PNC PHARMA & LIFE SCIENCES

Monthly News Brief

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BioPharma Climbs Higher as 9 Drugmakers Ink 'Pandering' Drug Price Deals With Trump *(BioPharma Dive)*

President Trump released letters sent to 17 major pharmaceutical companies responding to their proposals under his Most Favored Nation (MFN) order. He also announced new agreements with nine additional drugmakers, saying the deals would substantially reduce prescription drug prices. In return, the companies will receive three years of relief from tariffs. Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Eli Lilly, Novo and EMD Serono all struck deals with the White House in recent months before Friday's batch of agreements with Gilead, Merck, Amgen, Bristol Myers Squibb, GSK, Novartis, Sanofi, Genentech, and Boehringer Ingelheim. Three companies remain – J&J, AbbVie and Regeneron – and analysts expect them to fall in line soon.

Novo Nordisk's Weight Loss Pill Approved by FDA *(BioPharma Dive)*

The FDA approved an oral version of Novo Nordisk's weight loss medication Wegovy, setting off the next phase of high-stakes battle with rival Eli Lilly for control of the lucrative obesity drug market. Novo will gain an early lead with the January 2026 launch of oral Wegovy, though Eli Lilly may quickly follow with orforglipron, which succeeded in late-stage trials in 2025 and could win FDA approval within weeks.

Senate Rejects Competing Health Bills, Setting Up ACA Subsidy Lapse *(Medtech Dive)*

The U.S. Senate voted down two competing healthcare bills, one from Democrats and one from Republicans, effectively setting the stage for enhanced Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies to expire at the end of 2025. Both measures failed to reach the 60 votes required to advance, with votes largely split along party lines. The Democrats' proposal sought to extend the enhanced ACA subsidies for three additional years, maintaining lower premium costs. The Republicans' alternative, would have allowed the subsidies to expire and replaced them with health savings account (HSA) contributions tied to lower-cost insurance plans. The rejection of both bills means the pandemic-era subsidies, first enacted during COVID-19, are likely to lapse, which will cause average premiums to more than double for many enrollees and prompt millions to drop coverage.

FDA Gets Mixed Feedback on Performance Monitoring for AI *(Medtech Dive)*

The FDA received mixed feedback on how to monitor the real-world performance of AI-enabled medical devices. Medical device companies and industry groups urged the agency to rely on existing, risk-based regulatory and quality frameworks rather than create new, broad post market monitoring requirements, warning that added rules could hinder innovation. In contrast, medical organizations and patient advocates supported stronger post-deployment oversight and transparency, generally arguing that manufacturers should be responsible for tracking AI performance.

FDA Needs More Staff, Authority to Oversee Device Recalls, Watchdog Finds *(Medtech Dive)*

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found the FDA lacks sufficient staff and authority to effectively oversee medical device recalls, creating delays and potential patient safety risks. Reviewing nearly 4,000 recalls from 2020–2024, the GAO concluded that staffing shortages prevented the FDA from meeting its recall oversight goals, including timely closure of recalls. The watchdog recommended that the FDA and the Department of Health and Human Services improve workforce planning and consider seeking additional authority to strengthen recall oversight.

Biotech Startups Are Built on Venture Capital. Track Funding Rounds Here. *(BioPharma Dive)*

Over the past two decades, the amount of VC money put into biotech has climbed considerably, resulting in the creation of hundreds of new companies. Tracking that investment can reveal important patterns, showing how different drug types or diseases rise or fall out of favor with investors. Despite recent volatility in public markets, biotech venture funding has remained active, with investors increasingly favoring larger, fewer rounds ("megarounds") to give companies longer runways while IPO activity remains limited. Funding has been concentrated in areas such as oncology, rare diseases, neuroscience, and emerging platforms like AI-enabled drug discovery, reflecting a continued preference for differentiated or late-stage assets.

Biotech IPOs Are The Industry's Lifeblood. Track How They're Performing Here. *(BioPharma Dive)*

IPOs make the biotechnology industry tick. Stock listings give young companies the funding they need to develop their drugs, and their venture backers an opportunity to earn a return. IPO activity reached a peak in 2021, when more than 100 biotechs priced an IPO and together raised nearly $15B. But that momentum came to a halt in 2022 as stock prices of newly public companies plummeted amid a sector-wide downturn. The pace of IPOs stalled and in 2024 only 24 drugmakers priced initial share sales. In 2025, only 11 drugmakers priced initial public offerings raising about $1.6B, the lowest total in at least seven years.