

IMPulse

Intermountain Media Pulse

A TRUETONE INCORPORATED COMPANY

**news
CLIP**

11623 Lake Shore
Nampa, ID 83686
(208) 880-9814

FOR YOUR INFORMATION
The Spokesman-Review
Spokane, Washington
Sunday Oct. 1, 2017
Wire Report
Page 1 of 2

Price's exit upsets GOP health care push

Party already struggling in bid to repeal, replace Obamacare

BRANCHBURG, N.J. — The ouster of Tom Price as President Donald Trump's health secretary is yet another self-inflicted blow for Republicans wishing to put their own stamp on health care — and the latest distraction for a White House struggling to advance its agenda after months of turmoil.

Price resigned Friday amid investigations into his use of costly charter flights for official travel at taxpayer expense. His exit makes it even more unlikely that Republicans will be able to deliver on their promise to repeal and replace former President Barack Obama's law, even though they control the White House and both chambers of Congress.

"I think health care is a dead letter through the next election," Joe Antos, a policy expert with the business-oriented American Enterprise Institute, said Saturday.

The health secretary's exit capped a week in which a last-ditch GOP health care bill failed to advance in the Senate. Regaining momentum will be more difficult now that the White House also has to find a replacement for Price. That makes it harder to visualize how the administration and congressional Republicans can fulfill their goal of remaking the health care system along conservative lines, although Trump has said he's confident a plan can pass early next year.

Price — who Trump concluded had become a distraction — had been on the rocks with the president since before the travel flap. A former Republican congressman from Georgia, he proved less helpful than expected on the health care fight. Price played a supporting role while Vice President Mike Pence took the lead, especially with the Senate.

The task of installing another secretary at the Health and Human Services Department won't be easy.

The nominee will have to run the gantlet of Senate confirmation. The already contentious process will be more challenging as Democrats shift from playing defense to offense on health care, heartened by the survival of the Affordable Care Act and polls showing support for the government's leading role in health care.

And HHS is not the only department that needs a leader. Trump has yet to pick a permanent replacement for his chief of staff, John Kelly, who left his previous job running the Department of Homeland Security in July.

Two potential candidates for health secretary already hold senior Senate-confirmed posts at HHS, which could be a plus for the White House.

IMPulse

Intermountain Media Pulse

A TRUETONE INCORPORATED COMPANY

**news
CLIP**

11623 Lake Shore
Nampa, ID 83686
(208) 880-9814

FOR YOUR INFORMATION
The Spokesman-Review
Spokane, Washington
Sunday Oct. 1, 2017
Wire Report
Page 2 of 2

Seema Verma leads the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which runs major insurance programs. Scott Gottlieb heads the Food and Drug Administration, which has regulatory authority across pharmaceuticals and consumer products.

Verma is a protégée of Pence, who played a major role in negotiations with Congress this year on the futile Obamacare repeal effort.

Verma is seen as a talented policy expert, but she's still relatively new to the ways of Washington. Gottlieb is a veteran, but he may prefer the FDA and its clearly defined mission to the quicksand of health care policy.

Also mentioned is Louisiana GOP Sen. Bill Cassidy, co-author of the last Republican health care bill that failed to advance. Cassidy would probably win confirmation easily, but his prospects in the Senate appear bright, and he may not want to depart for a Cabinet post in a tumultuous administration.

Another potential candidate is Florida's Republican Gov. Rick Scott, a former hospital executive who is term-limited after 2018. But Scott is expected to mount a Senate campaign against Democratic incumbent Sen. Bill Nelson next year, and he may have ambitions and interests beyond health care.

by Jill Colvin and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar for the Associated Press

###

Copyright 2017 The Associated Press