

Health officials tap Amazon, Walmart for help boosting D2C prescription drug sales

Article

The news: The Trump administration recently met with leading retailers, including Amazon and Walmart, to explore ways in which more US consumers [can get their prescription](#)

[medications directly from pharma manufacturers](#), according to a Bloomberg report.

How we got here: President Trump and his top federal health officials are prioritizing lowering drug costs in the US. A “most-favored nation” [executive order issued in May](#) called for equalizing how much the US and other developed countries pay for prescription drugs, though details are scant while the pharma industry waits for next steps.

The order also instructed the HHS to develop a plan to help Americans buy their drugs directly from manufacturers, bypassing middlemen such as insurers and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs).

- PBMs negotiate medication prices with manufacturers and use their influence to take a big cut of a drug’s sales due to rebates and fees.
- Removing PBMs from the process, while having consumers pay most-favored nation pricing directly to pharma companies, could create needed transparency into drug pricing while driving down costs.

Zooming in on D2C pharma efforts: Drugmakers such as Eli Lilly, Pfizer, and Novo Nordisk have [rolled out D2C online platforms](#) over the past year-plus. They partner with telehealth providers who can prescribe the manufacturer’s products, with the aim of improving access to certain medications [that often aren’t covered by insurance](#), such as weight loss drugs.

Yes, but: Most prescription drug spending is covered by insurance, even as more pharma players enter the D2C market.

- Nearly half (48%) of US adults who have paid for prescription medications said they are included in their insurance plan, per M3 MI’s 2025 MARS Consumer Health Study.
- 21% purchase their drugs through a Medicare Part D plan.
- Far fewer patients pay for their prescriptions all on their own.

Most Prescription Drugs Are Purchased Using Health Insurance or Supplemental Plans/Benefits

% of US adults who purchased their prescription drugs through the following methods, March 2025

Prescriptions are included in my health insurance plan

48%

Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (Part D)

21%

A prescription savings program discount card/mobile app (e.g., GoodRx)

15%

A Flexible Spending or Health Savings Account (FSA or HSA)

11%

A prescription drug plan separate from my health insurance

10%

I usually pay for prescriptions myself because my plan has a high deductible

10%

I pay for all prescriptions myself because I have no prescription coverage

7%

A prescription assistance program from a drug brand

6%

Brand-specific coupons, rebates, or loyalty cards

5%

Other

5%

Note: n=20,005 ages 18+ who purchased drugs for themselves in the past 12 months
Source: M3 MI/Kantar Media Healthcare Research, "2025 MARS Consumer Health Study,"
May 2025

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Plus, it's unclear what role companies such as Amazon and Walmart would play in the government's plan to have people purchase drugs right from their manufacturers. Both retailers have been ramping up their pharmacy businesses and have drug pricing contracts with PBMs and insurers.

Our take: The administration hasn't been pro-pharma in Trump's second term, threatening drug pricing controls, [tariffs](#), and [stricter D2C advertising regulations](#) all in the first several months. But the two sides found some common ground by primarily blaming PBMs for high drug prices. However, it's unrealistic to expect pharma's middlemen to be cut out anytime soon, as they are so deeply rooted in the US healthcare infrastructure.