



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
HEALTH

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Healthcare News At A Glance



National

United States Supreme Court halts injunctions by federal judges against administration's transgender troops policy–

The administration wants transgender troops who have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria to commit to a biological sex (male or female) if they want to continue serving in the military. This rule would apply to more than 900 active-duty service members. The administration believes that this will cut down on medical costs related to gender dysphoria-related procedures. Some federal courts blocked the policy, but this Supreme Court decision brings the administration one step closer to being able to enact it.

Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) spent \$27.5 million on lobbying in 2018– There was a 5.6 percent increase in spending by the industry since 2009; a record-breaking amount was spent lobbying in the initial months of 2018. One of the goals for lobbying was to reverse a policy that was enacted last year that would require drug manufacturers to provide Medicare beneficiaries with a 70 percent discount if they exceed their annual out-of-pocket cap of \$3,750. PhRMA was unsuccessful in reversing the legislation, partly because of the government shutdown.

Partnership for America's Health Care Future group launches anti-"Medicare for all" advertisements on social media– For the next three weeks, media sites such as Facebook and YouTube will be airing an advertisement suggesting that Medicare for all, single-payer, and public option will lead to fewer choices and less coverage.

CVS Pharmacy introduces "Beauty Marks" to promote body positivity– CVS is working with 13 other well-known brands to start its Beauty Marks initiative in which images for in-store beauty products will be labeled as "beauty unaltered" or "digitally altered." The company believes that this move will promote transparency and create more realistic expectations of beauty for customers. Nearly 70 percent of images in stores are now labeled, and the goal is to get to 100 percent by 2020.

Healthcare Studies and Reports

1. Researchers from Stanford University School of Medicine found a 93 percent survival rate for patients who came to the hospital for a firearm injury. More than 15 percent of patients were readmitted for related causes within six months, costing \$86 million between 2010 and 2015.
2. Study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* reports that 33 percent of the injuries that occur on an electric scooter require treatment in an emergency room. Head injuries (40 percent) followed by fractures and cuts (32 percent) were the most frequent kinds of injuries.
3. Study in the *Journal of Neuroscience* finds that a single night of sleep deprivation leads to a 15 percent average reduction in a person's pain threshold; the data suggests that keeping noise levels and distractions to a minimum may improve recovery time at a hospital.
4. Study in *JAMA Pediatrics* finds a correlation between a longer duration of screen (computers, phones, etc.) time at the ages of 2 and 3 and a delay in developmental milestones at the ages of 3 and 5.

Around the World

Up to 500 breast cancer patients will have an opportunity to partake in Pfizer's pay-for-performance model for the breast cancer drug, Ibrance. If a patient's cancer spreads within four months, they will be refunded with up to 33.5 percent of the drug treatment cost.

California

Government shutdown delayed fire season planning for national parks– On December 22, 2018, a day before the government shutdown, the president signed an Executive Order to reduce the risk of wildfire by removing hazardous fuels. Park rangers and officials are now concerned that they are not adequately prepared to handle the upcoming fire season due to the shutdown. Preparations such as hiring staff, training rangers, and contracting for helicopters and water-dropping planes have been put on hold; there is also a possibility that the government will shut down again in the next few weeks.

Other States

AdventHealth to open a hospital in Kansas– A new 85-bed facility will be built in Merriam, Kansas and will include an outpatient health facility, a birth center, surgical services, an intensive care unit, and cardiac services. The new facility will create approximately 200 new jobs.

Mayors from Massachusetts visit Canadian injection sites– The two mayors traveled to Montreal and Toronto to observe supervised injection facilities (SIF) that provide users with clean needles, monitor consumption, provide emergency overdose treatment and clean disposal. The mayors remarked about the cleanliness of the facilities and adequacy of the staff. They also noted that there was no chaos and no heightened police activity. The mayors said that such a site could potentially work in the United States but that it would probably be a long process before reaching the level of integration they witnessed in Canada.

