

President Trump Taps Former Lilly President to Lead HHS

President Donald Trump recently nominated former pharmaceutical executive Alex Azar to be his next Health and Human Services (HHS) secretary.

Azar, a veteran of George W. Bush's administration, would succeed Tom Price, who resigned after he spent roughly \$1 million on private and government air travel in seven months on the job.

If confirmed, the 50-year-old Azar would be thrust onto the front lines of a White House agenda that includes repealing Obamacare, reining in drug prices and rolling back regulation--goals that have remained largely unfilled since President Trump took office.

The Trump administration is wagering that Azar has the policy and political chops to get those priorities back on

track, and the managerial expertise required to repair relationships within HHS and on Capitol Hill left frayed by congressional Republicans' dysfunctional repeal effort and the subsequent scrutiny of Price's travel habits.

Azar spent nearly a decade at Indianapolis-based Eli Lilly, where he rose to become president of the pharmaceutical giant's U.S. operations before leaving earlier this year. Prior to that, he served as HHS general counsel and then deputy secretary across six years with the Bush administration.

It was there where Azar built a reputation as a pragmatic and highly competent--if demanding--leader steeped in both the processes of policymaking and the federal bureaucracy.