



## 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](#).*

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### Healthcare regulatory news

FDA [granted accelerated approval](#) to Eisai-Biogen's [Alzheimer's treatment Leqembi](#), priced at [\\$26,500/year](#) (higher than [ICER's value estimate](#): \$8,500-\$20,600)... FDA approved a [first-of-its-kind combination adult asthma](#) rescue inhaler... FDA advisory committees will [meet February 15](#) to discuss Emergent BioSolutions' over-the-counter naloxone application.

*Wall Street Journal* reported FDA is [increasingly placing holds on clinical trials](#) of experimental treatments.

CMS [released a timeline](#) for the first year of the Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program and [encouraged stakeholder feedback/insights](#)... CMS released [guidance for states](#) to prepare for termination of Medicaid

continuous enrollment on March 31 and [help beneficiaries maintain](#) continuity of coverage.

HHS [awarded \\$245M to SAMHSA and HRSA](#) to support youth mental health and the mental health workforce.

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## Healthcare law and policy news

MedPAC [recommended increasing](#) 2024 Medicare physician (1.25%) and hospitals (1%) payments.

A record [15.9M individuals have selected](#) ACA plans... KFF estimated [5M uninsured individuals could enroll in coverage](#) with virtually no premiums.

A [district court remanded](#) the issue of \$1B+ in 340B underpayments back to [HHS to devise a remedy](#).

California [sued insulin manufacturers and PBMs](#) for unlawfully increasing insulin price.

AstraZeneca [will acquire CinCor Pharma](#) (\$1.8B)... BioNTech [acquired InstaDeep](#) (\$682M)... CVS [invested \\$100M in Carbon Health](#) to pilot primary/urgent care clinics in its retail stores and is [exploring acquiring Oak Street Health](#) (\$10B+)... Blues plans and affiliated companies [launched Synergie](#), a medication contracting organization to [improve physician-administered drug affordability/access](#)... Mark Cuban Cost Plus Drugs [will partner with RxPreferred Benefits](#) to lower employer plan drug prices.

AAP [recommended for the first time](#) that physicians [offer weight-loss drugs to children with obesity](#).

A [JAMA study found tele-mental health use](#) during the pandemic offset decreased in-person care and generated higher utilization for several mental health conditions, as compared to pre-pandemic... *Health Affairs* studies found 1) private equity-acquired physician practices [rely more heavily on advanced practice providers](#) (e.g., NPs and PAs); 2) hospitalization rates for birthing people within 60 days of birth [decreased 17% in states that extended postpartum](#) Medicaid coverage; and 3) Black medical trainees are [significantly more likely to carry heavier debt burden](#) than other racial/ethnic peer groups... US [cancer deaths have fallen 33%](#) since 1991.

[AHCA reported 84% of nursing homes](#) face moderate/high staffing shortages.

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## Special Section: COVID-19 and Other Respiratory Illnesses News

HHS [renewed the COVID-19 public health emergency \(PHE\)](#); HHS is reportedly considering allowing the [PHE to expire as early as April](#).

Moderna plans to [charge between \\$110 and \\$130 per COVID-19 vaccine](#) once government purchasing ends, similar to the pricing of Pfizer and BioNTech for their vaccine.

Department of Defense [removed its COVID-19 vaccine mandate](#) for service members and announced plans to [overhaul its approach to countering](#) biological and chemical threats.

FDA reported [AstraZeneca's COVID-19 preventive monoclonal antibody drug, Evusheld, is likely not effective](#) at neutralizing infection from the XBB.1.5 variant... Regeneron is developing a COVID-19 monoclonal antibody that [could be effective against all known variants, with](#) clinical trials planned to begin this year.

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