



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
HEALTH

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Healthcare News At A Glance



National

Federal government officially bans some flavors of vaping products— Last week, the president's administration placed a limited ban on mint-flavored and fruit-flavored vaping products after it was reported that more than 5 million middle and high school students used a vaping product in the last month. Some groups, including anti-tobacco organizations, expressed opinions that the ban did not go far enough and should have included all flavors including tobacco and menthol. In similar news, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officially raised the federal legal age for buying tobacco products from 18 to 21 years. Nineteen states had already implemented such a rule, but now all states will have to comply. In other news, a report analyzing the nation's poison control centers found that roughly 1,900 toddlers (ages 5 and below) were exposed to vaping liquids in 2018.

New federal rule requiring Affordable Care Act (ACA) insurers to bill enrollees separately for portion of premium attributed to abortion coverage is finalized— Starting in June, health insurance companies will be required to send all plan members a separate bill of at least \$1 for any premium costs that are related to abortion coverage. Proponents of the rule argue that the program will increase transparency while opponents argue that it will create confusion and may prompt insurance to stop covering abortion services altogether. The new rule will cost each insurance company approximately \$2.7 million to implement this year.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation will have new director— Brad Smith, a former Rhodes scholar and entrepreneur from Nashville, has been appointed to the new position under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Under his direction, there will be 600 employees in charge of creating new payment models for value-based care transformation. The former director, Adam Boehler, was appointed to lead the International Development Finance Corporation.

U-Haul releases new policy that prevents the hiring of nicotine users— Starting February 1, 2020, the company will be asking new applicants about their nicotine use. Those who currently use nicotine will not be considered for hire. The company says this policy is an effort to ensure a "healthier workforce."

Highlighted Healthcare Studies

1. Study in *JAMA Cardiology* finds that patients with atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) who had less than 50 percent adherence rate to prescribed statins had a 30 percent increased risk of death compared to the patients who adhered to their prescribed statins.
2. Study in *Health Affairs* finds that in the 12 Southern states that expanded Medicaid, there was a 1.8 percentage point reduction in the number of people who experienced a decline in health status compared to people in states that did not expand.
3. Study in *Natural Medicine* finds that artificial intelligence and new imaging techniques can reduce the time it takes to analyze brain tissue samples during brain surgery by 20-30 minutes, within less than 150 seconds, and with an accuracy of 94.6 percent (compared to the 93.9 percent using conventional methods).
4. Study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* finds that more than 60 percent of the 888 California pharmacies surveyed could not provide accurate instructions on disposing opioids.

Around the World

1. Nearly 60 people in China are sick from viral pneumonia. Officials are still investigating the cause.
2. Nearly 24 people and an estimated 1 billion animals died as a result of the bushfires in Australia.
3. At least one person has died as a result of the 6.4 magnitude earthquake that hit Puerto Rico this week.

California

California's ACEs awareness campaign creates formal reimbursement process for Medi-Cal children and adults screened for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)– As part of the campaign, adults and children will be provided with a state-based questionnaire that will include various questions about adversity to measure sources of stress, anxiety, and fear. The screenings will be voluntary as neither the physicians nor patients have to participate. Physicians that provide the questionnaire and review the responses with their patients will receive \$29 for each patient that is screened. Local chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics will assist physicians in ACEs-related follow-up care.



California legislators introduce more stringent e-cigarette bill–

Lawmakers introduced Senate Bill 793 last week that would place a temporary band on flavored vaping and tobacco products, including menthol, that are not covered by the federal ban. The bill will not apply to online sales.

Some California cities using animals as part of wildfire prevention strategy–

Anaheim, California, has a contract with Environmental Land Management to station roughly 400 goats in high-risk fire areas. The terrain is suitable for the goats that are placed there and that eat the invasive grasses and dried brush while minimally grazing native species. Some experts argue that it is not enough as goat grazing does not cover all the potential risks of fire.

