

California

Adventist Health and UC Davis Health open new cancer center for patients displaced by fires in Paradise– Since the fires, 120 cancer patients have been traveling to a center that is 46 miles away after the care centers closed in Paradise. The alternative treatment home is an effort to improve accessibility for the patients of Butte County.

Investigation finds that soft drink companies spent \$11.8 million lobbying California legislators in 2017 and 2018– The lobbying included travel funds, movie screenings, tickets to professional sports games, and expensive dinners. The analysis finds that 9 in 10 state legislators accepted the contributions.

Other States

Ohio-based hospital to raise minimum wage to \$15 per hour– Nationwide Children’s Hospital made the announcement last week that all of its employees will see pay increases by 2020. The current minimum wage rate for the hospital employees is \$10 per hour while the state’s mandated minimum wage rate is \$8.55, and the median hourly rate in 2017 was \$17.79. In other Ohio news, a pay-for-performance model for community health workers to address infant mortality will be launched in Cleveland. The model has shown success in other areas since the 1990s.

Colorado’s Office of Saving People Money on Health Care provides potential solutions to decreasing healthcare costs– The department will be required to submit a report by January 2020. Some of the proposals include increased price transparency in hospitals, the establishment of a reinsurance pool for insurance premiums, and a ban on surprise, out-of-network bills.

New York declares public health emergency due to measles outbreak– A large outbreak occurred in an Orthodox Jewish Community. The mayor stated that parents whose children are not vaccinated would be subject to a \$1000 fine. Rockland County in New York placed a ban on unvaccinated children from public spaces, but it was put on hold by a judge last week.

Massachusetts passes bill banning gay conversion therapy on minors– The state is now the 16th state to pass this law. According to one report, tens of thousands of LGBTQ minors are subjected to conversion therapy that can include induced vomiting and electric shocks.

Two veterans commit suicide at separate Veterans Affairs facilities in Georgia– One suicide occurred at a hospital parking lot while another occurred via a gunshot at the main entrance of another hospital. The facilities are investigating the deaths. The VA has been under scrutiny for the last few years as such cases keep occurring. To learn more about mental health for veterans in the US, read *our issue brief*.

Philadelphia sees increase in HIV cases after years of decline– The city’s health department noted 419 new HIV cases in 2017, and at least 59 of those cases involved intravenous drug use. In response, the city has been increasing HIV testing and expanding clean syringe availability. Injection facilities are illegal in the state.

Tennessee’s Medicaid program lost 12 percent of enrolled children since 2016– The state may have dropped over 100,000 children from the program after cutting out families that may be income ineligible. Families that are income ineligible for TennCare have the option of enrolling their children in CoverKids if their family income is below 250 percent of the poverty line. Nearly 40 percent of children in CoverKids lost their insurance.

Minnesota Department of Public Health reduces acceptable levels of certain pollutants found in drinking water– The department slightly decreased the acceptable amount of perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) from 27 parts per million (ppm) to 15 ppm. These compounds are often found in products such as cookware, food wrappers, and firefighting foam and are linked to health conditions such as cancer and thyroid disease. The new action will put six private wells out of compliance. In other Minnesota news, a Minnesota children’s clinic will be opening a transgender clinic for youth who identify as transgender and will include services such as psychological care and hormone treatments.

Alabama prisons have been deemed unsafe and unconstitutional by Department of Justice (DOJ)– After two years of investigations, the DOJ finds that Alabama is violating the constitutional rights of prisoners by failing to protect them from violence. The DOJ is working with the state to make improvements.

Latest News in Healthcare Business

CVS

CVS will now be expanding same-day delivery on prescription drugs and other items to 6,000 of its 10,000 stores. The delivery fee is \$7.99, and orders can be placed through an app or by calling the pharmacy.

Amazon

Amazon's voice assistant Alexa can now offer HIPAA-compliant skills such as checking prescriptions, finding urgent care centers, scheduling visits, and logging healthcare data. Amazon has six partners including pharmacies, insurers, and hospitals that will be testing the voice applications.

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

Journal of the California Dental Association's April Issue highlights oral health for older adults– The articles are focused on how to provide oral health care for older adults through the integration of medicine and dentistry, public health approaches, additions to dental education, and the addition of dental benefits to Medicare.

Hunger as
a Health
Issue

Indiana school district partners with nonprofit to repackage leftover school lunch into take-home meals– The nonprofit Cultivate uses food that has been prepared but not served and creates take-home frozen meals. One school will provide 20 children with a backpack filled with food daily and eight frozen meals during the weekends for the rest of the school year.

Mental/
Behavioral
Health

Cornell to implement new mental health service for students in the fall– The services will include same day, 25-minute, goal-focused counseling sessions. The program is modeled after a successful program implemented at Brown University. The student mental health programs will undergo internal and external review to watch for bias and racism in the mental health system. Cornell Health has also been allocating additional resources to keep up with the increasing demand for mental health.

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