# Donald Trump aims to slash US drug prices by 59% amid mixed industry reaction



Donald Trump held a press conference today, sparking renewed health concerns among social media users as he appeared alongside his Secretary of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. The President announced ambitious plans to cut prescription drug prices by up to 59%, but his appearance elicited comments online regarding his physical state. Observers noted Trump's distinct orange hue, with social media posts describing him as looking “especially orange,” a reaction that many might interpret as a commentary on his health and overall well-being.

The press conference comes amid ongoing debates about drug pricing in the United States, a topic Trump aims to tackle with significant policy changes. According to reports, the U.S. consistently pays alarmingly higher prices for prescription drugs than other developed nations—often nearly three times as much. For instance, a weight-loss medication that costs $88 in London can reach up to $1,300 in the U.S. Such disparities have led to mounting pressure on pharmaceutical companies to reduce prices. In line with this, Trump has proposed an executive order mandating drug manufacturers to align their prices with those in wealthier nations or face regulatory actions, including tariffs and other penalties.

Experts have intimated that pricing discrepancies for medications like Wegovy and Zepbound, both popular weight-loss drugs, are unsustainable given the obesity epidemic affecting nearly 40% of Americans. While some drug companies have shown willingness to collaborate with the administration on these pricing reforms, legislators and industry representatives have raised concerns about potential negative impacts on innovation and investment within the healthcare sector. The Federal Trade Commission will play a crucial role in enforcing antitrust regulations to promote a fairer competitive landscape.

Reactions from the pharmaceutical industry have been mixed. Following the announcement of Trump’s price-cutting initiative, stock values for major pharmaceutical firms took a hit, with some analysts warning that such regulatory pressures could adversely impact generic drug markets, particularly those in India. Indian pharmaceutical firms heavily rely on the U.S. market for their revenue, and many saw declines in their stock values shortly after Trump's press conference. The repercussions could reverberate through the industry, particularly for companies like Sun Pharma and Biocon, which have substantial exposure to the American market.

Trump’s proposed measures follow an earlier attempt to implement similar policies during his first term, which faced legal challenges that ultimately stalled their enactment. Critics of the current plan point out that despite its far-reaching aims, detailed enforcement mechanisms are still lacking, leaving ambiguity about its actual impact on consumers and the drug market.

As Trump prepares for an official visit to the Middle East, he is expected to pause in the UK, where his Air Force One is scheduled to refuel. The ongoing discussions about health and drug pricing remain a focal point for his administration as he attempts to address these pressing issues in the run-up to the next election.

Overall, while Trump’s health was a topic of speculation during the press conference, the broader implications of his policy announcements concerning drug pricing are set to influence not just the pharmaceutical landscape but also the wellbeing of millions of Americans who depend on affordable medication.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2054090/donald-trump-health-fears-press-conference)
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8. Paragraph 8: [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/european-pharma-stocks-follow-asia-peers-down-trump-moves-cut-prices-2025-05-12/)

