

California

Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sends letter to California Air Resources Board warning potential sanctions over air quality– California has been given until October 10 to withdraw their “incomplete” implementation plans to the EPA and submit more detailed reports regarding 82 local areas that are out of compliance with the Clean Air Act. The sanctions could lead to reduced funding for California highways and create a mechanism for the federal government to place its own implementation plans.

With temperatures above 100 degrees, communities face preemptive blackouts in order to decrease the risk of fire– Pacific Gas & Electric equipment was said to be the largest contributor to the fires that killed 86 people last year. As a result, the company has agreed to shut off power during hot temperatures. It is affecting the quality of life of residents as the power shut-offs are frequent and some feel that they are not given enough notice.

Mosquitoes that can carry Zika, dengue, and yellow fever are proliferating through California– The species *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopitius* are invasive species, which means that they are not normally found in this geographic region. There are no records to indicate that these mosquitoes are carriers of the diseases but they have the potential to rapidly spread disease if it is introduced, such as in the case of somebody traveling abroad and bringing the virus back.

Los Angeles Times report finds that murder of females is on the rise in Los Angeles County– Since 2013, the number of murdered females increased by 50 percent while the number of murdered males has decreased by 4 percent. Females are more likely to be beaten, stabbed or strangled. Female homicide victims are, on average, older than murdered males.

Other States

New York and Massachusetts among some of the states taking action on e-cigarettes– The governor of New York temporarily banned flavored e-cigarettes last week as the vaping-related lung illnesses count rose above 500. This week, a ninth person died from a vaping-related illness. Massachusetts passed the most stringent ban in the country this week with a four month prohibition on sales of *all* vaping products.

Johns Hopkins University will not be renewing its contract with the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)– Since 2004, the medical school has been providing medical training to ICE’s Special Response Teams. For the last ten years, the university earned over \$7 million from 37 contracts with the agency. In other Maryland news, 200,000 residents of Maryland will see a decrease in their premiums for a second year in a row if they receive it through the state’s exchange. Six percent of the state is still uninsured. The state’s governor accredits the success to fixing the reinsurance program. More than 100,000 people will see an average of roughly 15 percent decline in their premiums.

Wisconsin sees close to an eight percent increase in uncompensated care between 2017 and 2018– Nearly 150 hospitals provided \$1.2 billion of unreimbursed or uncompensated care in 2018. The uncompensated care includes charity care, where the hospital does not expect compensation, and debt, where compensation was expected but patients were unable to pay. Uncompensated care remained steady nationwide. In other Wisconsin news, the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality found that there were significant disparities in health outcomes between geographic location, income, race, and health coverage. The report found that Caucasians had better health compared to their African American and Latino counterparts, and that people above the age of 75 living in the county with the lowest income had two times higher likelihood of dying than their counterpart in the wealthiest county.

Largest Native American land area gets the first cancer clinic on reservation land in the Southwest– The \$2 million Tuba City Regional Health Care Specialty Care Center will have two full-time oncologists. Tribal members often suffer from untreated cancer and delayed diagnoses due to the distance that tends to exist between specialty centers and reservations. Members in the Navajo Nation, which includes members of the Navajo, the Hopi, and the San Juan Southern Paiute tribes, are disproportionately affected by colon, ovarian, kidney, cervical, and gastric cancer among others. Roughly 250,000 members live on the reservation. The Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation is governed by an indigenous, community-based board of directors.

Updates on the Federal “Public Charge” Rule

Despite extensive coverage on the “Public Charge” rule, there has been a great deal of misinformation among immigrant populations, leading to confusion and fear. Here are some clarifying details:

- The new rule is set to take effect on October 15, 2019
- The rule will add healthcare, food stamps, cash assistance and public housing to a list of public benefits that could be negatively factored in the paperwork of immigrants who wish to apply for visas or permanent residencies *after* the changes go into effect
- The income requirements for applicants will now be increased to 250 percent of the federal poverty level under the new rule

Newsbytes Relevant to Our Strategic Priorities

Have you checked out our latest resources from September 2019?



Policy Brief: Reinstatement of the Individual Mandate and Penalty in CA

Issue Brief: That Status of Marijuana in the United States

Blog: A Hopeful Change to how Mental Health is being Addressed in Schools

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

DentaQuest and KRC Research conduct oral health poll– Among the findings, the survey shows that oral health is a primary health concern for most Americans. It also finds that roughly 75 percent of Americans are unable to receive dental care, primarily due to the high cost and lack of insurance. From the providers ‘side, the poll indicates that nine in ten dentists and physicians feel that there is a connection between oral health and overall health.

Hunger as a Health Issue

Celebrities addressing hunger through various avenues– There are many celebrities who are working with organizations around the world to combat hunger. Rapper Curtis Jackson, also known as “50 Cent,” created an energy drink and pledged one meal to the World Food Programme for every drink sold. Singer Christina Aguilera created the World Hunger Relief program and raised \$115 million to provide food to the hungry and spread awareness.

Mental/ Behavioral Health

Singer and Actress Lady Gaga’s Born this Way Foundation released report on mental health of young Californians in partnership with a California mental health commission– The report highlighted that almost 50 percent of the youth between the ages of 13 and 24 did not know where to find mental health services. Six in ten students reported poor mental health and high stress.

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