



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
HEALTH

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Healthcare News At A Glance



National

Right-to-try Bill fails in the House– The bill had been controversial as leaders from both parties had spoken out against the risks to patients. The bill would have bypassed the FDA approval process for therapies for terminally ill patients.

Conservative groups warn against ACA “bailouts”– The Affordable Care Act (ACA) payments were designed to provide subsidies to cover the costs for insurance companies that cover very sick beneficiaries or that offer discounts to low-income individuals. In efforts to repeal the ACA, the conservative groups are pleading with Congress to remove the subsidies from the government funding bill.

Bipartisan Opioid Quota Reform Bill introduced– Four senators from different states presented a bill to give the Drug Enforcement Administration the ability to set quotas based on the number of overdose deaths and the rate of abuse of Schedule I and II controlled substances.

The Walt Disney Company hopes to bring its magic to hospitals– With over \$100 million in donations, Disney will work with hospitals and health care providers to transform the patient experience through interactive Disney-themed treatment rooms and Disney-style customer service.

Purdue Pharmaceuticals provides funding for efforts to curb the opioid epidemic– The company has spent millions sponsoring radio and print advertisements along with state efforts to combat the epidemic. Many are critical about the company's intentions given its role in driving the epidemic.

Drones may begin providing medical supplies– The usefulness of drones in the recent hurricane relief efforts has garnered interest from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in utilizing drones for medical supplies and proposals seeking federal approval are underway.

World Health Organization (WHO) News Feed



- 1) New guidance released for regulating tobacco products
- 2) Egypt eliminates lymphatic filariasis, a roundworm infection spread by mosquitoes
- 3) Kenya was certified as Guinea Worm-Free
- 4) Yellow fever has been on the rise in Brazil

The CDC's Weekly Morbidity and Mortality Report

On Friday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a weekly report and highlighted a study about Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF). IPF is a rare lung disease that has no cure. The study found that dental professionals had a much higher chance of acquiring the disease than anybody else. The CDC is now investigating potential causes.

California



Proposition 63 shows success– A RAND study evaluating the effects of the Mental Health Services Act concluded that the Act increased access and care for vulnerable populations in the Los Angeles County. Passed in 2004, Prop 63 places a 1 percent tax on millionaires and has generated more than \$16 billion to be used for prevention and treatment for mental health illness across California. The State Auditor report highlights missed opportunities and room for improvement.

Controversial bill that would require access to abortion pill on campus currently in Assembly– Sponsored by Senator Connie Leyva (D-Chino), the Senate bill would require all the University of California campuses and California State University to stock up on RU-486, an abortion medication for women who are up to 10 weeks pregnant.

Three mental health workers killed in hostage situation– A gunman murdered three women who provided mental health care at the Veterans Home of California in Yountville. Many of the details remain unknown. Mass shootings have spurred a national debate around mental health and firearm control.

Other States

CMS blocks Idaho's attempt to skirt the ACA– Last week, CMS rejected Idaho's plan to provide state-based insurance plans that are not in compliance with the ACA and warned that Blue Cross of Idaho could face harsh penalties. The Federal government is encouraging for short-term plans as an alternative.

Employers in Massachusetts allowed to file exemption from ACA contraceptive mandate– A U.S. District judge declined the Massachusetts lawsuit against the Trump Administration's rules that allow employers the ability to deny birth control coverage under religious or moral grounds. California and Pennsylvania were successful in temporarily blocking the enforcement of the rules. The judge believes the state will be shielded due to the ACCESS Act that essentially requires employers to cover birth control.

Premera Blue Cross continues participation in state-exchange in Alaska and Washington– Due to the benefits from the refund granted by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, the insurer will continue to provide coverage in areas lacking state-exchange insurers.

Fertility clinics in Ohio and California experience malfunctions– Later this week, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine will evaluate the fertility clinics in Cleveland and San Francisco to investigate the refrigerator failures that possibly damaged over 2,000 frozen eggs and embryos.

Minnesota considering Medicaid work requirements– Republican lawmakers in Minnesota push for work requirements that could potentially affect 125,000 of the 400,000 Medicaid recipients who do not have a disability. Democratic lawmakers believe this could cause increased costs and unintended consequences.



Notable Research Published this Week

Health Affairs:

1. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released projections for the national healthcare spending from 2017-2026. CMS estimates that spending will grow by 5.5 percent in the next several years and will account for 19.7 percent of the GDP by 2026.

The Journal of American Medical Association:

1. Researchers from Harvard and the London School of Economics and Political Science determined that the primary drivers of national health care spending were high prices of labor and goods. In 2016, the US had a lower proportion of the population insured, similar utilization rates, the highest percentage of obese adults, and the lowest life expectancy compared to ten other high-income countries.
2. Researchers from the University of Southern California found many occurrences in which pharmacy benefit managers (PBM) pocketed the difference when beneficiaries were unknowingly paying co-payments that were higher than the price of the drugs.

Newsbytes in Strategic Initiative Areas



To bring focus to our work, the Institute has identified three strategic areas: oral health, mental health and hunger as a health issue. This segment highlights news articles relevant to these priorities.

Oral Health

Dental ambulatory surgery center for children in North Carolina to open soon– Set to open March 26, 2018, the new center will provide oral care for children living in dentally underserved areas. This will be North Carolina's first dental-only ambulatory center which received a certificate of need (CON) last year.

Hunger as a Health Issue

Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association address Arkansas' food insecurity problem– The insurance company launched the Fearless Food Fight campaign to provide meals and stock food pantries. The country has one of the highest numbers of people facing food insecurity.

Mental/ Behavioral Health

Kentucky responds to mass shooting with a mental health bill– Kentucky was one of many states to experience a mass shooting event this year. Lawmakers have responded by introducing a bill that seeks to provide one mental health professional for every 1,500 students in the state's schools.