



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
HEALTH

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Healthcare News At A Glance

National

Unsafe levels of lead and cadmium found in school supplies sold through Amazon– When Amazon was notified, they issued refunds and created a new requirement that all sellers of school supplies and children’s jewelry will have to provide lab test results showing that the products comply with safety regulations. The company was fined \$700,000 by the Washington Attorney General.

UnitedHealthcare partners with providers to offer maternity care bundled payment– The providers will receive a single payment for each episode of perinatal care and reimbursements will be based on health outcomes. The insurer already has a maternity program that has resulted in lower costs and better health outcomes.

Walmart raises age for buying tobacco to 21 years– The company has joined Walgreens and Rite Aid in raising the minimum age to purchase tobacco products starting July 1, 2019. Walmart will also stop selling fruit-and dessert-flavored e-cigarettes.

Starting July 7, 2019, pharmaceutical companies will be required to display list prices for prescription drugs on TV ads– The companies will be required to list prices if they exceed \$35 in large, legible text on television advertisements. The companies may include a statement that having health insurance can alter the prices and can list the prices of their competitors.

Administration may change formula for calculating federal poverty level– The Office of Management and Budget proposed a formula that would lower the estimation for the inflation rate, therefore slowing the rate at which poverty levels rise. The budget director said the formula should be re-examined as they have more knowledge about inflation. Opponents argue that the new calculation would remove assistance for families that are in need.

District Judge temporarily halts Medicare cuts to 340B hospitals, requesting remedial measures within three months– The judge ruled that the cuts to the reimbursement rates were unlawful but did not grant the permanent injunctions that were requested by hospitals since the pay rules already went into effect at the beginning of last year.

Highlighted Healthcare Studies

1. Study by the Rand Corporation finds that the average prices for private hospital outpatient services were 293 percent of the Medicare rates.
2. Study in *Clinical Infectious Diseases* finds that if all inpatient healthcare facilities utilized an electronic registry system to track patients for carbapenem-resistant *Enterobacteriaceae*, an antibiotic-resistant bacteria, the incidence of the infection could drop by 12 percent over three years.
3. Study in the *Journal of Rural Health* finds that between 1999 to 2016, diabetes mortality rates were six times as likely to improve in metropolitan areas than rural areas.
4. Study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Psychiatry* finds that Caucasians were 35 times more likely to receive a buprenorphine prescription in an outpatient visit than people of color.
5. Study by the Kaiser Family Foundation finds that beneficiaries who switched from traditional Medicare to Medicare Advantage in 2016 were already spending \$1,253 less, on average, in 2015.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Updates

1. The CDC finds that the number of uninsured people increased by 3.75 percent between 2017 and 2018.
2. The CDC finds that 60 percent of the 3,410 pregnancy-related deaths that occurred between 2011 and 2015 were preventable.

California

Caltrans fined after International Union of Operating Engineers complains that Caltrans workers made to clean human-related waste for which they do not have appropriate training– Caltrans workers have cleaned human waste, feminine hygiene products, and needles near homeless encampments. The union said that workers should be provided with specific training for biohazards as well as increased pay. The department has been fined \$850 up until now for failing to review investigations related to occupation-related accidents.

Just 43 measles cases have already cost California counties more than \$400,000 this year– The figure only accounts for how much the counties have spent trying to contain potential outbreaks after people have been affected. The director of immunization at the CDC estimates that each measles case, including medical care, costs around \$32,000.

Manifest MedEX receives \$4.9 million contract from the California Emergency Medical Services Authority to develop data network for ambulances and hospitals– The program will run for two years and will include 13 emergency medical service providers and 16 hospitals. The health information program will allow emergency service providers and hospitals to collect real-time data on incoming patients and combine data from electronic health records.

Other States

Ford looking to expand GoRide to North Carolina, Louisiana, Texas, and California in 2020– GoRide is Ford Motor Company's medical transportation program. It currently operates in Michigan and Ohio and provides medical transportation for nonemergency visits, similar to Uber and Lyft. The company is looking to expand its program to 40 cities in four years.

