

## BENEFITS BREAKDOWN

July 2025



# U.S. Prescription Drug Spending Rose 10.2% in 2024

A new [report](#) from the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists revealed that prescription drug spending in the United States reached nearly \$806 billion in 2024, up 10.2% from 2023. The increase was largely driven by the demand for weight loss medications, including glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) drugs. GLP-1 medications are prescribed for diabetes and obesity and are now the top drug category by total spending and the fastest-growing segment on the market. The report also suggests that oncology, vaccines, and new generics and biosimilars may influence prescription, clinic and hospital spending in 2025:

As prescription costs rise, employers may see an increase in health care expenses. While employers can't control the price of pharmaceuticals, they can help by educating employees on benefits offerings, best practices and coverage specifics. By arming employees with knowledge about the health care system, such as how to find generic medications, employees can make informed decisions about their medications.

## White House Releases Chronic Disease Report

The White House's Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission released its first major report on chronic disease in the country. The commission comprises officials from various federal agencies and is chaired by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. An earlier executive order by President Donald Trump established the MAHA Commission to address life expectancy and chronic disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 40% of the roughly 73 million U.S. children have at least one chronic health condition (e.g., asthma, allergies, obesity, autoimmune diseases and behavioral disorders).

The "[Make Our Children Healthy Again: Assessment](#)" report explored how technology, health and agriculture innovations have driven economic growth but also introduced health threats. Overall, the report attributed many chronic diseases to the following potential drivers:

- Ultra-processed foods (UPFs)—Nearly 70% of children's calories come from UPFs, which are high in added sugars, chemical additives and saturated fats.
- Environmental chemicals—Children are increasingly exposed to synthetic chemicals, such as pesticides, microplastics and dioxins.
- Sedentary, technology-driven lifestyle—Children are experiencing high levels of inactivity, screen use, sleep deprivation and chronic stress. Teens average nine hours of nonschool screen time each day, and 85% of teens didn't meet the 2024 federal minimum daily activity recommendation.
- Medical overuse—There are concerns about overprescribing medications, including antidepressants, ADHD medicines, asthma medications and or GLP-1 drugs, to children.

The report also suggested that childhood vaccine schedules and clinical trial practices should be studied further. The initial report didn't clearly outline policy changes, but it did outline next steps, including research initiatives and potential uses of technology. Kennedy shared that, while there is no budget yet, the MAHA Commission will develop a roadmap and policy recommendations. The strategy for this initiative is due in August. In the meantime, employers should continue to monitor for research updates.