

## WORLD IN BRIEF

## Trump to issue stop-payment order on health care subsidies

WASHINGTON — In a brash move likely to roil insurance markets, President Donald Trump will “immediately” halt payments to insurers under the Obama-era health care law he has been trying to unravel for months.

The Department of Health and Human Services made the announcement in a statement late Thursday. “We will discontinue these payments immediately,” said acting HHS Secretary Eric Hargan and Medicare administrator Seema Verma. Sign-up season for subsidized private insurance starts Nov. 1, in less than three weeks, with about 9 million people currently covered.

In a separate statement, the White House said the government cannot legally continue to pay the so-called cost-sharing subsidies because they lack a formal authorization by Congress.

However, the administration had been making the payments from month to month, even as Trump threatened to cut them off to force Democrats to negotiate over health care. The subsidies help lower copays and deductibles for people with modest incomes.

Halting the payments would trigger a spike in premiums for next year, unless Trump reverses course or Congress authorizes the money. The next payments are due around Oct. 20.

## Democrat says party won't cave on 'Obamacare'

Senate Minority leader Chuck Schumer says “threats and bullying” from President Donald Trump will not force Democrats to repeal the Obama health care law.

The New York Democrat tells reporters people will blame Republicans for the pain of Trump’s decision to halt federal payments to insurers.

Schumer says blocking those subsidies will cause higher premiums and prompt some insurers to stop selling policies. He says people “know full well which party is doing it.”

Schumer says Trump has “a decreased level of trust” with voters and congressional Democrats. He says Trump lacks leverage to force Democrats to make concessions.

The Democratic leader says there’ll be a good chance to restore the money in a bipartisan end-of-year spending bill.

In other developments, a coalition of state attorneys general is planning to file suit today to try to block Trump’s move.

The office of California Attorney General Xavier Becerra says the federal suit will argue that the Trump administration violated a law that requires government agencies to obey existing statutes and follow orderly and transparent procedures.

The state officials will also argue that the Trump administration violated the U.S. Constitution’s “Take Care Clause,” which requires the executive branch to faithfully execute laws.

## Californians under siege try to fight fires, find loved ones

SONOMA, Calif. — They are trying to find lost loved ones, to sift through the remains of lost homes, to count, identify and mourn the dozens of dead — all while the fires rage on.

The communities of Northern California were preparing for another day under siege today, despite being driven to exhaustion by evacuations, destruction and danger amid the deadliest week of wildfires the state has ever seen.

“It wears you out,” said winemaker Kristin Belair, who was

driving back from Lake Tahoe to her as-yet-unburnt home in Napa. “Anybody who’s been in a natural disaster can tell you that it goes on and on. I think you just kind of do hour by hour almost.”

The death toll had climbed to an unprecedented 31, and was expected to keep rising. Individual fires including the Oakland Hills blaze of 1991 had killed more people than any one of the current fires, but no collection of simultaneous fires in California had ever led to so many deaths, authorities said.

“We had series of statewide fires in 2003, 2007, 2008 that didn’t have anything close to this death count,” said Daniel Berlant, a deputy director with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

## Tillerson: Trump will scorn but not bolt from Iran nuke deal

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump will say today the Iran nuclear deal is no longer in America’s national security interests, but he won’t withdraw from the landmark 2015 accord or immediately re-impose sanctions, U.S. officials said.

The announcement is essentially a compromise that allows Trump to condemn an accord that he has repeatedly denounced as the worst deal in American history. But he stops well short of torpedoing the pact, which was negotiated over 18 months by the Obama administration, European allies and others.

Instead, Trump will kick the issue over to Congress, asking lawmakers to come up with new legislation that would automatically re-impose sanctions should Iran cross any one of numerous nuclear and non-nuclear “trigger points,” Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster said in remarks released ahead of Trump’s announcement.

