

CAPITOL STREET

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CMS Administrator Nominee: Dr. Oz

Physician, TV Personality & Disruptor

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Dr. Mehmet Oz supports Medicare Advantage (MA), shuns the ACA, criticized COVID-19 vaccine mandates, and has promoted controversial treatments such as hydroxychloroquine. TV personality Dr Mehmet Oz -- now CMS Administrator nominee to follow Chiquita Brooks-LaSure -- supported the ACA in 2009 & 2010, but in 2022 noted that he would vote to repeal it. If confirmed, given a lack of government or operations experience, we believe a CMS Administrator Oz would likely delegate to Deputies and other experts at the CMS. Other details: Dr. Oz ran an unsuccessful campaign for Senate in 2022 in PA, and is currently an advisor to a nutritional supplement company (iHerb). Oz is an outspoken supporter of Trump and more recently RFK Jr. as well. His net worth is between \$100-\$300 M.

»» Key Points

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (HHS) and Dr. Mehmet Oz (CMS) could work well together. CMS sits within HHS so the two leaders would have a decent amount of interaction. Both will face uphill battles during confirmation hearings, particularly RFK Jr. Neither have experience managing large, bureaucratic organizations, and both are Donald Trump loyalists, seen as disruptors to the system.

Both RFK Jr. and Dr. Oz are tasked with taking on the illness industrial complex. Fighting chronic disease may be the common thread here. We note that Senator Cassidy (R-LA), incoming Chair of the HELP Committee, also seeks to address food, nutrition, wellness and curbing expensive chronic diseases.

HHS and CMS both require 51 Senate votes to be confirmed, and the process will be bumpy. The Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) confirmation process will take place before CMS confirmation (1Q 2025).

- The CMS process would involve a series of hearings before the Senate Finance Committee (Chair Crapo, R-ID), where Dr. Oz would testify and answer questions about qualifications, policies, and views.
- If the Senate Finance committees approve his nomination, it will move to a full Senate vote.
- A simple majority vote (51) in the Senate would be required for his confirmation.

Recess appointments could make this nomination a reality but it's not a good look. Circumventing a Republican Congress isn't a good look when the GOP has a majority. John Thune (R-SD), the new Senate majority leader, has said that he would allow recess appointments. We note that recess appointments aren't permanent. Intersession appointments can last nearly a year and intrasession appointments can last nearly two years. Previously named health recess appointments include Donald M. Berwick (CMS administrator) in 2010 under Obama, and Daniel Meron (HHS General Counsel) in 2004 under Bush.

About CMS. CMS operates or oversees programs that provide health coverage to about 50% of Americans, including [Medicare](#), Medicaid, the [Children's Health Insurance Program](#), and the ACA or "Obamacare" marketplace exchange [Healthcare.gov](#). The four programs account for \$1.6 T in spending, or nearly 25% of the entire [federal budget](#).

ABOUT MEHMET OZ, MD

A physician with an MBA. Dr. Mehmet Oz was born on June 11, 1960 (age 64), in Cleveland, Ohio, to Turkish immigrant parents. He earned a degree in biology from Harvard University in 1982, followed by an MD and an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and the Wharton School in 1986. He began his residency in cardiothoracic surgery at Columbia University Irving Medical Center in 1986. In 2001, Oz became a professor of surgery at Columbia University, and later retired to professor emeritus in 2018.

Dr. Oz gained national recognition through appearances on The Oprah Winfrey Show, which earned him the title "America's Doctor." This exposure led to his own program, The Dr. Oz Show, which ran from 2009 to 2022. While widely popular, his show faced criticism for promoting controversial health practices and unverified treatments, leading some medical professionals to question his scientific credibility.

Dr. Oz's relationship with Donald Trump began with shared appearances in the media and evolved as he was appointed to Trump's Council on Sports, Fitness, and Nutrition in 2018. Trump appeared on the Dr. Oz show during his 2016 presidential campaign. Trump's endorsement played a pivotal role in Oz's 2022 bid for a U.S. Senate seat in Pennsylvania, where he ran as a Republican (and lost to Democrat John Fetterman).

After his failed Senate bid, Dr. Oz returned to promoting health initiatives through his nonprofit, HealthCorps, and serving as an advisor to a supplement company. Dr. Oz's career has included several controversies, including:

- Criticism from medical professionals for promoting unproven health products, as well as products that he had financial investments in.
- His advocacy for hydroxychloroquine during the COVID-19 pandemic, a treatment later deemed ineffective.
- His 2015 peers' letter calling for his removal from Columbia University's faculty for endorsing pseudoscience.

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