Other States

Illinois' first day of legal marijuana sales yields \$3.2 million for the state–

Recreational marijuana became legal on January 1st as Illinois became the 11th state to join the list of states that legalized marijuana. The state generated millions of dollars in profits from the 37 dispensaries. The profits are one of the highest and comparable to Oregon that also made \$3.2 million on the first day of legalizing recreational marijuana in 2015. This year, Michigan generated \$221,000 from sales on the first day.

Legislators in New Hampshire to introduce bill testing bottled water for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)–

Regulators in the state determined that there were toxic amounts of PFAS chemicals in local bottled water. The bill would aim to require mandatory testing of water bottles for PFAS and other toxins. Last year, legislators introduced a bill to set strict PFAS limits for public water supplies but the bill did not pass. In other New Hampshire news, hospitals are beginning to add more mental health beds due to increased state funding. Portsmouth Regional Hospital and Parkland Medical Center are among the first to utilize the funding to install a total of eight new inpatient psychiatric beds.



Federal government grants Maryland Department of Health funding to address opioid abuse in pregnant women and new mothers–

The state received \$3.6 million in federal funding to launch the "Maternal Opioid Model (MOM)" over five years to improve treatment for pregnant and new mothers that have opioid substance use disorder. If the state meets certain performance requirements, the department could receive an additional \$1.5 million.

St Louis University School of Medicine starts its first fellowship for addiction medicine– Starting this year, a fellowship doctor will learn how to treat addiction and utilize telemedicine. The fellow will have rotations in city hospitals, community centers, and clinics. Next year, the program will have two fellows and the fellowship is open to any specialty in medical education. The American College of Graduate Medical Education certified addiction medicine fellowships in 2018 to address the opioid overdose crisis.

New Texas surprise medical billing legislation goes into effect this year– Senate Bill 1264 (SB 1264,) will apply to approximately 33 percent of Texans who have private health insurance through the state-regulated health plans that include state employees, public school teachers, and others who receive their health insurance through the ACA marketplace. Before the passage of SB 1264, physicians that were out-of-network from the hospital could bill patients for the remainder of a bill if the health insurance company declined to pay for it in a process known as "balance billing." SB 1264 will require insurance and health care providers to negotiate prices using an arbitration process that does not include the patient.

US News and World Report 2020 Ranking of Best Diets

Aside from the other ratings that the US News and World Report publishes, there is the annual Best Diets Overall ranking. The report ranks 35 diets based on the recommendations of a panel of nationally recognized experts in diet and nutrition. The factors considered include the ease of following the diet, nutritional completeness, safety, and ability to lead to weight loss. The following are the top three diets for this year:

Diet Name	Score	Description
Mediterranean Diet	4.2/5	Emphasis on plant-based cooking
Dietary approaches to stop hypertension (DASH)	4.1/5	Reduction of saturated fat and salt intake
Flexitarian Diet	4.1/5	Emphasis on whole grains and plant-based proteins

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

Colgate releases new smart toothbrush– The toothbrush includes optic sensors that can measure biofilm buildup. The user can then use the application on their phones to determine where the buildup is the greatest and where they should spend the most time brushing. The toothbrush recently won the Best of Innovation for Health and Beauty award at the Consumer Electronics Show.

Hunger as a Health Issue

Argentina government to start anti-hunger program– The government will provide low-income families with food cards. Mothers with young children, pregnant women, and people with disabilities will be prioritized. The food card will be reloaded once a month and will include 4,000 pesos (\$67 USD) for mothers with one child to purchase various foods.

Mental/ Behavioral Health

San Francisco startup looks to provide online mental health options– The startup called Cerebral launched this week. Consumers can pay a monthly fee of \$92 for access to an initial video visit with a physician, medication delivered to their homes, and monthly checkups with a care manager to track the patient's progress. The startup will be competing with companies such as Lemonaid Health and MDLIVE that offer mental health care through telemedicine. Cerebral will be available to people in Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and California.