



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

HHS [proposed rescinding](#) the Trump Administration Most Favored Nation drug pricing model final rule.

Over [2.5M people have enrolled in ACA coverage](#) during the special enrollment period... CMS informed [Ohio](#), [Utah](#), and [South Carolina](#) it would not allow Medicaid work requirements.

Following court loss, FDA will [begin regulating some drugs, including imaging agents, as devices](#).

The VA [will not cover the Alzheimer's drug](#) Aduhelm.

GAO [reported SNFs](#) with fewer registered nurses had higher patient re-hospitalizations and recommended that HHS impose stronger penalties to prevent such incidents.



Healthcare law and policy news

President Biden [urged Congress to lower drug prices](#), including through Medicare negotiation... Biden [nominated Samuel Bagenstos](#) as HHS General Counsel.

Senate passed a [budget resolution](#) (50-49), setting up Democrats' attempt at a \$3.5B budget reconciliation bill that would, among other things, [lower Medicare eligibility age, expand Medicare benefits](#), extend enhanced ACA subsidies, and permit Medicare drug price negotiation.

A Missouri judge ruled [Medicaid expansion can advance](#) over the Governor's objection.

UnitedHealthcare [will pay \\$15.6M to settle mental health parity claims](#)... Takeda will [pay \\$1.85M to settle pay-for-delay claims](#) related to a generic ADHD drug... A class action suit [alleges four pharmaceutical manufacturers colluded](#) by restricting sale of insulin to contract pharmacies under 340B... A [class action antitrust lawsuit alleges](#) that HCA [raised prices and failed to comply](#) with price transparency requirements... Chamber of Commerce [sued HHS to stop health plan price transparency requirements](#); PCMA sued to [invalidate plan requirements to publish historical prescription drug](#) net prices.

EQRx will [go public through a SPAC](#)... Honor Technology [acquired Home Instead](#)... Aetna [launched a virtual primary care solution](#)... Pfizer will [sell rights to a recently-discontinued glaucoma drug](#) to Fera Pharmaceuticals.

62% of physicians surveyed by Google Cloud said the [pandemic forced technology upgrades that would normally take years](#); 90% now use telehealth, up from 32% pre-pandemic... Telehealth use stabilized at [5% of claims](#) in May, after three months of decline... A Better Medicare Alliance-commissioned report [recommended that Medicare Advantage plans improve data collection](#) on social determinants of health... A *Journal of General Internal Medicine* study found a [hospital-at-home program boosted inpatient capacity](#) during the pandemic.

The US had a [record 95,000 drug overdose deaths](#) in 2020.



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

Succeeding in the new reality

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COVID-19 News Supplement

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COVID-19 by the Numbers

There have now been [over 36.3 million confirmed COVID-19 cases](#) in the US, with a death toll approaching 620,000... The country is [averaging over 110,000 new cases/day](#) over the past week, up from approximately 20,000 cases/day a month ago... American Academy of Pediatrics reported that there [were nearly 94,000 cases among children last week](#) (about 15% of all cases) and hospitalizations rates are rising.

354 million COVID-19 [vaccine doses have been administered](#) in the US (roughly 680,000/day over the past week)... 196 million Americans ([69.2% of Americans 12 and older](#) and 90.6% of Americans 65 and older) have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine; 167 million Americans are fully vaccinated (59% of Americans 12 and older).

Executive and Administrative Action

Biden chief medical advisor, Anthony Fauci, urged [more testing among those already vaccinated](#) in order to better track breakthrough infections... Fauci and other senior Administration officials also urged [vaccination mandates to be instituted at the local level](#), including at universities, businesses, and other organizations.

HHS will [require its healthcare employees](#) to get vaccinated for COVID-19.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin [plans to make COVID-19 vaccine mandatory](#) for all 1.4 million service members by mid-September.

Healthcare Law, Business, and Policy News

A [KFF poll found](#) that 63% of parents thought that unvaccinated students 12 and older should be required to wear masks in schools, however, only 42% of parents feel comfortable with vaccine mandates.

More than 90 health systems have [adopted COVID-19 vaccination requirements](#) for employees.

Surveillance, Testing, and Treatment

FDA [authorized a third dose](#) of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna's COVID-19 vaccines for people with weak immune systems... CDC's Advisory Community on Immunization Practices will [meet today to discuss and vote](#) on whether COVID-19 vaccine booster shots are needed... Anthony Fauci hopes that [full FDA approval of one or more COVID-19 vaccines](#) will occur within the month of August.

Based on new confirmatory evidence, CDC [advised people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or contemplating pregnancy](#) to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

A *NEJM* study [found that a third dose of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine](#) substantially improved protection for organ transplant recipients who have weakened immune systems... An Israeli study found that 88% of individuals who received a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine [had similar or fewer side effects](#) than they did after their second dose.

A [preprint study](#) found that Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine was only [42% effective against infection in July](#), suggesting that it may not be as effective against the Delta variant.

The European Medicines Agency is [investigating potential skin condition and kidney disorder side effects](#) resulting from the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines.

FDA [cleared AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine doses](#) for export overseas after delays resulting from investigation of contamination issues at the Emergent BioSolutions manufacturing plant... NIH animal studies found that [an intranasal version of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine](#) provided protection against serious disease.

Moderna will [double enrollment in a trial of its COVID-19 vaccine](#) in children under age 12.

World Health Organization (WHO) announced [a clinical trial in 52 countries to study three anti-inflammatory drugs](#) as potential COVID-19 treatments.

WHO also announced [new efforts to investigate origins of the pandemic](#), encouraging countries to “depoliticize the situation and cooperate.”