



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

Center for Healthcare Regulatory Insight



April 22, 2022 | Issue 218

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.

[› Subscribe here](#)

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 a special supplement.



Healthcare regulatory news

The Biden Administration [released](#) the 2022 [National Drug Control Strategy](#)... FDA [proposed requiring opioids be dispensed](#) with mail-back envelopes for safe disposal.

CMS [proposed a 3.2% \(\\$1.6B\) 2023 payment increase](#) for inpatient hospitals and adding [three health-equity-focused measures](#) to hospital quality reporting.

CMS [outlined its health equity strategy](#).

HHS plans to [rescind the healthcare worker “conscience” rule](#).

HHS [posted data](#) and released [a report](#) on [hospital](#) and [nursing home](#) ownership changes, including mergers/acquisitions/consolidations, since 2016.

HHS announced [ARPA-H will operate within NIH](#).

HHS announced [\\$226.5M in American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) funding](#) for a community health worker training program, [\\$105M in ARP-funded grants to states/territories to support transition](#) of the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) to the “988” dialing code, and \$90M in ARP funds to [identify/reduce health disparities](#) at HRSA Health Center Program-supported facilities and look-alikes.

GAO [recommended HHS agencies develop procedures](#) and train staff on reporting political interference.



Healthcare law and policy news

Supreme Court remanded [Arkansas and New Hampshire Medicaid work requirement cases](#) to the DC Circuit Court of Appeals with instructions to [vacate the judgements](#) and dismiss the cases.

Johnson & Johnson (J&J) [will pay West Virginia \\$99M to settle](#) opioid epidemic-related claims... J&J, McKesson, and Endo [will pay Alabama \\$276M to settle opioid-related](#) claims... Louisiana [sued UnitedHealthcare/Optum Rx](#) for allegedly overcharging the Medicaid program through inflated drug prices.

GBL [will acquire Affidea](#)... Regeneron will [acquire Checkmate Pharmaceuticals](#) (\$250M)... A KRR-led consortium [offered \\$14.9M to acquire Ramsay Health Care](#)... CB Insights reported [global digital health investment decreased 36%](#) in Q1 2022 to \$10.4B... Humana will [divest a 60% stake in Kindred at Home](#)... Cigna's Evernorth and Kaiser Permanente [announced a five-year network agreement](#).

A STAT investigation [concluded the FDA Breakthrough Device Program has resulted](#) in benefits to manufacturers with unclear value to patients.

JAMA studies found: (1) [60.1% of physicians believe all forms of tobacco are equally harmful](#), making them less likely to recommend e-cigarettes for patient

tobacco cessation; and, (2) most NCI-designated cancer centers [do not publicly disclose payer-specific cancer therapy prices](#) and marked up drug costs a median of 118% to 634% of acquisition costs.

Commonwealth Fund reported [one-in-four Black and Latinx/Hispanic Americans age 60+ report racial/ethnic discrimination](#) when seeking healthcare.



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

kpmg.com/socialmedia



[Privacy](#) | [Legal](#)

This email was sent by KPMG LLP, 3 Chestnut Ridge Road, Montvale, NJ 07645

© 2022 KPMG LLP, a Delaware limited liability partnership and a member firm of the KPMG global organization of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Limited, a private English company limited by guarantee. All rights reserved. NDP295619-1A

The KPMG name and logo are trademarks used under license by the independent member firms of the KPMG global organization.



COVID-19 News Supplement

Center for Healthcare Policy Insight



COVID-19 by the Numbers

Approximately [80.8 million COVID-19 cases](#) have been documented in the US, with a death toll of over 990,000... The country [averaged about 40,000 cases/day](#) over the past week, up from approximately 30,000/day two weeks ago, with cases [rising in more than half of states](#); meanwhile, COVID-related deaths averaged [nearly 400/day](#) over the past week, continuing a downward trend... World Health Organization (WHO) reported cases across the globe [were down 24% between April 11 and 17](#), while deaths were down 21%... WHO [predicted about 15 million people had died from COVID-19 globally](#) by the end of 2021, more than double officially reported numbers.

