

# PNC PHARMA & LIFE SCIENCES

## Monthly News Brief

May 2026

### **[Novo Hikes Guidance on Wegovy Pill's Fast Sales Start](#)** *(BioPharma Dive)*

Novo Nordisk raised its 2026 outlook after its newly launched oral Wegovy pill delivered a stronger-than-expected debut, with first quarter sales of ~DKK 2.26B (~\$350MM) nearly doubling analyst estimates. The rapid uptake has helped offset pricing pressure and competition from Eli Lilly. Novo sees the pill as a key lever to regain share in the GLP 1 market, having gained an early lead in oral obesity treatments and built a sizable prescription base ahead of rival launches.

### **[Abbott Gets FDA Nod, CE Mark for AI-Enabled Imaging Device](#)** *(Medtech Dive)*

Abbott received FDA clearance and a CE mark for its AI-enabled coronary imaging system, Ultreon 3.0, which combines optical coherence tomography (OCT) with AI to guide stent placement. The platform uses high-resolution imaging plus AI analysis to assess arterial plaque and help physicians choose stent size and placement more accurately, improving decision-making during procedures. The new version adds greater speed, image clarity, and automated insights.

### **[Trade Court Rules Trump's 10% Global Tariff Illegal](#)** *(Medtech Dive)*

The U.S. Court of International Trade ruled that President Trump's temporary 10% global tariff is illegal, finding the policy "unauthorized by law" and based on a broad interpretation of Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974. The court said the administration failed to meet the legal criteria required to impose such tariffs, but it did not issue a nationwide block, instead limiting relief to a small group. The ruling is being appealed by the government, leaving the tariffs in place for most importers in the near term while the legal challenge continues.

### **[FDA Chief Marty Makary Resigns From Agency, Ending Tumultuous Tenure](#)** *(Healthcare Dive)*

Marty Makary stepped down as FDA commissioner in May 2026. During his time leading the agency, Makary pushed to speed drug approvals—introducing ideas like streamlined clinical trial requirements and greater use of AI— but multiple key officials resigned amid mass layoffs and some analysts detected an uptick in delayed drug reviews compared to years past. The agency had also come under fire for unpredictable shifts in guidance and regulatory rejections that frustrated some drugmakers.

### **[CVS Sues to Challenge New Tennessee PBM-Pharmacy Breakup Law](#)** *(Healthcare Dive)*

CVS is suing Tennessee over a new law that would bar pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) from owning pharmacies, effectively forcing companies like CVS to separate their businesses. CVS argues the law is unconstitutional and discriminatory against out-of-state firms, claiming it would force the company to close ~136 pharmacies and halt services in the state if implemented (compliance deadline 2028). The law (FAIR Rx Act) reflects growing state efforts to curb PBM vertical integration.

### **[Employers Say They Prefer Rebate-Free PBM Models](#)** *(Healthcare Dive)*

Employers are increasingly favoring rebate-free pharmacy benefit models that pass savings directly to patients, with over 90% saying this approach improves transparency, simplicity, and affordability. The shift reflects growing frustration with traditional rebate-driven PBM models and a broader move toward more predictable, fee-based structures.

### **[Optum Rx Introduces Industry's First Transparent Pharmacy Care Model](#)** *(Business Wire)*

Optum Rx launched a new transparent PBM model that replaces traditional drug pricing structures with a flat, fee-based approach. Clients will pay fixed monthly fees per member, not tied to drug list prices or prescription volume—eliminating spread pricing and increasing visibility into PBM and manufacturer payments. The model also adds consumer-facing tools to show real-time drug pricing and full cost breakdowns, aiming to improve affordability and decision-making. Overall, the shift reflects broader regulatory pressure on PBMs to improve transparency and align incentives with patients and plan sponsors.

### **[PBM Regulation May Bolster Big Three Market Position Versus Smaller Competitors](#)** *(Cite Line)*

New PBM regulations around transparency and pricing are likely to strengthen the dominance of the Big Three (CVS Caremark, Express Scripts, OptumRx), as their scale and vertical integration make them better positioned to absorb compliance costs and shift to new business models. Smaller PBMs face greater operational burden from these changes and often rely on larger players for core services, which could accelerate consolidation and limit their ability to compete.

### **[CMS Suspends New Medicare Enrollment of Hospice, Home Health Providers](#)** *(Healthcare Dive)*

CMS is imposing a six-month nationwide halt on new Medicare enrollment for hospice and home health providers as part of a broader effort to crack down on fraud, waste, and abuse in the program. During the pause, the agency plans to ramp up targeted investigations, data analytics, and enforcement actions to identify and remove providers suspected of fraudulent activity. The moratorium applies to new enrollment applications and certain ownership changes but does not affect existing providers, who can continue delivering care.

### **[Stretching Scare Authorizing Legislation as Far as Possible: A Legislative History of the 340B Drug Pricing Program](#)** *(Wiley Online)*

The article traces the 340B program back to its 1992 origins as a narrowly targeted policy meant to help core safety-net providers offset unintended cost increases from the Medicaid Drug Rebate Program and ensure access to discounted drugs for vulnerable patients but finds that vague statutory language and subsequent policy evolution allowed the program to expand far beyond those original intentions.

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