

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
Thursday Nov. 30, 2017
by Ricardo Alonso-
Zaldivar (AP)
Page 1 of 1

Trump health pick parries questions on drug cost, health law

WASHINGTON – Calling it the opportunity of his lifetime, President Donald Trump’s pick for health secretary pledged Wednesday to help lower drug prices and said he’d carry out the Obama-era health law his boss has been unable to erase.

Alex Azar’s assurances to the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions committee were met with doubt by lawmakers of both parties, especially Democrats concerned about his ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

Nonetheless the 50-year-old former drug company and government executive deflected Democratic attempts to paint him as a political partisan beholden to a powerful industry. Some Democrats, including Sens. Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire and Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island, focused their questions on practical policy issues not tinged by ideological conflict.

“I don’t have pharma’s policy agenda,” Azar said at one point. “This is the most important job I will have in a lifetime, and my commitment is to the American people.”

Committee chair Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., told Azar at the conclusion of the hearing that he believes the Senate will vote to confirm him.

Known as a brainy policy expert with a conservative political pedigree, Azar said his main priorities would be lowering drug prices, making health insurance more affordable, continuing Medicare’s efforts to pay for value not just volume, and confronting the opioid epidemic.

If confirmed, Azar would be Trump’s second HHS secretary, replacing Tom Price, who resigned under pressure after using private charter flights at taxpayer expense.

###

Copyright 2017 The Associated Press