

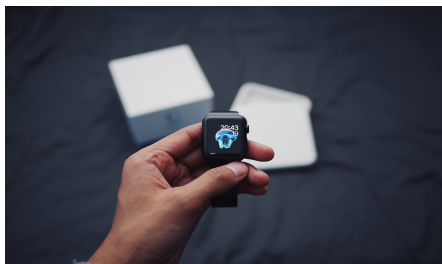


LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY  
HEALTH

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# Healthcare News At A Glance



## National

**United States Secret Service going on tour to provide trainings about school violence**– The Secret Service will be providing training on identifying people who could be a potential school violence perpetrator before any incident occurs. These trainings are based on a report compiled by the Secret Service that reviews school attacks from 2008 to 2017.

**US Court of Appeals upholds the ban on Title X clinics from making abortion referrals**– The 9<sup>th</sup> US Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the decisions of judges in Washington, Oregon, and California. In addition, Title X providers will not be allowed to share office space with abortion providers.

**Health and Human Services department updates Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements for Schedule II drugs**– Pharmacists must differentiate between partial fills and full refills of Schedule II prescription drugs such as opioids in order to prevent wrongful refills.

**American Medical Association releases online resource for physicians to navigate issues tied to digital health information**– Available as the Patient Records Electronic Access Playbook, the resource contains information and resources about the best ways to protect patient privacy and the legal and operational challenges associated with electronic health records. In related news, the Trump Administration proposed policy changes that could potentially allow patients to download their health records on smartphones and send them to other applications. The electronic health software Epic is opposing this proposal, citing privacy fears given that the health records will no longer be protected by HIPAA once they leave the software system.

**Food and Drug Administration (FDA) classifies insulin as a biologic**– This change will allow manufacturers to produce biosimilar versions of insulin that could potentially lower the cost. In similar news, the FDA approved an oral pill to treat high cholesterol. It is the first non-statin approved drug for this purpose in almost twenty years. Statins are associated with adverse health effects.

## Highlighted Healthcare Studies

1. Study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* finds that mortality rates due to alcohol increased by 4.2 percent for men between 2012 and 2016 and 7.1 percent for women between 2013 and 2016. American Indian and Alaska Natives were disproportionately affected.
2. Study in *Pediatrics* finds that children who were following an alternate vaccine pattern from the standard one were 4 times more likely to be behind on their vaccines.
3. Study in *The Lancet* finds that the “Medicare for All” proposal could save over \$450 billion, 68,000 lives, and 1.73 life-years annually compared to the current health system.
4. Study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* finds that the proportion of adults who did not visit a primary care physician increased from 38.1 percent to 46.4 percent between 2008 and 2016.
5. Study in *JAMA Network Open* finds that only 15 percent of people in residential drug treatment centers received effective treatment for opioids in 2016.
6. Study in *JAMA Internal Medicine* finds a two-fold increase in the number of people over the age of 65 inhaling or ingesting marijuana between 2015 and 2018. The number of seniors who reported dual use of alcohol and cannabis rose from 2.9 percent to 8.3 percent.

## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Updates

The current seasonal flu vaccine is 45 percent effective against influenza A and B viruses combined according to the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

## California

**California's justice department will be able to fully sequence mitochondrial DNA to identify bodies–** Human bodies that are exposed to harsh environmental conditions can have broken DNA that makes it difficult to sequence. Mitochondrial DNA is present in greater quantities than the standard DNA that is tested. The advancement will be used to help with the identification process of bodies found.

**Federal judge blocks state and federal governments from moving Americans infected with the novel coronavirus from Northern California to Southern California–** The US District Judge prevented the transfer of up to 50 Americans who had been quarantined at the Travis Air Force Base after being stuck on a cruise ship in Japan. Officials from Costa Mesa in Southern California sought court intervention after being informed that state officials were planning to move those who were infected to the state-owned facility in Costa Mesa.

**After three years of decline, enrollment in Covered California increased by nearly 2 percent–** State officials attribute the increased enrollment to the new state tax on the uninsured and available subsidies for some to pay their health insurance premiums. To learn more about the Reinstatement of the Individual Mandate and Penalty in California, read *our issue brief*. Over 1.5 million Californians have purchased their insurance this way and people can still sign up for coverage until April 30, 2020.

