



'Made in America' vape products gain ground

BUSINESS, 4A

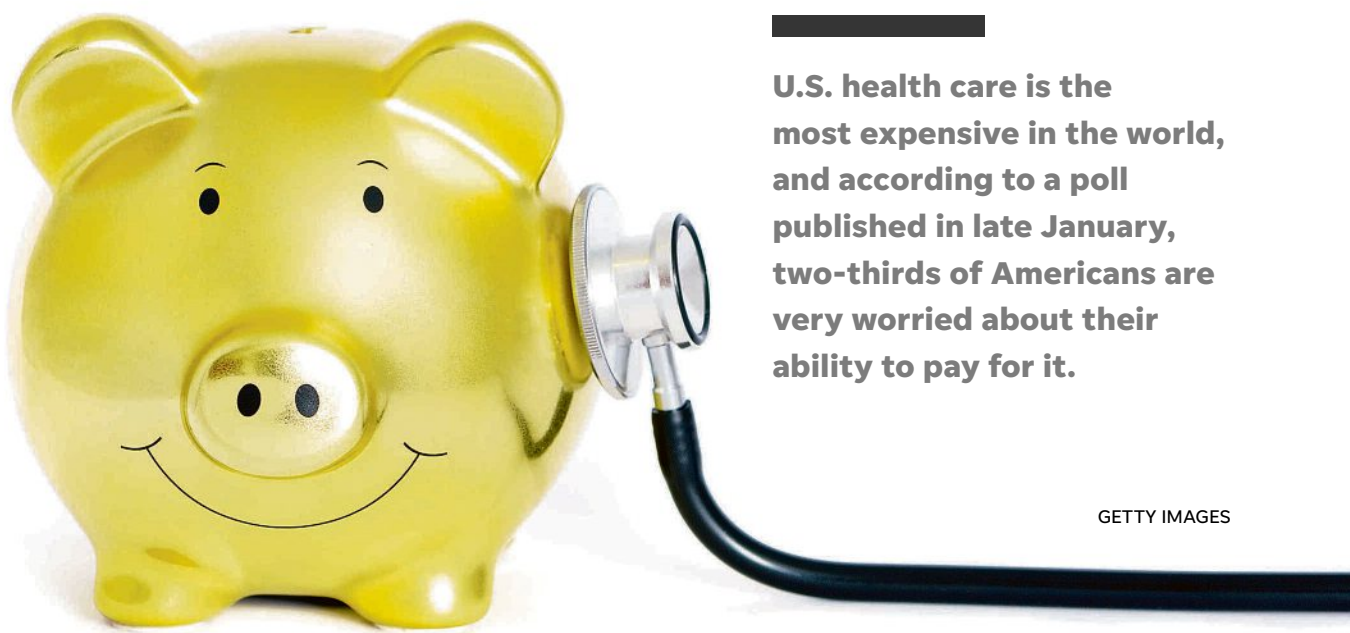
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ANALYSIS

The high cost of U.S. health care



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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.

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

Point State Park's famous fountain is back

Beth Ann Miller Beaver County Times USA TODAY NETWORK

The famous view at Point State Park in Pittsburgh is back in time for the NFL Draft.

On April 7, the park's iconic fountain sent water skyward again, completing a year-long, \$3.4-million renovation project in which improvements were made to several areas, including the fountain, by the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, which operates the park.

Lt. Gov. Austin Davis, a Pittsburgh native, joined DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn, Point State Park Operations Manager Jake Weiland, Allegheny County Executive Sara Innamorato, Pittsburgh Mayor Corey O'Connor and Visit Pittsburgh CEO Jerad Bachar to officially reopen the fountain in anticipation of a year of major events for the city, including the NFL Draft from

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