

## Health Chiefs Plug Medicare Payment Pilot for Wearable Devices

Dec 4, 2025, 4:50 PM EST

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Reporter - Bloomberg

Top US health officials touted to tech companies Thursday that they will offer a new payment structure to manufacturers that create solutions that monitor chronic health conditions affecting seniors.

The Department of Health and Human Services plans to test novel ways to reimburse wearable health devices and telemedicine applications, which historically have been ineligible for payment through Medicare.

Under the HHS's Advancing Chronic Care with Effective, Scalable Solutions (ACCESS) model, telehealth companies and wearable tech manufacturers will receive payments for positive improvements in a patient's health.

The pilot will focus on conditions affecting more than two-thirds of Medicare recipients, which include high blood pressure, diabetes, chronic pain, and depression. The program will begin July 1, 2026, and run for 10 years.

Details of the voluntary model were discussed in front of an audience of representatives from leading digital health companies and a panel of leaders from prominent physician groups, including the American Medical Association, the American College of Cardiology, and the American Psychiatric Association.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced the model earlier this week.

"For the first time, it's going to give beneficiaries of original Medicare and their providers access to high-value, technology-first supportive care options that I think are going to make a massive difference, specifically preventing and managing chronic diseases," CMS Administrator Mehmet Oz said Thursday.

The summit builds on an HHS meeting with tech companies in July, which sought to leverage their expertise to create apps that make it easier for patients to use and share their health-care information and manage chronic health conditions.

Although over 400 companies have signed on to take part in the health department's digital transformation, acting Department of Government Efficiency Administrator Amy Gleason told audience members that the agency has lacked a payment method for these new digital health tools.

The new financing model would be the missing piece to achieving mass adoption of these solutions, Gleason said.

Thursday's meeting also came with an announcement that the FDA will waive its standard pre-market safety review process for these digital tools.

"Facilitating use of those devices in a controlled context can accelerate access to the market for these breakthrough therapies," FDA Chief of Staff Jim Traficant said.

Traficant said companies interested in participating in the program should apply directly to the FDA. Though no application date was shared, he told audience members that the FDA will issue a notice soon with additional details.