## Other States

**New Jersey Governor proposes highest tax on cigarette in the country in budget proposal–** If approved, the excise tax would rise to \$4.35, the highest statewide cigarette tax in the nation. In addition, the customer would also pay a state sales tax. The tax is expected to generate \$218 million annually. Missouri has the lowest cigarette tax at \$0.17 per pack. Data from 2018 indicates that roughly 13 percent of adults in New Jersey smoke cigarettes. In similar news, a study released by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health found that the density of tobacco retailers in the state dropped by 20 percent after the state passed regulations that limited one retailer per 1,000 residents. The report also found that school zone exposure dropped to zero for over 10,500 youths.

**Georgia ranks sixth in the US for having one of the highest rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among seniors–** Data from the CDC indicates that STDs increased by 131 percent between 2008 and 2018. In other Georgia news, the number of children between sixth through twelfth grade that were considering suicide jumped by 26 percent between 2017 and 2018. The number of suicide attempts within this population increased by 31 percent between 2017 and 2018.

**Florida lawmakers pass bill requiring parental consent for abortions for those under the age of 18–** The governor is expected to sign the bill. The bill allows for a woman below the age of 18 to request a waiver from a judge in the case of abuse, incest, or harm. Once it is law, doctors who perform abortions without parental consent could face prison time for a third-degree felony.

**New report finds that housing supply for people with disabilities in North Carolina is lacking–** Slightly over 5 percent of the housing meets federal accessibility standards while more than 11 percent of households have somebody with a disability. The national rate for accessible units is 6.4 percent. The federal accessibility standards include stepless exterior entry, bathrooms and bedrooms on the entry level, steps with guard rails and accessible bathrooms with grab bars. More than half the families with a member who has a physical disability are cost-burdened which means they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

**Number of children with lead poisoning drops by 17 percent in Connecticut–** According to the state's Department of Public health, there was a 17 percent decrease in the number of children in the state with lead poisoning between 2016 and 2017. There was also a slight decrease in the racial and ethnic disparities in lead poisoning. However, the report also indicates that while the number of cases declined, there were more cases with children with higher levels of toxin in their blood. The report attributes the success of the decline in the number of cases to a social media campaign and prevention activities taken up by local health departments.

**Utah begins the Pharmacy Tourism Program to allow state employees to travel to other countries to fill their prescriptions–** Certain members that are part of the Utah Public Employees Health Program are being provided international airfare to get their high-cost medicines filled in Vancouver, Canada or Tijuana, Mexico. According to the nonprofit health plan, the program saved \$250,000 since last year. Participating members even receive \$500 cash back for participating in the program. Currently, the program only services employees with serious chronic conditions.

## Recent Healthcare Related Surveys and Polls

20%

Percent of people who reported donating to a crowdfunding campaign to help somebody pay for their medical expenses according to the National Opinion Research Center.

55%

Percent of people who reported that they were not too worried or not at all worried about contracting the coronavirus compared to 37 percent reporting this sentiment with regard to the flu according to a poll by the *Associated Press*.

55%

Percent of individuals who reported holding a positive opinion of the Affordable Care Act according to the Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll.

## Newsbytes Relevant to Our Strategic Priorities

Have you checked out our latest resources from February 2020?



**Policy Brief: Dignity in Aging Act of 2019 (HR 4334)**

**Issue Brief: Intimate Partner Violence**

**Blog 1: Census 2020: Is This Person a Citizen of the United States?**  
**Blog 2: Losing Access to Care: Your Pharmacy is Closing**

*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

**American Academy of Pediatrics releases Oral health Prevention Primer resource for medical professionals**— The tool provides 20-30 minute interactive presentations that guide users on how to identify oral health needs, assess oral health risks, apply fluoride, get paid for oral health services, integrate oral health services into one's practice, and collaborate with oral health professionals to help prevent oral health issues.

Hunger as  
a Health  
Issue

**Hospital and health systems identify food insecurity as a top health challenge in the New York City metropolitan area**— The Vice President and Chief Population Health Officer of NYC Health + Hospitals states that 12 percent of people in one of their service areas live in food deserts with no access to fresh food or groceries within a five-mile vicinity. The hospitals and health systems are responding by creating food pharmacies where patients can utilize food prescriptions. There are plans to expand the pharmacies to all 23 hospitals in the next four years.

Mental/  
Behavioral  
Health

**Schools in Massachusetts piloting telehealth programs to provide mental health counseling**— Students in some Western Massachusetts school districts in rural areas now have access to telehealth mental health counseling. The American Academy of Pediatrics telehealth leader stated that measuring the efficacy of these programs has been difficult due to the lack of a controlled study. The school-based experiment received a \$1 million federal grant to collect data on the program for the next three years.

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