



# Amazon’s U.S. Prime sign-ups slow this year

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# Watkins Glen Grand Prix Festival revs up



A look at historic racing items inside Smalley’s Garage, on South Franklin Street in Watkins Glen.

## All-day event to take over Finger Lakes village

Jeff Smith  
Elmira Star-Gazette  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Watkins Glen’s rich motor racing history will be celebrated Friday, Sept. 5, at the annual Grand Prix Festival of Watkins Glen. Thousands are expected to fill downtown Watkins Glen from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. for an all-day festival packed with ex-

citement. Since 1993, the Grand Prix Festival of Watkins Glen has revved up the Schuyler County village. Events will include a Walk of Fame award ceremony, Legends Speak historical lectures, pre-race inspection at Smalley’s Garage, and the Stone Bridge Drivers Car Display featuring over 600 classic sports cars. “We could not be more excited about the upcoming Grand Prix festival,” said Nigar Hale, executive director of the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce. “It coincides with the Watkins Glen International Grand Prix races.” Hale said the timing of the festival, coming just after Labor Day, is perfect

to draw a big crowd. Local business owners agree. “It’s huge. It’s amazing,” said Jim Guild, owner of Famous Brands Outlet on North Hamilton Street in Watkins Glen. “The Grand Prix will bring thousands of people on the street, then on Saturday and Sunday many of them will be at the track.” Hilliard U.S. Vintage Grand Prix weekend, meanwhile, will take over Watkins Glen International raceway Sept. 4-7. Guild said he was on the committee in 1993 that formed the first Grand Prix Festival.

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# New York approves health insurance rate hikes

David Robinson  
New York State Team  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Health insurance rate increases in New York for 2026 have been approved for health plans selling coverage through the New York state-run Affordable Care Act marketplace. The health insurance rates for individuals will increase 7.1% on average next year while small-group plan rates rise 13%, state records show. Those premium rate increases came in below the proposed rates sought by health insurers, which requested rate hikes of 13.5% and 24% for individuals and small group plans, respectively. At the same time, many working-age consumers in New York who get their health insurance through the workplace are expected to face a range of health insurance cost hikes next year. Employers nationally expect to shift a larger share of insurance costs to employees and their families next year by raising deductibles, co-pays or out-of-pocket requirements.

## What NY says about health insurance rate hikes

State Department of Financial Services officials asserted the rising cost of medical care — including in-patient hospital stays and rapid increases in drug prices — continued to be the main driver of health insurance premium increases. The final approved rates for 2026 would keep health insurers’ profit provisions at 1%, state officials added, noting they sought to limit those returns in light of ongoing inflationary pressures harming consumers. The rate increases in New York would impact about 1 million New Yorkers who are enrolled in individual and small group plans directly through private insurers or through the state’s ACA health exchange, NY State of Health. The rate increases for next year vary from a high of nearly 21% through

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# Autism project draws over 100 proposals

## Initiative announced by Kennedy to mine data

Robin Respaut, Ahmed Aboulenein and Julie Steenhuysen  
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – Researchers have submitted more than 100 proposals to participate in the Trump administration’s \$50 million study into possible causes of autism, with a list of up to 25 grant winners expected to be an-

nounced by the end of September, people with knowledge of the plans told Reuters. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced the Autism Data Science Initiative in May and put the National Institutes of Health in charge of it. The program aims to mine large datasets to investigate possible contributors to autism and evaluate the outcomes of existing treatments. Studies chosen for funding might begin to show results in two to three years,

according to the government’s request for research proposals. The effort is proceeding separately from a review of vaccine safety commissioned by Kennedy, who has long promoted the idea that vaccines contribute to autism, contrary to scientific evidence. He has promised to announce health policy changes in September “that will dramatically impact the effects” related to autism, without providing details on the data that would

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Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has promised to announce health policy changes in September “that will dramatically impact the effects” related to autism. ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES FILE