Over 30 people in Oregon and Washington get measles infection–

Almost 90 percent of those infected have never received a vaccine for measles, while the vaccination status of the other 10 percent is currently undetermined. One of the areas in which the outbreak occurred had a vaccination rate of 78 percent which is below the threshold of herd immunity (a situation in which enough of the population is vaccinated to resist the spread of a contagion). The measles vaccine is given in two stages: (1) a vaccination between the ages of 12 and 15 months that confers 93 percent immunity, and (2) a vaccination between the ages of four and six that confers 97 percent immunity.

Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) continues its nonemergent policy change with program in Mississippi– Starting this year, BCBS of Mississippi will review emergency visits and may shift the cost of the expenses to the hospital and the patient if the company decides the case was not an emergency. BCBS had already issued similar policies in Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, New Hampshire, and Ohio. Physicians have complained that such a policy will dissuade people from seeking necessary care.

As cold wind chills head towards Illinois and Minneapolis, city agencies and nonprofit groups scramble to shelter the homeless– Agencies and organizations are reaching out to homeless individuals to provide them with food and warm attire. The Chicago Transit Authority will place buses outside for homeless individuals to stay in for the next few nights. Many may not know about the upcoming weather and may not have adequate warning to seek shelter.

School superintendent in Indiana charged with felony insurance fraud after lying that sick uninsured student was her child– The superintendent found the student at home with strep throat after noticing that he did not show up to school for multiple days. The superintendent is said to have purchased clothes for the child and cleaned his home on previous occasions. She took the child to a clinic, but the child was refused treatment because he lacked insurance. At the next clinic, she told the hospital staff that the child was her son in order to receive care and a prescription for antibiotics.

State judge in Iowa declares “fetal heartbeat” abortion law unconstitutional– The judge found that a law that bans abortion after the detection of a heartbeat violates due process and equal protection. Last year, the Iowa Supreme Court struck down a law that would require women to wait 72 hours between seeking an abortion and receiving one. In similar news, New York expanded abortion access to women by allowing abortion after 24 weeks if the pregnancy becomes life-threatening for the mother and allows for a woman to seek abortion at any time for a fetus that is not viable.

Care Mobile van in Atlanta, Georgia helps reduce emergency room visits for children with asthma– The Ronald McDonald House and Atlanta pediatric system partnered to provide a 40-foot-long van that travels to areas with children with high rates of asthma and provides checkups to more than 650 students. Educators and parents have noted improved school attendance after the bus was deployed.



Healthcare-Related Gallup Poll Findings (data from 11-1-18)

54%

Percentage of respondents who believe the healthcare system should be based on private insurance. Forty percent believed it should be government-run.

57%

Percentage of respondents who believe that the federal government should be responsible for ensuring that all Americans have healthcare coverage.

79%

Percentage of respondents who reported that they are dissatisfied with the total healthcare costs in the United States.

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

Scientists from the University of Louisville believe they may have found a link between gum disease and Alzheimer's— Their study was published in *Science Advances*. The researchers found that a significant bacteria that is associated with gum disease was also found in 96 percent of the brains of the Alzheimer's patients in their study. The team, backed by the pharmaceutical company Cortexyme, has also developed a treatment that they believe will treat Alzheimer's and are currently testing it in clinical studies.

Hunger as a Health Issue

Climate change, globalization, and geopolitical events are accelerating a sudden loss of livestock and crops— The sudden loss is happening more frequently and more rapidly throughout the world and is leaving people unprepared for the next food shortage. It is also resulting in hunger. South Asia's food loss has been heavily influenced by extreme weather. In the future, developing countries will likely be affected the most, depending on what foods they import. Scientists recommend building food-reserves in countries that are heavily dependent on imports.

Mental/ Behavioral Health

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) finds that more than 33 percent of high school students who are transgender attempt suicide— The report finds that approximately 2 percent of all high school students identify as transgender. Approximately 30 percent of students do not feel that their school is a safe environment and more than one-third of the students experience bullying at schools. Transgender people feel that the gender they identify with is not the same as their biological sex.