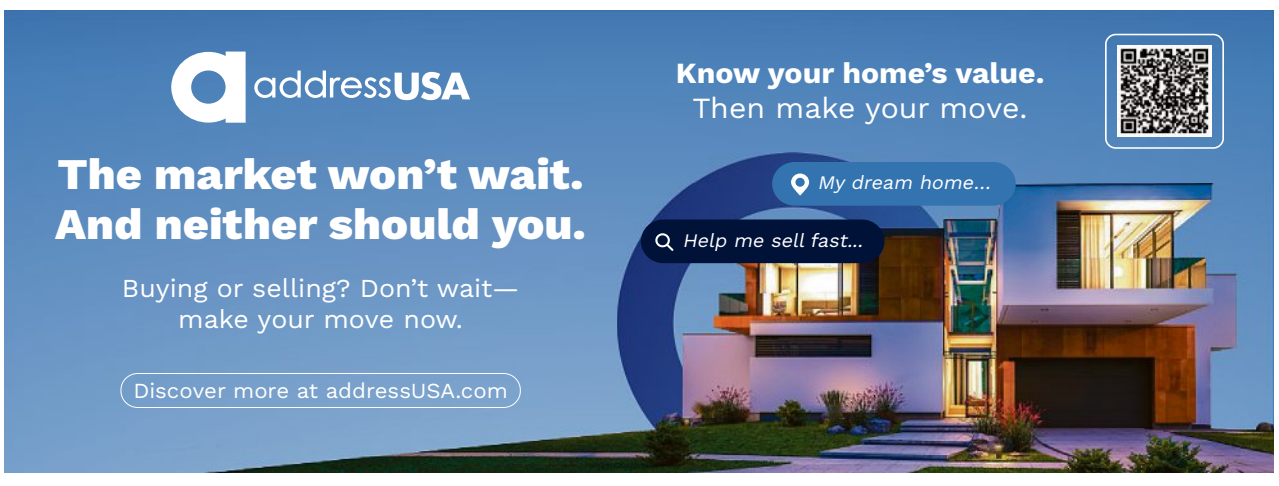

MCDONOUGH COUNTY
The Voice

FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026 | MCDONOUGHVOICE.COM

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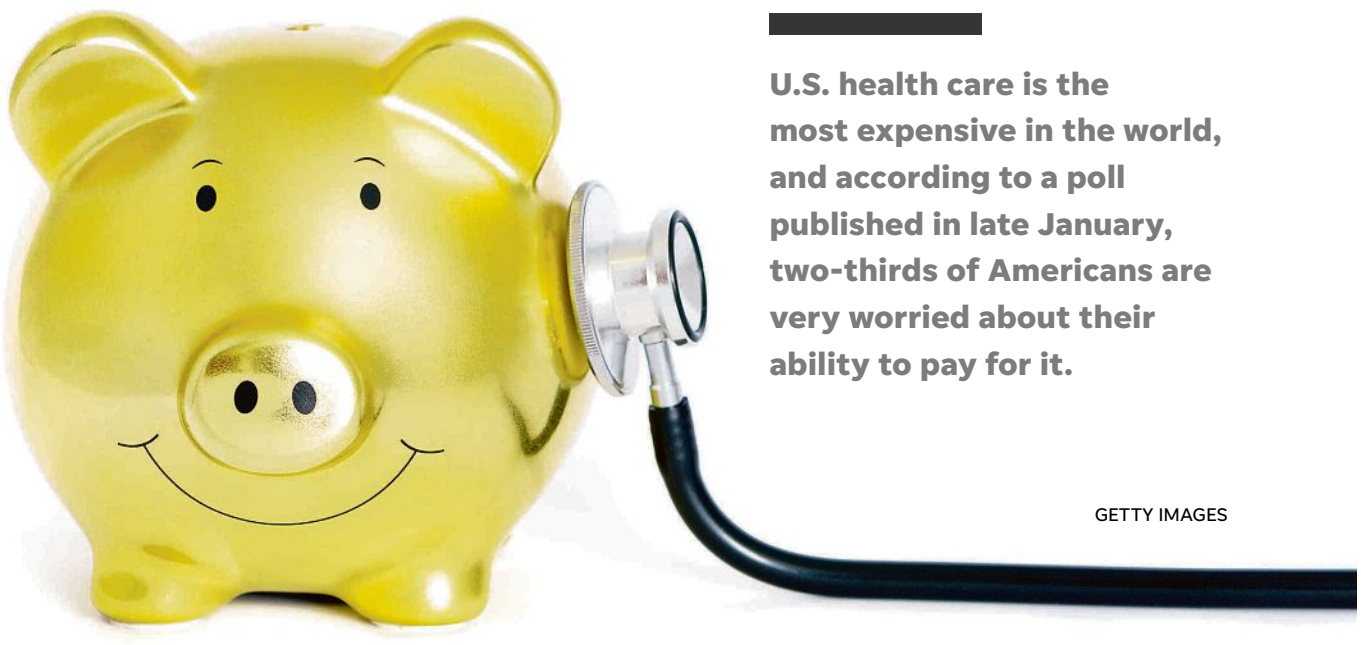
ANALYSIS