The BA.2 variant accounts for [approximately 74% of COVID-19 cases](#) in the US, while a sub-lineage, BA.2.12.1, accounts for 19% of cases.

More than [11.5 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered across 184 countries](#)... Over 571 million COVID-19 [vaccine doses have been administered](#) in the US... Over 256.9 million Americans ([approximately 82.2% of Americans 5 and older](#)) have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose; over 219 million Americans are fully vaccinated (70.1% of Americans 5 and older); over 99.6 million Americans have received a booster or additional dose (just 45.5% of those fully vaccinated).

A [CDC study found](#) among 397 children aged 5 to 11 hospitalized for COVID-19 from late December through February, 87% were unvaccinated, 30% had no underlying medical conditions, and 19% were admitted to ICUs; the cumulative hospitalization rate was 2.1 times as high among unvaccinated children as among vaccinated children.

Executive and Administrative Action

A [federal judge vacated CDC's mask mandate](#) for planes and other public transportation; federal officials announced they [would not enforce the mandate](#), prompting many airlines and public transportation systems to make masks optional... the Justice Department will [appeal the decision after the CDC deemed the mandate](#) "necessary for the public health."

In response to questions about the White House Correspondent's Dinner and other large social gatherings, new COVID-19 response coordinator, Dr. Ashish Jha, said the country is at the point "[where I think we can gather safely](#)"... Dr. Jha also recommended [Americans 60 or older get a second booster vaccine](#).

CDC [launched the Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics](#) to provide data, models, and analytic tools to improve the country's decision-making in response to COVID-19 and other public health threats.

The White House announced its [Global COVID-19 Summit will be held May 12](#).

Department of Labor OIG reported [OSHA failed to appropriately coordinate COVID-19 protections for federal agency staff](#).

Department of Justice [announced criminal charges against 21 defendants](#) for COVID-related fraud.

The Biden Administration is [considering delaying repeal of Title 42 border restrictions](#).

Healthcare Law, Business, and Policy News

Georgetown University's Center for Children and Families found Medicaid's continuous enrollment coverage protection during the pandemic has [been most impactful in Medicaid non-expansion states \(17.6% enrollment growth\) compared to expansion states \(11.3% growth\)](#); 6.7 million children could lose coverage when the pandemic ends due to redeterminations.

A [Cell Reports Medicine study found](#) wearables, such as smartwatches, can help track progression of COVID-19 through changes in heart rate.

A [JAMA study found](#) unvaccinated people who had been sick with COVID-19 had an 85% lower risk of acquiring COVID-19 again compared to unvaccinated individuals without prior COVID-19, similar to the effectiveness offered by mRNA vaccines.

KFF estimated approximately [234,000 COVID-19 deaths since last June could have been prevented](#) with a primary series of COVID-19 vaccination.

A IQVIA analysis found COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics [drove a 12% increase in US medicine spending in 2021](#).

Politico reported on growing concerns about a [drop in routine childhood vaccines during the pandemic...](#) CDC reported the proportion of [kindergarteners who are up to date on their routine childhood vaccines fell](#) from 95% to 94% in the 2020-2021 school year.

Surveillance, Testing, and Treatment

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices [met Wednesday to discuss COVID-19 booster doses](#); several members concluded that most [Americans under 50 should wait](#) for the next iteration of booster shots rather than getting a fourth dose now, while others expressed concerns about ["booster fatigue"](#) and undercutting confidence that current vaccines are working effectively.

FDA may [not authorize a COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 and under](#) until June.

Moderna [reported its experimental bivalent COVID-19 vaccine based on the original strain and Beta variant](#) triggered [more antibodies than its original vaccine](#) formulation; the company plans to continue focus on advancing a bivalent COVID-19 booster for fall 2022.

CureVac and GlaxoSmithKline reported their [second generation COVID-19 vaccine was highly effective in preclinical studies](#) on rodents.

WHO [strongly recommended](#) giving Paxlovid to people with [mild to moderate COVID-19 at high risk of hospitalization](#) because they are unvaccinated, older, immunocompromised, or have chronic illness.

The federal government is in [discussions with Shionogi about purchasing its COVID-19](#) antiviral pill.