More than 40 states have filed lawsuits against twenty drug makers for inflating prices by over 1000 percent and impeding competition for generics– The lawsuits allege that the twenty companies coordinated the price hikes for treatments for conditions such as diabetes, high cholesterol, cancer, and epilepsy.

Iowa Department of Health issues warning about disease that can be transferred from dogs to humans– Canine brucellosis can cause infertility and stillbirth in dogs and fever, headache and weakness in humans. The cases mostly came from breeding facilities where people came into contact with reproductive fluids during the birthing process of the dogs.

Public Option bill arrives at desk of Washington governor– If passed, the public plan will be available to all citizens regardless of income and will cover basic services. The state will place a cap on the rates to providers at 160 percent of the federal Medicare rates and will contract with private insurance companies to administer the plan.

Dentists in Oregon can now administer vaccines– Oregon is now the only state in the country in which dentists will be allowed to administer any vaccines. Currently, dentists can administer the flu vaccine in Minnesota and Illinois. The dentist who helped draft the bill anticipates that more people will start getting vaccinated for conditions that are related to oral health such as getting the Human Papillomavirus vaccine to prevent oral cancer. The reimbursement structure for vaccines through dental insurance has not yet been determined.

New York hospital includes measles alert in emergency response system– Montefiore Nyack Hospital in Rockland County had multiple measles cases this season. The hospital and emergency department developed an alert system that allows first responders to notify the emergency department of a potential incoming measles patient.

Arizona sued by Planned Parenthood after placing ban on telehealth abortion services– Nearly 80 percent of the population in Arizona no longer has access to abortion services due to laws that the state legislature passed that targeted abortion providers. In addition, Arizona has also banned nurse practitioners from performing the services and requires a 24-hour waiting period along with a two-trip requirement before a woman can receive the services.

New Hampshire to provide menstrual products in all middle and high school restrooms in public schools– The bill was created after a high school student discussed that many students were missing school days because they could not afford to buy menstrual products. In similar news, California will be eliminating sales taxes on female hygiene products which are expected to cost the state around \$9 million a year in tax revenues.

Healthcare Disaster Preparedness

The National Health Security Preparedness Index determines how prepared states are for potential health disasters. The states are evaluated on 129 measures under six domains: health security surveillance, community planning and engagement, information and incident management, healthcare delivery, countermeasure management, and environmental and occupation health. The 2019 Index indicates a 3.1 percent improvement since the last year. The following states were ranked above and below the national average:

Above the National Average

- Connecticut
- Colorado
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Nebraska
- New York
- Rhode Island
- Utah
- Vermont
- Virginia
- Wisconsin

Below the National Average

- Alaska
- California
- Hawaii
- Indiana
- Louisiana
- Michigan
- Mississippi
- Montana
- Nevada
- New Mexico
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- South Dakota
- Texas
- Washington
- West Virginia
- Wyoming

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

Survey by Pronamel of 2000 US adults finds that they rank teeth as the feature of their appearance that they are most concerned about– The other four features included hair, weight, skin concerns, and clothing. Nearly half the respondents said they were most embarrassed about their teeth compared to the other features. The survey respondents ranked oral health as a top priority followed by mental health.

Hunger as a Health Issue

Drought in Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) could exacerbate hunger– DPRK has been experiencing a drought since early spring that will impact food production in June and September. The food production decreased by 12 percent between 2017 and 2018, and 10.1 million people, representing 40 percent of the population, need food assistance. Organizations are stepping in to help by providing community greenhouses for growing fresh vegetables year-round and water pumps for crop irrigation.

Mental/ Behavioral Health

American Psychological Association releases psychological practice guidelines for girls and women– The last time, the guidelines were released in 2007. The new guidelines call for psychologists to be aware of women's strengths, their forms of identity and self-perception, and the structural discrimination that impacts their psychological wellbeing.