

February 20, 2025

Dear senators,

The 75 undersigned organizations representing diverse interests, including consumer safety, public health, faith, racial justice and labor organizations, urge you to vote against Dr. Mehmet Oz's nomination to serve as the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and to publicly announce your opposition as soon as possible if you have not yet already done so.

Dr. Oz has massive conflicts of interest, peddles unproven "cures" for personal profit, and represents an existential threat to the Medicare program.

Dr. Oz owned between \$280,000 and \$600,000 in shares in UnitedHealth Group,¹ a major Medicare Advantage insurer, and between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in shares of CVS Health, based on disclosures from 2022.^{2,3} Dr. Oz previously publicly promoted unproven treatments for COVID-19 as well as supplements without sufficient evidence of their effectiveness.⁴ He also appears to have violated marketing disclosure requirements in promoting the supplement company, iHerb, on social media.⁵

If confirmed as the Administrator of CMS, based on his prior writings, we should expect Dr. Oz to seek to further privatize our health care system, including supercharging ongoing efforts to privatize Medicare, which would threaten access to care for seniors and people with disabilities.⁶

Further privatizing Medicare would leave millions more Americans at the whim of greedy health insurance corporations at a time Americans are already feeling the burden of our broken system.⁷ Privatized Medicare Advantage companies are doing a worse job serving beneficiaries than traditional Medicare.⁸ Companies offering privatized Medicare Advantage plans often make it difficult for patients to get the care they need and for doctors to provide necessary care.⁹

¹<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2024/12/02/dr-oz-medicare-medicare-ozempic-conflicts/>

²<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/12/13/dr-oz-companies-tied-medicare/76917868007/>

³<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2024/12/02/dr-oz-medicare-medicare-ozempic-conflicts/>

⁴<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/20/well/dr-oz-health-medicare-record.html>

⁵<https://www.citizen.org/news/dr-oz-appears-to-violate-ftc-influencer-marketing-rules-with-iherb-social-media-ads/>

⁶<https://www.forbes.com/sites/steveforbes/2020/06/11/medicare-advantage-for-all-can-save-our-health-care-system/?sh=ae4b87f4d120>

⁷<https://www.forbes.com/sites/steveforbes/2020/06/11/medicare-advantage-for-all-can-save-our-health-care-system/?sh=ae4b87f4d120>

⁸<https://medicareadvocacy.org/ongoing-medicare-advantage-overpayments-and-barriers-to-care/>

⁹<https://medicareadvocacy.org/medicare-advantage-for-all-is-not-the-answer/>

The Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General found that privatized Medicare insurers were denying large numbers of Medicare enrollees medically necessary care.¹⁰ Similarly, the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that patients with significant care needs,¹¹ including those in the last year of their life,¹² were more likely to drop their privatized Medicare Advantage plan and return to traditional Medicare. This indicates that these patients were unable to receive necessary care and returned to traditional Medicare where their choice of provider and access to services are guaranteed.

These privatized Medicare companies take the extra money they make from delaying and denying care to beneficiaries and siphon it into excessive executive compensation and share buybacks and dividends. Just last year, these companies cost Medicare an excess of around \$82 billion.¹³ If this trend continues, we could be overpaying insurance companies by more than \$1 trillion over the next decade.¹⁴

The head of CMS needs to be someone who has the best interest of the American people at heart, not his own self-interest and the wishes of insurers that seek to put corporate profits ahead of patients' needs.

We urge you to announce your opposition to Dr. Oz's nomination as CMS Administrator.

Signed,

National Organizations

314 Action

ACA Consumer Advocacy

American Economic Liberties Project

American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP)

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Be A Hero

Beta Cell Action

¹⁰<https://oig.hhs.gov/reports/all/2022/some-medicare-advantage-organization-denials-of-prior-authorization-requests-raise-concerns-about-beneficiary-access-to-medically-necessary-care/>

¹¹<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/07/05/535381473/as-seniors-get-sicker-theyre-more-likely-to-drop-medicare-advantage-plans>

¹²<https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-482>

¹³<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2819817?guestAccessKey=868d34eb-8ea3-4442-8a2b-10ac358bd17b>

¹⁴<https://www.crfb.org/blogs/new-evidence-suggests-even-larger-medicare-advantage-overpayments>

Center for Economic and Policy Research

Center for Medicare Advocacy

CenterLink: The Community of LGBTQ Centers

Coalition on Human Needs

Consilium Scientific

Debs-Jones-Douglass Institute

Defend Public Health

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)

Disability Victory

Doctors for America

Health Care Voter

Healthcare NOW

Indivisible

Jacobs Institute of Women's Health

Just Care USA

Labor Campaign for Single Payer

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

MomsRising

NAACP

National Association of Social Workers

National Consumers League

National Council of Jewish Women

National Health Law Program

National LGBTQI+ Cancer Network

National Women's Law Center

NBJC

Nurses for America

Oregonizers

People Power United

People's Action

Physicians for a National Health Program

Popular Democracy Action

Positive Women's Network-USA

Progressive Democrats of America

Protect Our Care

Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)

Public Citizen

Social Security Works

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)

UltraViolet Action

Universities Allied for Essential Medicines

Vision y Compromiso

Voices for Progress

Voices of Health Care Action

Young Invincibles

State and Local Organizations

Act for Democracy

AIDS Foundation Chicago

AIDS Resource

BHE-INC

Center for Health Progress

Citizen Action/Illinois

Doctors Organized for Health Care Solutions

Indivisible Marin

Healthcare is a Human Right WA

Metro New York Health Care for All

MN Insulin 4 All (T1International)

New York Doctors Coalition

Ohio Nurses for America

Pennsylvania Stands Up

PSARA (Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action)

Rise Up WV

South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center

The People's Lobby

Unity Fellowship of Christ Church-NYC

Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut

VOCAL-NY

Washington Community Action Network

WV Citizen Action