

California

Patient Right to Know Act goes into effect– According to the law, physicians, surgeons, osteopaths, naturopathic doctors, chiropractors, podiatrists, and acupuncturists who are on probation for serious offenses such as sexual misconduct with a patient, drug abuse that caused harm to a patient, and criminal convictions related to patient care are required to disclose that information to every patient. Patients will be asked to sign a form stating that the physician disclosed the information.

California begins implementation of 2016 voter-passed law requiring background checks for purchase of ammunition– To purchase the ammunition, a consumer must present a Real ID (the latest form of drivers' licenses that meet security standards) or supplement their state driver's license with other identification. The law also restricts ammunition sales to licensed dealers. Additionally, the state will track all rounds of ammunition that are purchased. According to one gun shop owner, the process slowed the sales down from two minutes to 25 minutes. In addition to the firearm restrictions, the following laws went into effect: lower income and homeless veterans can request the free designation of their veteran status on their driver's licenses, law enforcement must provide body camera footage within 45 days of an incident that led to serious injury or death, and hospitals must provide a written patient discharge policy for homeless patients.

With new budget, California becomes the first state to extend Medicaid to low-income, undocumented migrants up to the age of 25– Out of the \$214.8 billion operating budget, this act will cost \$98 million to cover 90,000 people.

Other States

Health commissioner of New Jersey passes twofold approach to opioid overdose– Paramedics in the state will now be able to provide buprenorphine, a medication assisted treatment for people addicted to opiates, immediately after reviving somebody from an opioid overdose using naloxone. The goal is to jump-start the transition to long-term treatment while also treating withdrawal symptoms.

Maryland will create first-ever prescription drug affordability board– The board's purpose is to understand how drug prices work and create maximum limits for the amount that state and local governments should be required to pay for them. Their authority may be expanded to private insurances in the next few years as well.

Virginia governor unveils plans to improve maternal and infant health– In Virginia, African American mothers have double the rate of maternal mortality than Caucasian mothers. The governor is aiming to get rid of that racial disparity by 2025. The plan involves the use of technology to identify coverage gaps in health insurance and streamline healthcare enrollment. There will also be an outreach campaign that involves special attention to pregnant women suffering from substance use disorders.

State of Vermont puts a 92 percent tax on e-cigarette sales– In an attempt to decrease youth vaping, the state has increased the tax rate on e-cigarettes and tobacco-substitute products from 6 percent to 92 percent. The tax will not apply to cigarettes, and this will bring the price of e-cigarettes up to roughly the same price as cigarettes. Vermont also increased the legal purchasing age for e-cigarettes and tobacco products to 21 and restricted the online sale of such products to licensed wholesale dealers only.

Outside physicians now allowed to inspect heart surgery programs in Florida– After reports of high mortality rates (10 percent) for the pediatric heart surgery patients of Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg, the hospital ceased performing heart surgeries, and six officials resigned. Florida's governor signed a bill into law that would create greater oversight by allowing physicians to make site visits through the creation of a Pediatric Cardiac Technical Advisory Panel, whereas before this bill, only state inspectors could perform such visits.

Four New York Police Department officers commit suicide within a month– The officers ranged from 29 years to 62 years. All four committed suicide with their service pistols. In New York City, more officers die by suicide than in the line of duty, with an average of five officers dying by suicide every year since 2014. Mental health experts say the stress, peer pressure, and access to firearms increases the likelihood of suicide. The city's Commissioner appointed a mental health and wellness coordinator to help promote wellness and change the culture around asking for help when it comes to mental health.

Roundup of Recent Abortion Bans

In the last few months, states have taken various actions to restrict or ban abortions:

Alabama- On May 15, 2019, the governor passed a ban on abortion at every stage of pregnancy, including in the cases of rape and incest.

Arkansas- On March 15, 2019, the governor passed a ban on abortion after 18 weeks.

Georgia- On May 7, 2019, the governor passed a fetal heartbeat law that bans abortion after roughly six weeks.

Kentucky- On March 19, 2019, the governor passed a fetal heartbeat law.

Louisiana- On May 30, 2019, the governor passed a fetal heartbeat law.

Missouri- On May 24, 2019, the governor passed a ban on abortions after eight weeks.

Ohio- On April 11, 2019, the governor passed a fetal heartbeat law.

Utah- On March 25, 2019, the governor passed a ban on abortions after 18 weeks.

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

Pew Charitable Trust and Harvard School of Dental Medicine survey finds that people are open to the idea of receiving vaccines at the dental office– The two groups polled roughly 420 Medicaid patients and 400 patients that have private insurance. The poll found that 61 percent of all the people would be okay with receiving vaccinations and other preventive care services at their dental office. Around 60 percent of the patients were also okay with receiving preventive dental care such as sealants from physicians or other medical professionals.

Hunger as
a Health
Issue

County in Pennsylvania creates a Lunch at the Library system for children– Dauphin County Library System partnered with Dauphin County Technical School and the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank to create a Lunch at the Library program that provides a free, nutritious lunch along with a story-time session during the summer for children under the age of 19.

Mental/
Behavioral
Health

Training program in Colorado receives accreditation through Veterans Affairs– The program provides specialized training for doctoral students who are studying psychology to teach them how to effectively provide mental health services for veterans in rural communities. The focal points of the training are suicide, opioid addiction, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The accreditation was provided after six months of a successful pilot program.

If you would like to subscribe to our weekly newsletter, please email lhpl@llu.edu