

University of California (UC) Berkeley Labor Center and UCLA Center for Health Policy Research estimate a 2.5 percentage point increase in the number of uninsured Californians by 2023– According to the researchers, up to 800,000 Californians are expected to lose their health insurance coverage in the next five years as a result of the repeal of the federal tax penalty associated with non-compliance to the individual health insurance mandate.

Halt on right-to-die law is overturned by state appeals court– Early this year, a Riverside County Superior Court Judge halted the 2016 statute because it was introduced illegally during a special session. Last week, the state appeals court overturned the ruling stating that the physicians who brought the lawsuit did not have the legal standing to sue as the issue had no bearing on them. The statute gives terminally ill patients the option to request lethal medications.

California fires create additional health hazards as toxic chemicals from the fire seep into the soil– The fires can cause the release of radioactive isotopes from household items and asbestos in the houses. The soil has to be tested and cleaned before residents can return to their homes and begin rebuilding. If they wish to search for their items, families are encouraged to use protective gear (gloves, dust mask, and shovel) even after they receive clearance.

California's Department of Public Health to roll out California Influenza Surveillance Program this year– The department had 329 flu-related deaths on record for people younger than 65 years in 2017. The department suspects this number to be an undercount. One reason for the undercount is that health providers are not required to report flu-related deaths in seniors. Another reason is that the figure was based on reports of individuals' deaths as opposed to estimating based on mathematical modeling, like those used by the CDC. The new system will count flu-related deaths for people of all ages based on death certificates.

Other States

BCFS Health and Human Services nonprofit organization receives green light to bypass mental health requirements in a Texas migrant detention camp– While the federal policy states that there must be one mental health clinician present for every 12 children, the federal government will allow this non-profit organization that is running the clinic to have just one clinician for every 100 children. The costs of operating the shelter for taxpayers is \$1,200 per child per night.

Eight of the 45 babies born with syphilis in Arizona have passed away this year– The Arizona Department of Health declared a syphilis outbreak among women and babies. Officials urge parents to understand that syphilis, like other sexually-transmitted diseases, can be prevented through the use of condoms.

Nonprofit physicians group pushing to stop children's hospitals in Boston from serving hot dogs– The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine consists of 12,000 physicians who advocate for plant-based diets. The physicians say that children have a higher risk of choking and colorectal cancer from hot dogs. One hospital responded that hot dogs are not on the menu for inpatients even though they are available at the cafeterias.

City of Austin will pay \$75,000 to hire consultant to guide police department task force to address mental health– An audit of the police department indicated a dire lack of mental health expertise among police officers who commonly interact with mentally ill people. Approximately 33 percent of the deaths caused by police shootings were of people who have a mental illness. The department has put together a task force and will work with a consultant to understand how to address the issue, especially through the use of data.

Hawaii school confuses Pine-Sol cleaner for apple juice– Children at a Hawaii preschool were exposed to Pine-Sol instead of apple juice this week. There were no reported signs of trauma, and none of the children were taken to the hospital as the amount consumed was not enough to warrant any action. The classroom assistant who was responsible for the incident was fired.

Yale University installs contraceptive vending machines– The machines will include Plan B for \$49.99, and there are plans to include oral contraceptives as well. Three California universities have done this in the past.

Federal government approves policy change for retroactive Medicaid Coverage in Florida– The state received approval to reduce the retroactive eligibility from 90 days to 30 days for those who qualify for Medicaid. The policy goes into effect from February 1, 2019 to June 30, 2019.

The 100 Million Healthier Lives Initiative

The Initiative was started in 2014 by Dr. Somava Stout, the Vice President of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Boston. It is founded on the idea that health outcomes are heavily impacted by social and behavioral factors such as one's zip code, access to healthy food, and income. The goal is to create a network of partners who can identify ways to collaborate to improve population health outcomes. In 2014, the initiative started with 35 partners, and by 2017, it had 1,800 partners covering 500 million people in 30 countries. The groups are also developing a measurement framework to create a more comprehensive picture of the health status of a population as a whole.

100 Million Healthier Lives is facilitating Pathways to Population Health (P2P), a collaboration of five major organizations that are combining their strengths and efforts to create a culture of change and influence positive population health. *The Institute for Health Policy and Leadership is pleased to facilitate Loma Linda University Health's participation as a pioneer organization in P2P.*

Newsbytes Relevant to Our Strategic Priorities



To bring focus to our work, the Institute for Health Policy and Leadership has identified three strategic priorities: oral health, mental health and hunger as a health issue. This segment highlights news articles relevant to these priorities.

Oral Health

Medicaid recipients in Minnesota face multiple barriers to receiving dental care– Slightly over one-third of the children enrolled in Medicaid received dental care in 2017 even though dental care benefits are included in Medicaid coverage. This number represents a slight decline from 2015. With the help of grants, some organizations are working to improve access to care. They still experience long wait times because of the shortage of dentists accepting Medicaid, primarily due to low reimbursement rates.

Hunger as
a Health
Issue

Opposing sides in the Yemen war to meet in Sweden to discuss peace in the face of the world's worst humanitarian crisis which has left more than 12 million people starving and thousands dead– The two groups have begun the de-escalation process after three years of conflict. Airstrikes on schools and hospitals made it difficult for international agencies to provide logistical aid. Critics are appreciative of the initiation of conversations but are not entirely hopeful that significant strides will be made soon enough.

Mental/
Behavioral
Health

School-based health centers in Connecticut working with state departments to create suicide prevention infrastructure– In the last five years, the schools noted an 11 percent increase in the number of mental health visits. These visits compromise more than 40 percent of all visits to SBHCs. These systems are working in conjunction with other state departments to reduce emergency department visits and increase the use of outpatient treatment in order to promote continuity of care.