



U.S.-Iran ceasefire on tenuous ground

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The Record

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ANALYSIS

The high cost of U.S. health care



U.S. health care is the most expensive in the world, and according to a poll published in late January, two-thirds of Americans are very worried about their ability to pay for it.

GETTY IMAGES

Complex system, competing interests barriers to lower prices

Patrick Aguilar Washington University in St. Louis | THE CONVERSATION

In announcing its “Great Healthcare Plan” in January, the Trump administration became the latest in a long history of efforts by the U.S. government to rein in the soaring cost of health care. • As a physician and professor studying the intersection of business and health, I know that the challenges in reforming the sprawling U.S. health care system are immense. That’s partly for political and even philosophical reasons.

But it also reflects a complex system fraught with competing interests – and the fact that patients, hospitals, health insurance companies and drug manufacturers change their behaviors in conflicting ways when faced with new rules.

Soaring costs

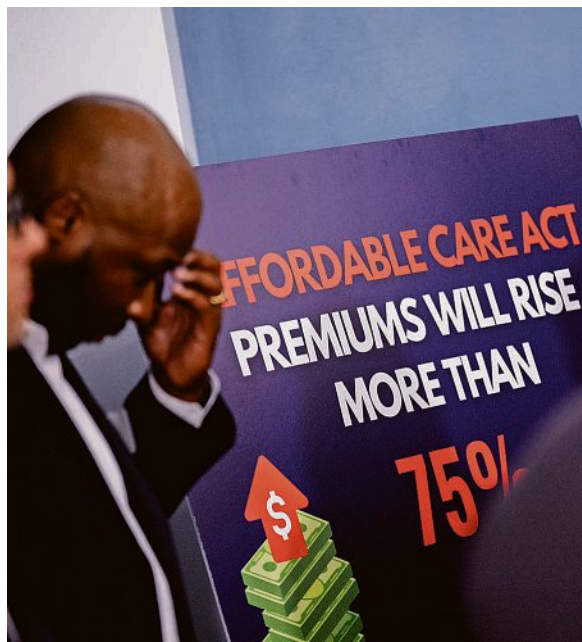
U.S. health care is the most expensive in the world, and according to a poll published in late January, two-thirds of Americans are very worried about their ability to pay for it – whether it’s their medications, a doctor’s visit, health insurance or an unpredictably costly medical emergency.

Disputes over health policy even played a central role in the federal government shutdown in fall 2025.

Trump’s health care framework outlines no specific policy actions, but it does establish priorities to address a number of longtime concerns, including prescription drug costs, price transparency, lowering insurance premiums and making health insurance companies generally more accountable.

Why have these challenges been so difficult to address?

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When COVID-19 pandemic era Affordable Care Act subsidies expired on Jan. 1, about 1.4 million people dropped coverage, and for most who didn’t, premiums more than doubled.

ANDREW HARNIK/GETTY IMAGES

Two men arraigned in Stockton shooting death

Victoria Franco The Stockton Record USA TODAY NETWORK

Two men were arraigned this week on murder and accessory charges in connection with the fatal shooting of a North Highlands resident last month in Stockton.

Henry Heath, 52, and Brian Hansen, 36, were arrested on April 3 on suspicion of killing 43-year-old Derrick Lee Walthall on March 31.

Walthall was found suffering from a gunshot wound on South Commerce and West Main streets, police said.

He was taken to a hospital where he died from his injuries.

Heath was arraigned on April 6 and charged with willful, deliberate, premeditated first degree murder and being a felon/addict possessing a firearm.

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Pacific Avenue shooting victim identified

Victoria Franco The Stockton Record USA TODAY NETWORK

A Stockton resident shot and killed during a shooting Tuesday morning has been identified by the San Joaquin County Medical Examiner’s Office.

Damon Richard James Owens, 42, was identified as the man fatally shot on April 7 in the 7600 block of Pacific Avenue behind a Michaels store.

Stockton police officers were dispatched to the scene at 5:09 a.m. Tuesday on a report of a shooting.

At the scene, Owens, who was initially described by police as a 32-year-old man, was found at the scene with gunshot wounds.

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