



Around the world of U.S. healthcare in 360 words or less

Center for Healthcare Regulatory Insight



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Editor's note

This note is produced every Friday by the [KPMG Center for Healthcare Regulatory Insight](#) and is intended to be short and succinct, no more than 360 words, to provide a digestible bite of healthcare and life sciences news from the past week. Please share this email with colleagues and other interested individuals, and encourage them to [subscribe to our mailing list here](#).

We welcome your feedback. Let us know if KPMG can help. Please [reply here to me](#), **Larry Kocot**, principal and national leader, KPMG Center for Healthcare Regulatory Insight or simply reply to this email with any comments or requests.



Special Supplement: COVID-19 News

In light of the continuing daily volume of COVID-19 activity and news, we have summarized [COVID-19 news for the week in this special supplement](#).



Healthcare regulatory news

CMS finalized CY2022 payment increases for [SNFs \(1.2%\)](#), [hospice \(2%\)](#), [inpatient rehabilitation facilities \(1.5%\)](#), and [inpatient psychiatric facilities \(0.1%\)](#).

Biden Administration [proposed a “Buy American” rule to boost production](#) and give [price preferences to domestic products](#), including active pharmaceutical products.

HHS [reversed a Trump Administration policy](#) limiting nursing home safety violation penalties.

CMS guidance states that [consumers will receive advanced premium tax credits](#) even if they did not file tax returns and reconcile 2020/2021 subsidies... IRS [guidance said that employees eligible](#) for free COBRA coverage under the American Rescue Plan are still eligible even if they initially opted out... CMS reported [average CY2022 basic Part D premiums will increase 4.9% to \\$33](#).

FDA approved the [first interchangeable biosimilar insulin product](#) and an [Abbvie pediatric bacterial skin infection treatment](#).

GAO reported that [4.6% of 2017 Medicare Advantage enrollees switched to traditional Medicare](#) in their last year of life.



Healthcare law and policy news

Senate [advanced debate on a bipartisan infrastructure bill](#), which would delay the Medicare drug rebate rule and [extend the sequester](#) to help offset costs.

[Anthem](#) and [Humana invested \\$140M](#) to launch a new PBM... Highmark [launched Lumevity](#) to support healthcare companies' organizational and digital transformation... Highmark is [collaborating with Stellar Health](#) on value-based payment transformation... Amwell will [acquire two digital health companies \(\\$32M\)](#)... PathAI [acquired Poplar](#)... PerkinElmer [will acquire BioLegend \(\\$5.25B\)](#).

American Heart Association [called for more diversity in genomic studies](#) assessing cardiovascular risk... STAT reported that [AI algorithms developed by Epic provide inaccurate or irrelevant](#) information to hospitals about patients.

Endo International will [settle a Tennessee lawsuit \(\\$35M\)](#) over opioid-related claims... Purdue Pharma's creditors [endorsed the company's bankruptcy plan](#)... Humana [sued Regeneron over allegedly inflating](#) the Eylea's price.

UnitedHealthcare, Cigna, and Aetna announced [policies to restrict use of high-cost biologic drugs](#).

Hospitals [sued HHS over the methodology](#) for [calculating graduate medical education reimbursement](#).

Commonwealth Fund [reported 10% of American adults were uninsured](#) in the first half of 2021, down 12.5% from 2020... A [JAMA study concluded](#) that expanding Medicare eligibility may reduce racial/ethnic health disparities... J.D. Power [reported that 51% of retail pharmacy customers](#) have used health/ wellness services during the past year.

430 healthcare groups [demanded Congress permanently expand telehealth flexibilities](#).



Questions or comments, please send to us-hcinsight@kpmg.com.

Succeeding in the new reality

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COVID-19 News Supplement

Center for Healthcare Regulatory Insight



COVID-19 by the Numbers

There have now been [over 34.7 million confirmed COVID-19 cases](#) in the US, with a death toll over 612,000... The seven-day [average of daily new cases is over 60,000](#), up 64.1% from last week; cases are up in over 90% of states and territories... A University of Washington model concluded that [roughly 1 in 5 Americans have been infected](#) with COVID-19 and that as many as 60% of cases have been unreported... CDC document suggests that the Delta variant causes more severe illness compared to other variants and is [as contagious as chickenpox](#).

344 million COVID-19 [vaccine doses have been administered](#) in the US (615,000/day over the past week)... Nearly 190 million Americans ([66.9% of Americans 12 and older](#) and 90% of Americans 65 and older) have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine; 163.9 million Americans are fully vaccinated (57.7% of Americans 12 and older).

California and New York City will [require state and city employees to be vaccinated](#) or show a weekly negative COVID-19 test... The Veterans Affairs Department [became the first federal agency to mandate vaccines](#), requiring 115,000 frontline healthcare workers to be vaccinated.

Executive and Administrative Action

President Biden announced a [requirement that federal employees attest to receiving a COVID-19 vaccine](#) or be regularly tested for COVID-19... Biden is encouraging states to [give newly vaccinated people a \\$100](#) incentive.

The CDC [changed guidance](#) to say that fully vaccinated individuals should go back to wearing masks in public indoor settings in areas with high COVID-19 transmission rates; CDC said that [69.3% of US counties have transmission rates high enough](#) to justify indoor mask wearing.

The Biden Administration [is actively considering recommending a booster](#) COVID-19 vaccine for at least some Americans.

Palantir announced that [HHS renewed its contract](#) to support COVID-19 vaccine distribution for another year... The US [purchased 200 million more doses](#) of the Pfizer-BioNTech to be delivered from October 2021 to April 2022.

Healthcare Regulatory News

HHS/Justice Department guidance [provides COVID long haulers with potential civil rights protections](#) under the American Disabilities Act.

Healthcare Law, Business, and Policy News

More than 50 medical and [health organizations released a joint statement endorsing mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations](#) for healthcare workers.

The House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis is [broadening its investigation](#) into political interference at the CDC.

A COVID States Project survey found that [nearly two-thirds of Americans support](#) federal, state, or local government requirements to get a COVID-19 vaccine... An Axios-Ipsos [poll found that unvaccinated individuals](#) who are White, older, and Republican are less likely to consider getting vaccinated than unvaccinated individuals who are Black or Hispanic, younger, and Democrat.

Surveillance, Testing, and Treatment

New [data show](#) that the efficacy of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine [dropped from 96% to 84% after six months](#); Pfizer plans to submit COVID-19 booster vaccine data to FDA by mid-August... A real world [study found that just one dose](#) of the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine offers higher protection against the Delta variant than indicated in some previously findings.

At the guidance of FDA, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna [will expand the number of young children \(age 5 to 11\) in their pediatric COVID-19 vaccine trials](#) in order to adequately assess possible side effects.

Moderna reported that its [COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing partners outside the US are facing delays](#) due to laboratory testing operations.

AstraZeneca plans to [seek full approval of its COVID-19 vaccine](#) in the second half of the year, bypassing emergency use authorization... A study concluded that [a person's risk of blood clots does not increase](#) after the second Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

FDA said that Johnson & Johnson's [COVID-19 vaccine can now be stored for six months](#), up from four and a half months.

Emergent BioSolutions announced that [FDA gave the company permission to restart COVID-19 vaccine production](#) at its Baltimore plant.

The European Union will [purchase up to 220,000 doses](#) of GlaxoSmithKline-Vir Biotechnology's monoclonal antibody for high-risk patients with mild to moderate COVID-19.

Shionogi began [a human trial of the first once-a-day pill](#) for treatment of early COVID-19.