



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 by the KPMG Center for Healthcare Regulatory Insight and is intended to be short and succinct, less than 360 words, to provide a digestible bite of news relevant to our clients and practices. Links are provided to source material (proposed and final regulations, agency guidance and press releases, reports, research, etc.) when available.

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Healthcare regulatory news

The [FDA approved](#) a blood test to detect concussions and more quickly identify brain injuries, potentially reducing the need for diagnostic CT scans...FDA [draft guidance](#) would allow drug manufacturers to test Alzheimer's disease treatments on patients before they exhibit outward signs of the disease... [OMB cleared a proposed rule](#) to exclude short term, limited duration insurance from the definition of individual health insurance coverage.

Blue Cross of Idaho [may offer low premium health plans](#) that do not comply with ACA requirements; HHS Secretary [Azar told a](#)

[Congressional Committee](#) that the state must approve the plans before HHS can consider enforcement action.



Healthcare law and policy news

President Trump's [budget](#) would cut HHS funding [by \\$17.9 billion](#), down 21% from 2017; it also proposed a broad range of policy changes, defended by HHS Secretary Azar in a [series of Committee hearings](#) this week.

The [CMS Office of the Actuary projected](#) that national healthcare spending will increase 5.5% annually on average (compared to 4.5% GDP growth) between 2017 and 2026, when it reaches \$5.7 trillion, or 19.7% of GDP; retail drug spending will increase 6.6% in 2018, up from 2.9% last year... Altarum estimated that the [opioid epidemic cost the country more than \\$1 trillion](#) between 2001 and 2017... [CDC estimates](#) that this year's flu vaccine may be 36% effective in adults, and 59% effective in children.

The House [Energy and Commerce Committee](#) explored the impacts of healthcare consolidation on costs and quality... meanwhile, the FTC and Illinois Health Facilities & Services Review Board [approved the proposed merger](#) of Advocate Health Care and Aurora Health Care (Wisconsin's decision is still pending) and the Massachusetts Public Health Council [unanimously approved](#) the merger of Partners HealthCare and Massachusetts Eye and Ear.

FTC Chair-nominee Joe Simons indicated at [his confirmation hearing](#) that he'd explore [forming a task force](#) to monitor whether anti-competitive conduct is contributing to higher drug prices... Walgreens is [exploring acquiring](#) the drug wholesale distributor AmerisourceBergen.

Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Chuck Grassley (R-IA) [sent letters to the IRS](#) probing "community benefit" of non-profit hospitals.

The Virginia House of Delegates [passed legislation](#) imposing a work requirement on some Medicaid enrollees, a [key step toward](#) Medicaid expansion.



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