

Pharmacy Briefing | March 2026

The latest on pharmacy news, trends, and insights

Brian Anderson, MBA | Principal
Rebekah Bayram, FSA, MAAA, FCA | Principal and Consulting Actuary
Marc Guieb, PharmD, RPh | Consulting Pharmacist



Highlights

- Congress passes the **Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2026**
- **The Federal Trade Commission (FTC)** settles with Express Scripts over business practices
- The federal government launches the **TrumpRx program**
- FiercePharma publishes “**Top 10 Most Anticipated Drug Launches of 2026**”
- The **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)** announces drugs selected for third round of price negotiations

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approvals and launches

- **Oral Wegovy (semaglutide)** is launched as an alternative to its injectable counterpart
- **Zycubo (copper histidine)** is approved to treat Menkes disease, a rare genetic disorder
- **Nereus (tradipitant)** is approved as a prescription drug to prevent nausea and vomiting caused by motion sickness

News

Congress passes the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2026

- The law contains a wide range of Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) reforms that, among other mandates, require PBMs to pass through 100% of rebates received and provide plans with comprehensive reporting on a regular basis.
 - Mandated reporting includes either semiannual or quarterly summaries detailing items such as a plan's gross and net spending, manufacturer remuneration linked to a plan's utilization, and steerage incentives directed towards PBM-owned pharmacies.
- The law also contains provisions regulating the frequency and scope of manufacturer rebate audits.

[Read more](#)

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) settles with Express Scripts over business practices

- Settlement provisions include items such as:
 - Curbing the preference of high wholesale acquisition cost (WAC) versions of drugs
 - Enacting pricing that is less dependent on high list prices and rebate payments
 - Onshoring of its group purchasing organization (GPO) Ascent from Switzerland to the United States
- The settlement cites an implementation date of January 1, 2028 for several mandates.

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The Federal government launches the TrumpRx program

- The website facilitates access to direct-to-consumer programs to help cash-paying patients access discounts for certain drugs.
- GoodRx is a “core integration partner” for the program; enrollee card information is the same for each program.

[Read more \(1\)](#) [Read more \(2\)](#)

FiercePharma publishes “Top 10 Most Anticipated Drug Launches of 2026”

- CagriSema, a combination drug featuring GLP-1 semaglutide, is listed as the most anticipated drug launch in 2026 and was submitted for FDA approval in December 2025.
- The second drug listed in FiercePharma’s Top 10 is orforglipron, a once-daily GLP-1 drug dosed orally.

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The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announces drugs selected for third round of price negotiations

- Examples of popular drugs included in the third round of negotiations include *Botox*, *Cosentyx*, and *Trulicity*.
- *Tradjenta*, which had been subject to previous negotiations, was selected for renegotiation.

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KFF polling highlights prior authorizations as the leading burden of receiving healthcare, outside of costs

- Roughly one in three insured adults reported the prior authorization process as their biggest healthcare burden outside of costs.
- Other highly reported complaints include setting appointments with healthcare providers, understanding bills, and finding providers contracted with their specific insurance provider.

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Drug Channels summarizes “Big Three PBM” 2026 formulary changes

- Drug Channels notes that the amount of formulary exclusions plateaued for Caremark and Optum Rx but increased for Express Scripts.
- Private label biosimilars, defined as biosimilar products marketed by subsidiaries within the same umbrella company as each PBM, continue to drive adoption and coverage.

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CMS publishes “National Health Expenditures 2024 Highlights”

- Retail prescription drug spend comprised 9% of total spend and increased 7.9% in 2024 compared to an increase of 10.8% in 2023.
- Healthcare spending among private health insurers increased 8.8% in 2024 compared to 11.2% in 2023, with much of this increase being related to increased enrollment.

[Read more \(1\)](#) [Read more \(2\)](#)

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CONTACT US:

myrxconsultant@milliman.com