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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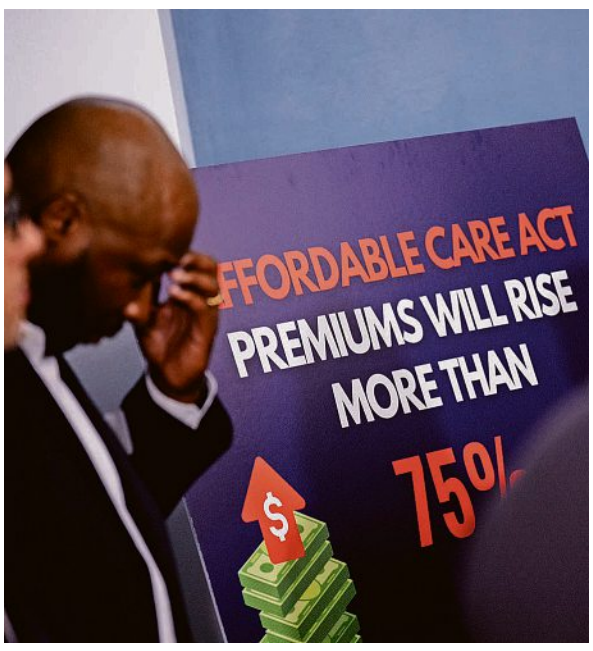

When COVID-19 pandemic era Affordable Care Act subsidies expired on Jan. 1, about 1.4 million people dropped coverage, and for most who didn't, premiums more than doubled.
ANDREW HARNIK/GETTY IMAGES

The Creston plant is one of several in the central states that manufacturers products for Ferrara Candy Co., one of eight businesses in Illinois recognized for being an ethical company. RODNEY WHITE/THE REGISTER

8 companies named most ethical in IL

Claire Grant
Springfield State Journal-Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

SPRINGFIELD – Eight Illinois-based businesses have secured a spot on the list of the most ethical companies globally.

Ethisphere, a Scottsdale, Arizona-based firm, recently released its list of the "World's Most Ethical Companies" for 2026, recognizing companies for having "best-in-class ethics and compliance programs, corporate governance practices and cultures of integrity," according to its website.

The firm puts together the list annually and is celebrating their 20th year of the list.

Any company who wants to be considered submits an application long before each new list is revealed. This year, 138 companies across 40 industries across 17 countries were rewarded with a spot on the list.

From Chicago-based firms to national tractor brands in Moline, eight Illinois businesses were included in the 2026 list.

- ADM, Chicago, seven-time honoree in food and beverage
- Allstate, Northbrook, 12-time honoree in property and casualty insurance
- CME Group, Chicago, one-time honoree in financial services
- Ferrara Candy Company, Chicago, one-time honoree in food and beverage
- Ingredion, Westchester, 12-time honoree in food and beverage
- JLL, Chicago, 19-time honoree in real estate
- John Deere, Moline, 19-time honoree in industrial manufacturing
- W.W. Grainger Inc., Lake Forest, two-time honoree in retail

Claire Grant writes about business, growth and development and other news topics for The State Journal-Register. She can be reached at CLGrant@usatodayco.com; and on X (Formerly known as Twitter): @Claire_Granted

Pekin bowling center closing, building going up for sale

Mike Kramer
Peoria Journal Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

PEKIN – When he sells the building housing Sunset Lanes, owner James Keith hopes the new owners will establish another bowling center.

But he does not believe entertainment venues are sustainable in today's economy.

"We have to sell because we're being taxed out of business," he said. "We have to charge more for our product than people in our community can afford to pay."

Keith said property taxes, sales taxes and licensing fees have forced entertainment centers like Sunset Lanes to raise their prices. Meantime, he said rising food and housing costs have left people with less disposable income, reducing their ability to spend money on non-essentials.

"This is an example of the result of over-taxing businesses in Illinois," he

See BUILDING, Page 2A

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Volume 170 | No. 181
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