Those “trigger points” would include violations of the deal involving illicit atomic work or ballistic missile testing, support for Syrian President Bashar Assad, Lebanon’s Hezbollah movement and other groups that destabilize the region, human rights abuses and cyber warfare, they said.

Congress will have 60 days to decide whether to snap the sanctions back into place, modify the law or do nothing. Any decision to re-impose sanctions would automatically kill America’s participation in the deal.

## Social Security benefits to rise by 2 percent in 2018

WASHINGTON — Millions of Social Security recipients and other retirees will get a 2 percent increase in benefits next year. It’s the largest increase since 2012 but comes to only \$25 a month for the average beneficiary.

The Social Security Administration announced the cost-of-living increase today.

The COLA affects benefits for more than 70 million U.S. residents, including Social Security recipients, disabled veterans and federal retirees. That’s about one in five Americans.

By law, the COLA is based on a broad measure of consumer prices generated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Advocates for seniors claim the inflation index doesn’t accurately capture rising prices faced by seniors, especially for health care.

“It’s squeezing them. It’s causing them to dip into savings more quickly,” said Mary Johnson of The Senior Citizens League. “The lifetime income that they were counting on just isn’t there.”

Some conservatives argue that the inflation index is too generous because when prices go up, people change their buying habits and buy cheaper alternatives.

The average monthly Social Security payment is \$1,258, or about \$15,000 a year.

## Suspect in slayings of boy, 3 adults arrested after manhunt

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The man suspected of fatally shooting a 7-year-old boy and three adults was arrested Friday as he walked along a southern Ohio road after a dayslong manhunt, a sheriff said.

Authorities located 23-year-old Arron Lawson after receiving a tip from someone who spotted him, Lawrence County Sheriff Jeffery Lawless said. He seemed worn out, the sheriff said.

Lawson is being held on charges of murder and aggravated murder. It wasn’t immediately clear whether he has an attorney.

He was arrested roughly 12 miles south of where authorities found three adults dead in a house trailer on Wednesday evening and later found the body of 7-year-old Devin Holston apparently hidden.

A fourth adult who was stabbed at the home fled and was flown to a hospital.

## Turkish troops move into al-Qaida-dominated Syrian province

BEIRUT — Turkish armored vehicles have rolled into northwestern Syria to impose a “de-escalation zone” in a province dominated by al-Qaida-linked militants.

The Turkish military said it began an operation late Thursday to set up “observation points” in Idlib, without providing further details or saying how many troops were involved.

Turkey’s Hurriyet newspaper said around 30 armored vehicles and more than 100 commandos and special forces are taking part in the operation, with more troop movements expected in the coming days.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the deployment of nearly 16 armored vehicles, five tanks and a military force came days after Turkey sent reconnaissance missions to the area.

## In Weinstein saga, McGowan emerges as powerful voice

NEW YORK — In a flurry of unrestrained tweets and with the “RoseArmy” at her back, Rose McGowan has emerged a kind of whistleblowing avenger in the Harvey Weinstein saga, leaving a scorched path behind her across social media.

After long referencing a past incident with Weinstein, McGowan on Thursday for the first time said it outright: “HW raped me,” the actress wrote, apparently referring to the embattled former Weinstein Co. co-chairman. Weinstein representative Sallie Hofmeister said “any allegations of non-consensual contact are unequivocally denied by Mr. Weinstein.”

The Hollywood Reporter said McGowan confirmed it was Weinstein she was referring to; her representative did not respond to a message seeking comment.

McGowan’s accusation was the latest development in the fast-unraveling saga surrounding Weinstein.

Police detectives in New York and London said Thursday that they are taking a fresh look into sexual assault allegations against Harvey Weinstein now that some 30 women have accused the Hollywood film producer of inappropriate conduct. Hachette Book Group, one of the country’s top publishers, announced it has pulled the plug on its Weinstein Books imprint.

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### For more information:

October 16th, 2017  
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Times: 9am, 10am, 11am, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm, 4pm

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