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Dr. Mehmet Oz, administrator for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, speaks Friday at the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce's Health Care Summit at the Aster Event Center in Upper Macungie Township.

## Dr. Oz gives prescription for controlling health care costs

Lehigh Valley summit held as local trans activist groups protest visit



Attendees listen to Dr. Mehmet Oz, administrator for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, speak Friday at the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce's Health Care Summit. **MONICA CABRERA/THE MORNING CALL**

By **Leif Greiss** | The Morning Call

Dr. Mehmet Oz, administrator of the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, gave his prescription for controlling spiraling health care costs Friday at the annual Lehigh Valley Health Care Summit, as local trans activist groups protested his appearance.

Oz, a former heart surgeon and TV personality, headlined the event organized by the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce. The crowd at the Aster Event Center in Upper Macungie Township was packed with notable local health care figures, including the CEOs of Jefferson Health and St. Luke's University Health Network, as well as politicians such as U.S. Sen. David McCormick, Lehigh Valley U.S.

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## Panel advises end to vaccine for Hepatitis B

Federal committee votes to end recommendation for shot at birth

By **Mike Stobbe**  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A federal vaccine advisory committee voted Friday to end the long-standing recommendation that all U.S. babies get the hepatitis B vaccine on the day they're born.

A loud chorus of medical and public health leaders decried the actions of the panel, whose current members were all appointed by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. — a leading anti-vaccine activist before this year becoming the nation's top health official.

"This is the group that can't shoot straight," said Dr. William Schaffner, a Vanderbilt University vaccine expert who for decades has been involved with ACIP and its workgroups.

Several medical societies and state health departments said they would continue to recom-

mend them. While people may have to check their policies, the trade group AHIP, formerly known as America's Health Insurance Plans, said its members still will cover the birth dose of the hepatitis B vaccine.

For decades, the government has advised that all babies be vaccinated against the liver infection right after birth. The shots are widely considered to be a public health success for preventing thousands of illnesses.

But Kennedy's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices decided to recommend the birth dose only for babies whose mothers test positive, and in cases where the mom wasn't tested.

For other babies, it will be up to parents and their doctors to decide if a birth dose is appropriate. The committee voted 8-3 to

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## Upper Macungie adopts rules for data centers

New measures won't apply to plans for Air Products site

By **Daniel Patrick Sheehan**  
The Morning Call

Upper Macungie Township now has rules regulating data centers, but the zoning ordinance amendment adopted by supervisors Thursday night comes too late to affect the biggest proposal on the table.

The township, like many others in the Lehigh Valley, crafted the ordinance because of the likelihood that the biggest kinds of data centers — the massive, noisy, energy-gobbling computer campuses that power artificial intelligence — will

be built here. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission says it's aware of several developers scouting the region for possible sites.

The most concrete proposal at the moment would turn the former Air Products campus in Upper Macungie into a 2.6 million-square-foot data center. Plans were submitted in early November and are scheduled for review at the Dec. 16 zoning hearing board meeting, though solicitor Andrew Schantz said the applicant is likely to request an extension.

The proposal was the main reason so many residents attended Thursday's meeting, which opened with a public hearing on the zoning

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## Bethlehem votes down proposal to add 4 new firefighters to 2026 budget

By **Lindsay Weber**  
The Morning Call

After a tense, five-hour meeting, Bethlehem City Council Thursday rejected a push from the city's fire union to add four firefighters to the department's ranks.

Budget amendments proposed by City Council member Grace Crampsie Smith would have re-allocated funding from the city's community recovery fund, firefighter overtime budget, and Community and Economic Development Department to bring

the fire department's workforce up to 110. A last-minute amendment also was proposed by member Bryan Callahan to raise property taxes — without providing a specific figure because he made the proposal in a spontaneous motion.

Both measures failed.

The vote on Crampsie Smith's amendments was 2-5, with Crampsie Smith and Callahan voting in favor, and members Michael Colon, Colleen Laird, Hillary Kwiatek, Rachel Leon and Kiera Wilhelm

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## At Lehigh University, Sen. McCormick says Pennsylvania can lead AI boom

By **Evan Jones**  
The Morning Call

The role of technology in America's future has been a passionate subject for U.S. Sen. Dave McCormick, who has written a book about it and has been advocating for Pennsylvania to be at the forefront of the growing tech industry.

Appearing at Lehigh University on Wednesday night as part of the Compelling Perspectives series, the first-term senator discussed the future of artificial intelligence and what it means for the state and nation.

After a brief introduction by Lehigh President Joseph



U.S. Sen. Dave McCormick, R-Pa., discusses the government's role in supporting artificial intelligence and innovation on Thursday during Lehigh University's Compelling Perspectives program in Bethlehem. **APRIL GAMIZ/THE MORNING CALL**

Helble, who mentioned McCormick's time as a wrestler for the U.S. Military Academy, the former hedge fund CEO talked about technology advocacy in his book "Superpower in Peril: A Battleplan to Renew America," and how it translates to his current views.

"It was based on my belief that we were going astray, that we needed a sort of focus on the building blocks of leadership in the world," said McCormick, R-Pa.

"One was the belief that this was an existential competition with China, and a battle that we had to

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