



# 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

CMS [announced 42% of 2024 Medicare Advantage \(MA\)-Part D plans](#) earned 4 stars or more, down from 2023 (51%); 74% of enrollees are in those high-rated plans, largely unchanged.

CMS is [removing coverage restrictions](#) for PET beta amyloid imaging for Alzheimer's disease diagnosis, potentially increasing [patient eligibility for new treatments](#).

FDA is [seeking comment](#) on innovative drug clinical trial design... OMB is [reviewing a FDA final rule to ban the sale of menthol cigarettes](#).

HHS [selected three initial Project NextGen COVID-19 vaccines](#) and awarded \$500M+ for vaccine/therapeutic development... HHS and Pfizer [reached an agreement](#) to extend patient access to the COVID-19 antiviral Paxlovid as it transitions to the commercial market with [a list price \(\\$1,390\)](#) more than twice the federal government cost (\$529).

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## Healthcare law and policy news

Henry Ford Health and Ascension Michigan [plan to form a \\$10.5B, 13 acute-care hospital joint venture](#)... Aspirus Health and St. Luke's Duluth [plan to form a 19-hospital nonprofit system](#)... Thermo Fisher [will acquire Olink](#) (\$3.1B)... Novo Nordisk will [acquire an experimental hypertension drug](#) from KBP Biosciences (up to \$1.3B)... Merck will [pay Daiichi Sankyo up to \\$22B](#) to co-develop/commercialize three experimental cancer drugs... Prothena, which is developing an Alzheimer's disease treatment, is [preparing for a potential sale](#).

Rite Aid [filed for bankruptcy](#), driven in part by opioid settlements... Walgreens and Alignment Health [will offer co-branded MA plans](#) in four states in 2024... Amazon Pharmacy [launched a prescription drug drone delivery](#) service... NCPA launched [a company to pursue litigation/arbitration against PBMs](#) for "junk" direct/indirect remuneration fees on pharmacists.

JAMA studies (1) [examined the cumulative effects](#) of 84 different SDOH factors on health outcomes for 9- and 10-year-olds; and, (2) found Medicaid enrollees who initiated buprenorphine treatment via telemedicine during the pandemic [had higher odds of treatment adherence](#) than those initiated through in-person visits.

Definitive Healthcare [reported approximately 145,000 health care providers, including 71,000+ physicians, left](#) the healthcare workforce in 2021/2022... A [KFF survey found](#) average employer-sponsored health insurance premiums increased 7% in 2023 to \$23,968; premiums up are up 22% in the last five years... A Politico analysis [found 88.7M individuals have had sensitive health information](#) exposed through data breaches year-to-date, up from 43.5M this time last year.

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