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## Bibliography

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* <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/trump-calls-out-weight-loss-drugs-target-price-cut-push-2025-05-12/> - On May 12, 2025, President Donald Trump issued an executive order targeting high-priced weight-loss drugs like Wegovy (Novo Nordisk) and Zepbound (Eli Lilly) as part of a broader initiative to lower prescription drug costs in the U.S. The order mandates that pharmaceutical companies adjust their prices to align more closely with those in other developed countries or face regulatory actions, including tariffs and export restrictions. Trump highlighted the vast disparity in drug prices with a personal anecdote: a friend paid $88 in London versus $1,300 in New York for the same weight-loss medication. In the U.S., Wegovy and Zepbound are listed at over $1,000 monthly, although some insurers cover part of the cost. Recently, manufacturers began offering direct-to-consumer prices around $499. With nearly 40% of Americans obese, pressure mounts on drugmakers to improve affordability. Both Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly expressed willingness to work with policymakers, emphasizing that systemic healthcare intermediaries also impact pricing. The administration indicated that GLP-1 drugs, including Ozempic and Mounjaro, will be prioritized for oversight due to their high cost and market significance. Meanwhile, the FDA is ending reliance on cheaper compounded versions now that branded products are no longer in short supply.
* <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/trump-says-he-will-cut-drug-prices-by-59-2025-05-12/> - On May 12, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump signed a broad executive order mandating pharmaceutical companies to lower U.S. drug prices to match those in other countries. The order gives drugmakers 30 days to meet government-set price targets, with threats of tariffs and further regulatory actions if they fail. While investors and analysts noted the order lacked detailed enforcement mechanisms, shares of major drug companies rebounded, suggesting it was less severe than anticipated. Trump cited extreme disparities in drug prices between the U.S. and other nations, including a weight-loss drug costing $1,300 in the U.S. versus $88 in London. The order proposes consumer access to internationally priced drugs, import reforms, and crackdown on anti-competitive practices such as delaying generics. Industry groups criticized the initiative, warning it could hinder innovation and investments. Legal experts predict potential litigation over the order’s legality, particularly concerning drug imports. The Federal Trade Commission is instructed to enforce antitrust actions, continuing a broader campaign Trump revived to lower consumer costs ahead of the election.
* <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/indian-pharma-stocks-drop-trump-sign-executive-order-cut-prices-medicines-2025-05-12/> - Indian pharmaceutical stocks declined by 1.6% on Monday, diverging from broader market gains, in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement of plans to significantly cut drug prices. Trump is set to sign an executive order enforcing "most favored nation" pricing, aiming to lower U.S. drug costs by 30%–80% to align with prices in other wealthy nations. The U.S. currently pays nearly three times more for many prescription drugs. The move concerns Indian drug manufacturers, which rely heavily on U.S. markets for revenue from low-cost generic drugs. Among those affected, Sun Pharma led losses with a 4.6% drop, while Zydus Life and Cipla each declined 0.7%. Divi’s Laboratories and Lupin dropped 2% each, and Biocon fell by nearly 3%. Analyst Shrikant Akolkar noted that a drastic price cut would immediately affect branded drugs and eventually impact generic markets by shrinking the potential size of new drug markets. The U.S. constitutes about one-third of India’s pharmaceutical exports, which totaled around $9 billion last fiscal year. The policy’s strict implementation could adversely impact leading Indian pharma firms like Sun Pharma, Biocon, and Zydus Life.
* <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/trump-sign-executive-order-reducing-prescription-drug-prices-2025-05-11/> - On May 12, 2025, former U.S. President Donald Trump announced his intent to sign an executive order implementing a "most favored nation" policy to lower prescription drug prices by aligning them with the lower prices paid in other high-income countries, potentially reducing costs by 30% to 80%. Trump made the announcement on Truth Social, asserting that this move would establish pricing fairness for Americans. The policy is expected to focus on the Medicare program but could extend beyond the medicines currently targeted under President Joe Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act, which had already facilitated negotiations for 10 drugs. Drug manufacturers, anticipating the order, expressed opposition, warning that government price setting could be detrimental to patients. Trump had previously attempted a similar policy during his first term, which was blocked by a court, although it was projected to save over $85 billion over seven years. The U.S. remains the highest spender on prescription drugs globally, a disparity Trump aims to address through his executive action.
* <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/european-pharma-stocks-follow-asia-peers-down-trump-moves-cut-prices-2025-05-12/> - Global pharmaceutical stocks fell sharply on Monday following U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement to reduce prescription drug prices by 30%-80%, aligning them with costs in other developed nations. Trump's proposed executive order introduces "most favored nation" or international reference pricing, aimed at addressing the U.S.'s high drug costs, though implementation details remain unclear. Major American drugmakers such as AbbVie, Amgen, Pfizer, Eli Lilly, and Merck saw premarket share declines between 2.1% and 3.6%. The announcement also affected pharmaceutical markets globally, with European firms like AstraZeneca, GSK, and Roche experiencing losses between 3.3% and 6.8%, and healthcare indices in Australia, India, and Japan also showing declines. Indian companies Biocon and Lupin were affected due to their substantial exports to the U.S., while Japanese pharmaceutical shares suffered their worst day, with Daiichi Sankyo dropping over 8%. Australian stocks CSL and Mayne Pharma also fell due to their exposure to the U.S. market. In Hong Kong, Alphamab Oncology plunged 14.4%. Analysts suggest the move could impact EU-U.S. trade discussions, as the U.S. may favor foreign price caps over tariffs to reduce patient costs. Meanwhile, the U.S. and China agreed to reduce reciprocal tariffs, signaling potential trade easing.
* <https://www.cnn.com/politics/live-news/trump-zelensky-ukraine-news-03-01-25/index.html> - On March 1, 2025, CNN reported that President Donald Trump was scheduled to undergo his routine annual physical examination at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Dr. Sean Barbabella, the physician to the president, announced that the date of the exam would be released publicly in the coming weeks. At 78, Trump was among America's oldest presidents, second only to former President Joe Biden. The report noted that Trump had previously received his annual physical at Walter Reed each year of his first term. After the first presidential physical, CNN's Dr. Sanjay Gupta reported that Trump had a common form of heart disease. Trump himself had expressed that health factored into his decision to run for president a third time, telling the Washington Post in 2022, "You always have to talk about health. You look like you're in good health, but tomorrow, you get a letter from a doctor saying come see me again. That's not good when they use the word again."