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The DAILY LEADER

FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026 | PONTIACDAILYLEADER.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

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?

See HEALTH CARE, Page 3A



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

Illinois honors fallen troopers

State to add memorial road signs for officers killed in the line of duty

Dave DeMille
State Journal-Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

Illinois officials announced April 1 that every Illinois State Police officer killed in the line of duty will be honored with a standardized memorial sign placed along Illinois roadways, according to a community announcement.

The initiative was unveiled on Illinois State Trooper Day and is a joint effort of the Illinois State Police, Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois Tollway and the Illinois State Police Heritage Foundation. State officials said the goal is to ensure all fallen ISP officers are recognized equally and consistently across the state.

Gov. JB Pritzker said the memorial signs are intended to preserve the legacy of troopers who died while serving the public. According to the announcement, the signs will stand as long-term reminders of the risks troopers take and the sacrifices made by their families.

The Illinois State Police was established April 1, 1922. Since then, 73 officers have died in the line of duty, according to the announcement. The first was Trooper Albert J. Hasson, who was struck by a vehicle while on patrol in 1924 along what is now old Route 66 north of Chenoa.

ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly said the agency reviewed existing memorial signage and found that not all fallen officers were commemorated. According to the announcement, some memorial signs had been installed over the years, but designs varied and coverage was incomplete.

Over the coming months, IDOT and the Illinois Tollway will install uniform signs for all fallen ISP officers. Officials said the standardized design is intended to show consistent respect for the officers and their families.

Illinois Transportation Secretary Gia Biagi said the signs will be visible reminders to motorists of the dangers troopers face daily while protecting drivers and maintaining roadway safety.

Beginning in 2011, the Illinois General Assembly passed resolutions

See MEMORIALS, Page 5A

Pekin bowling center is closing, building is 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 said. “If you go back in history, you’ll find that when businesses thrive, so do our communities. Because more people are working, they have more money to

spend and go out to eat more, or they go buy extra pairs of shoes for their kids.”

Tazewell County property records show Sunset Lanes paid \$38,851.82 in property taxes in 2023 and \$40,771.66 in 2024. Figures for 2025 are not yet available.

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Volume 147 | No. 117
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