

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

Finance Committee Executive Session to Consider Favorably the Nomination of Dr. Oz to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

March 25, 2025

Senator Cantwell Remarks

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

Sen. Cantwell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm speaking about this pivotal vote today because I want to be clear about the devastating impacts that Medicaid will have on our constituents that is included in the House Republican budget.

While I appreciate Dr. Oz's willingness to consider some interesting and important reforms, like PBMs or the basic health plan, he was unwilling to commit to opposing a cut to Medicaid. The math is clear. The proposal from the House budget would require massive cuts to Medicaid. And I appreciate that my Republican Senate colleagues know this, and which is why it's not in their particular proposal, but now we have to fight the negotiations between the House and the Senate and hold our colleagues accountable to protect this important program.

I know Dr. Oz won't. He wouldn't commit. He would not say no, and certainly not no to President Trump or Elon Musk or to the House of Representatives.

The House committee that oversees Medicaid and Medicare is responsible for funding \$880 billion from these cuts. So you can see from this chart, the only real place to get this is, particularly if Medicare is off the table, is from Medicaid. Even if the Committee completely eliminated every single other program in the E&C account, it still gives them one sixth of what they need.

So make no mistake, there is no other way to meet this mandate but then to impact Medicaid. My colleagues who are trying to play down this threat or act like there's some other way around it -- it's just not so. It's either bad math or bad faith.

Anyone who is telling their constituents is just not being honest with them. Last week, I spoke in my state, in Seattle, Spokane, and Tri-Cities, about these Medicaid cuts, and was joined by physicians, hospital providers, patients, who do not want to shoulder this burden. A patient like Gail Halverson from Spokane, who was terrified that this system that provided her and her late partner, who just passed, with affordable health care will no longer be there for them. She told me, "Who's going to pay for the nursing home? That's Medicare and Medicaid. So are we just going to be left to die?"

Harborview, a medical center in Seattle, with the most advanced trauma care in the region, receives 39% of their revenue from Medicaid. The CEO told me that the cut of this magnitude would be existential.

So everyone knows that this issue is on the table, and yet we don't have a nominee before us who will say clearly, he doesn't plan to cut Medicaid. According to the Congressional Budget Office,

Medicaid related expenditures account for 93% of the non-Medicare spending in the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The lion's share will absolutely have to come from Medicaid. It's time to now get a nominee who would support that. That is not Dr. Oz.

So, with this tsunami of cuts that we're looking at, I cannot support this nomination. I hope my colleagues will turn it down as well, and I hope our colleagues will join us in a fight to say, "No cuts to Medicaid." Thank you, Mr. Chairman.