



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Sirona Strategies Clients

DATE: November 20, 2024

RE: Background on Dr. Mehmet Oz - Nominee for CMS Administrator

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On November 19, President-elect Trump announced the appointment of Dr. Mehmet Oz to serve as the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Dr. Oz is a cardiothoracic surgeon, television personality, and former Republican candidate for Senate.

This memo provides an overview of Oz and his health care priorities.

### **Background**

Dr. Oz earned his bachelor's degree from Harvard University and his medical and business degrees from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and Wharton. In 1986, Oz began his medical career as a cardiothoracic surgeon at the Presbyterian Hospital in New York City, then affiliated with Columbia University. Oz co-founded the Cardiac Complementary Care Center in 1995, which provided alternative medicine to heart disease patients.

Oz's television career began on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, where he served as a health expert for five seasons. The *Dr. Oz Show* debuted on September 14, 2009, after Winfrey offered him the opportunity to host a syndicated series, and ran until January 24, 2022. In 2014, Oz [appeared](#) before the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection to discuss ways to protect consumers from weight-loss scams involving pills, creams and supplements, after concerns that he was marketing weight-loss products to consumers in a misleading fashion.

In September 2016, during his presidential campaign, Donald Trump appeared on *The Dr. Oz Show*. Oz was later [appointed](#) to the President's Council on Sports, Fitness, and Nutrition in 2018 during Trump's administration.

In 2022, Dr. Oz [ran](#) as a Republican candidate for senator in Pennsylvania following the retirement of Sen. Toomey (R-PA). He lost the election to Sen. Fetterman (D-PA), receiving 46.3 percent of the vote. Oz referred to himself as a "pro-life candidate" and supports the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, but has stated that abortion policies should be left up to the states.

### **Priorities**

Dr. Oz's key health policy priorities include addressing chronic disease through preventative health care; strengthening Medicare Advantage; reducing administrative costs, fraud, and wasteful spending; and driving efficiencies in federal health programs. He also expressed support for value-based care, telehealth, artificial intelligence (AI) and remote patient monitoring (RPM). It is anticipated that his priorities will also center around RFK Jr.'s [Make America Healthy Again \(MAHA\)](#) plan, should both be confirmed.

*Medicare & Medicaid*

During his 2022 campaign, Dr. Oz [promoted](#) a health care plan, which he referred to as “Medicare Advantage Plus” that would expand “privately run health insurance plans that happened under the Trump administration and are one of the Trump administration’s great successes.” He stated that “these plans are high-quality, low-cost, are beloved by seniors, and should be available to everyone who wants them.”

In 2020, Oz co-authored an [op-ed](#) that advocated for achieving universal health care coverage by expanding Medicare Advantage to every American who is not on Medicaid. He believes that Medicare Advantage has “much better benefits, care coordination, quality controls, levels of performance accountability and cash-flow models for implementing and delivering continuously improving models of care.”

Oz has not publicly shared his views on Medicaid, but he is a traditionally conservative Republican and it is expected he will focus on efficiency, fiscal responsibility and reducing fraud.

#### *ACA*

Dr. Oz has previously supported aspects of the ACA and individual insurance mandates, but expressed a belief that the final legislation had limited “ability to address the quality of care and more importantly the cost of care.” A spokesman for his 2022 Senate campaign stated that Oz no longer supported the ACA, stating that he “does not support a big government takeover of the health insurance industry” and that he “would not have voted for Obamacare.”

#### *COVID-19*

Dr. Oz served as an informal health adviser to Trump during the Covid-19 pandemic. During this period, Oz [promoted](#) the use of hydroxychloroquine, an anti-malaria drug, to treat COVID-19. The FDA ultimately [revoked](#) emergency use of the drug. He has also [praised](#) the development and rollout of COVID-19 vaccines.

#### *Health IT*

Dr. Oz is a [partner](#) with 100Plus and Sharecare, companies that offer RPM software and devices. He has [stated](#) that “AI is the most important advance that will affect medicine in our lifetime” and that AI-enabled RPM has the potential to transform treatment for chronic conditions, including heart disease.

Oz is also a proponent of telehealth and has [called for](#) making permanent the Medicare COVID-19 telehealth flexibilities.

#### *Value-Based Care*

In a 2021 [interview](#), Oz stated that he believes “value-based approaches will be the foundation of effective health care system,” citing the costs of a “fractured path of care where people don’t get a comprehensive, cohesive management around the complicated things that are happening to them.” He has expressed support for preventative health care to manage chronic diseases and reducing administrative expenses in health care.

#### **Conclusion**

Sen. Cassidy (R-LA), the incoming Senate HELP Committee Chair, and Sen. Crapo (R-ID), the incoming Senate Finance Committee Chair, have [both expressed](#) his support for Dr. Oz’s nomination.