 million Medicare beneficiaries have received discounts over \$26.8 billion on prescription drugs – an average of \$2,272 per beneficiary,” according to a [January 2017 Centers on Medicare and Medicaid Services report](#).

Seniors Will No Longer Be Guaranteed Free Preventive Services And Annual Check-Ups. [60 million people](#) with Medicare have access to free preventive services because of the Affordable Care Act.

Seniors Could Once Again See Less Coordinated Care. Provisions in the ACA encouraged groups of doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers to come together to provide coordinated high-quality care to the Medicare patients they serve. In fact, [8.9 million](#) Medicare beneficiaries are now benefiting from higher quality, more coordinated care.

Trump Waged A War On Medicaid:

More than [7.2 million American seniors](#) and 8.5 million adults aged 50 to 64 have Medicaid coverage. The Medicaid program provides critical support for America’s seniors in long-term care and nursing homes -- funding [53 percent](#) of long-term care nationwide.

Trump Wants To Gut The Medicaid Budget. Despite [promising not to cut Medicaid](#) when he ran for president, President Trump has repeatedly asked for steep budget cuts to Medicaid and other essential health programs through his budget proposals. Most recently, Trump sought [more than \\$1 trillion in cuts](#) to Medicaid and the ACA for fiscal year 2021. His budget essentially ends Medicaid expansion by [eliminating](#) the enhanced federal payment and proposes nationwide work requirements, which experts [estimate](#) would cause up to 4 million people to lose coverage. Roughly [3.8 million](#) Floridians rely on Medicaid for coverage, including more than 2.5 million children.

Trump Has Championed Burdensome Paperwork Requirements. For years, Trump has empowered states to impose red tape and paperwork requirements as part of his ongoing efforts to dismantle Medicaid. Work requirements have been at the center of these efforts. After Arkansas imposed the nation’s first work requirements program, more than [18,000](#) residents lost Medicaid coverage. While work requirements have been blocked by a federal judge [several times](#), the Trump administration [keeps fighting](#) to impose these onerous rules in Medicaid. A recent GAO [report](#) found that the administrative costs to implement the failed work requirement programs in five states topped \$400 million. In addition to work requirements, the administration has encouraged states to impose other barriers such as [increased eligibility verification](#) as well as premiums and other cost-sharing.

- **Requiring People To Work To Maintain Medicaid Coverage Is Particularly Burdensome For Older Adults.** Less than half of American adults [ages 55 to 64](#) work. Some are retired, and for many others, chronic health conditions make it [difficult](#) to maintain steady employment.

Trump Continues To Support Medicaid Block Grants. Ahead of the pandemic, the Trump administration [announced](#) guidance that could severely limit state funding for those enrolled in Medicaid expansion. Block grants are a [blatant attempt](#) to limit funding, gut coverage and kick people off the rolls. Importantly, under a block grant, federal funding would no longer necessarily increase in response to a public health emergency like coronavirus, potentially forcing states to limit enrollment or benefits. This could lead to people losing coverage and access to care, undermining prevention and treatment of diseases nationwide.

Trump Wants To Eliminate Medicaid Expansion Through His Texas Lawsuit To Overturn The ACA. The lawsuit would terminate Medicaid expansion, threatening to rip away coverage from 17 million and cut key funding for already-struggling rural hospitals during the pandemic. If the ACA is overturned, Florida will lose the opportunity to expand coverage to [1,596,000 additional residents](#). Research has shown that Medicaid expansion has resulted in healthier people, communities, and economies. One study even found that Medicaid expansion [saved](#) the lives of at least 19,200 older adults.

Trump Weakened Oversight Of Nursing Homes Before The Pandemic

Before the outbreak, the Trump administration rolled back nursing home oversight and critical protections for residents. And even as it has become clear that nursing homes are at the center of this pandemic, the administration has continued to pursue policies that make nursing homes less safe.

The Trump Administration Isn't Sufficiently Tracking Nursing Home Outbreaks. Even as infections in nursing homes across the country skyrocketed, the Trump administration [failed to track](#) the number of cases and deaths in nursing homes until more than 100 days after coronavirus was detected in the United States. Even now, the administration is not tracking this data in a timely and adequate manner, failing to include key demographic information for both residents and workers who have been infected with the virus. The administration also refuses to report cases and deaths before May 1, 2020. Experts say more comprehensive data is critical to battling the virus and understanding why it is spreading faster in some nursing homes than others. David Grabowski, professor of health policy at Harvard Medical School, [noted](#) that information-gathering and transparency could help prevent future outbreaks: "It's impossible to fight and contain this virus if we don't know where it's located."

President Trump And Seema Verma Rolled Back Protections For Nursing Home Residents Ahead Of The Pandemic. The Trump administration has [cut the size of fines](#) for health violations in nursing homes. Federal records show that the average fine dropped to \$28,405 under Verma's tenure, down from \$41,260 in 2016. Experts say that for large nursing homes, these smaller fines are merely a "rounding error" giving them less incentive to fix faulty and dangerous practices before someone gets hurt. According to [Toby Edelman](#), a senior policy attorney and expert on nursing home regulation at the Center for Medicare Advocacy, found that the administration has largely pulled back its enforcement of "special focus facilities" --nursing homes cited for a pattern of serious infractions-- issuing increasingly small fines even though the government continued to cite them for serious violations.

The Trump Administration Rolled Back Obama Administration Rule Making It Easier For Nursing Home Residents To Sue For Negligence Or Abuse. The Trump administration has [rolled back](#) an Obama-era

regulation that blocked nursing facilities from requiring that disputes with residents be settled in private arbitration -- a move that the nursing home industry had aggressively sought. Families often feel pressured to sign arbitration agreements and only find out later that they are prevented from suing if they believe their loved ones received bad care.