



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

Center for Healthcare Regulatory Insight



May 7, 2021 | Issue 171

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

CMS will [end the Part D Payment Modernization Model](#) on December 31 due to low participation.

939,575 individuals have [signed up for ACA plans](#) during the special enrollment period through April 30.

FDA approved a [naloxone nasal spray](#) with double the typical dose for opioid overdose treatment... FDA [withdrew](#) a Trump Administration policy [requiring annual drug review timeline reports](#).... The FDA issued [a report on its oversight activities](#) during the pandemic.



Healthcare law and policy news

President Biden signed legislation [extending the ban on fentanyl analogues](#) into October.

A federal [trial began over McKesson, AmerisourceBergen, and Cardinal Health's](#) roles in the opioid epidemic... Delaware's supreme court [rejected Cigna's attempt](#) to [collect a \\$1.85B termination fee](#) from Anthem over their failed merger.

Roivant Sciences [will go public through a SPAC](#) (\$7.3B)... HCA [sold four hospitals to Piedmont Healthcare](#) (\$960M)... Myriad [sold assets, including its rheumatoid arthritis disease test Vectra](#), to LabCorp (\$150M)... R1 RCM [will acquire VisitPay](#) (\$300M)... Walmart [plans to acquire MeMD](#).

A [\\$100M CVS venture fund will invest](#) in digital health startups... Medline [invested \\$1.5B](#) in the domestic healthcare supply chain... Incyte will [settle kickback allegations](#) (\$12.6M).

50% of Americans want [Congress to pass legislation bringing down prescription drug](#) costs; 53% of [Americans](#) fear healthcare costs will become unaffordable... House [Energy and Commerce](#) and [Education and Labor Committees](#) discussed drug pricing reform bills.

Health Affairs studies found that "[pharmacy deserts](#)" are more common in Black and Hispanic neighborhoods; that hospital acquisitions of physician practices were associated with [higher rates of inappropriate MRI referrals](#) and [diagnostic and lab tests](#); that PE firms are [more likely to acquire hospitals with larger operating margins](#); and that SNF patients [could be discharged to the home sooner](#) without compromising quality... Lown Institute [ranked hospitals on delivery of low-value](#) tests/procedures.

A *JAMA* study found [that rising wholesale drug prices led to higher out-of-pocket expenses](#) for 57.3% of insured patients... FAIR Health reported that [telehealth utilization among privately-insured individuals fell 15.7%](#) from January to February, the first month-to-month decline since September... AMA reported that for the first time [less than half of physicians](#) (49.1%) work in private practice... A *JAMA* study found that [Medicaid enrollment increased 5.2M](#) January 2019-September 2020.



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

Succeeding in the new reality

Visit the COVID-19 resource center for KPMG analysis, insights, and perspectives.



kpmg.com/socialmedia



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

You have received this message from KPMG LLP. If you wish to unsubscribe from Around the world of U.S. healthcare in 360 words or less, please [click here](#). If you wish to unsubscribe from all KPMG communications, please [click here](#).

KPMG LLP, 3 Chestnut Ridge Road, Montvale, NJ 07645

© 2021 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. NDP131714-1A

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 Regulatory Insight



COVID-19 by the Numbers

There are now over 32.6 million confirmed COVID-19 cases in the US, with a [death toll over 580,000](#)... New confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States are [at the lowest point in seven months](#) (48,000 new cases/day over the past week); 20 states had fewer cases than the week before... As of Monday, children [made up 22.4% of new COVID-19 cases](#) in the past week, up from [just 3% of new cases](#) a year ago... CDC projected that US COVID-19 [cases could see a sharp decline by July](#) and that the pandemic could be brought under control if nationwide vaccination efforts and safety measures continue.

University of Washington scientists [estimated that 6.9 million people have died from COVID-19](#) worldwide, more than twice the official number, and that 905,000 have died in the US, 38% higher than the CDC tally.

252 million COVID-19 [vaccine doses have been administered](#) in the US (2.09M/day over the last week, [down from 3.37M/day](#) three weeks ago)... 149.5 million Americans ([57% of Americans 18 and older](#) and 83% of Americans 65 and older) have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine; 108 million Americans are fully vaccinated (41.9% of Americans 18 and older).

Executive and Administrative Action

President Biden set a goal of [having 70% of Americans receive at least one COVID-19 vaccine](#) dose by July 4; as soon as Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine is authorized for children ages 12 to 15, the Administration also plans to launch a comprehensive plan to vaccinate as many as many adolescents as possible by July 4th.

The Biden Administration will [begin reallocating COVID-19 vaccines](#) that go unclaimed by states... The Administration [launched a website, text-message tool, and phone hotline](#) to help Americans find COVID-19 vaccines available near them and is [supporting Pfizer's efforts to begin exporting](#) US-made doses of its COVID-19 vaccine.

U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai announced that the [White House supports the waiver of intellectual property protections](#) for COVID-19 vaccines for the duration of the pandemic; the Administration is moving forward on discussions with the World Trade Organization on waiving the protections.

HHS announced \$1 billion in American Rescue Plan funding to [strengthen COVID-19 response efforts and increase vaccinations](#) in rural communities and \$250 million in American Rescue Plan funding to develop and support a community-based workforce charged with increasing COVID-19 vaccinations in

underserved communities... HHS also announced a [COVID-19 Coverage Assistance Fund to cover COVID-19 vaccine administration costs](#) for patients in health plans that do not cover the costs or require patient cost-sharing.

The Administration [restricted travel from India](#) (not impacting citizens, permanent citizens, and others with exemptions) starting at midnight on Tuesday (May 4).

CMS increased [national average payment rates](#) for COVID-19 monoclonal antibodies from \$310 to \$450 in most health care settings and to \$750 when administered at the beneficiary's permanent residence or temporary lodging, like a hotel or motel, cruise ship, hostel, or homeless shelter.

GAO [reported on access-related issues](#) for mental health and addiction treatment during the pandemic...

Healthcare Regulatory News

FDA [revoked the emergency use authorization](#) for Battelle's respiratory decontamination system following a voluntary request from the company.

Healthcare Law, Business, and Policy News

The American Hospital Association [requested that HHS extend](#) the provider relief funds spending deadline from June 30 until the end of the public health emergency.

A federal judge [vacated the nationwide ban on evictions](#) during the pandemic, ruling that the [CDC exceeded its authority](#) in issuing the moratorium.

A Harris poll found that [10% of Americans will get a COVID-19 vaccine "whenever I get around to it;"](#) 21% will wait and see before getting the vaccine, and 14% will not get the vaccine at all... Only 52% of parents responding to an Axios/Ipsos survey are [likely to vaccinate their children under the age of 18](#) as soon as they are eligible... An Ipsos survey found that [57% of all Americans continue to wear a mask "at all times"](#) when leaving the house; just 47% of unvaccinated adults wear a mask "at all times" ... 55% of respondents to a VeryWell survey [believe individuals should have to prove they've been vaccinated](#) to do things such as board an airplane or enter a restaurant for indoor dining.

Dell will collaborate with i2b2 transSMART Foundation [to create and study "digital twins" or virtual models](#) of tens of thousands of long-haul COVID-19 patients.

Surveillance, Testing, and Treatment

FDA is expected to clear [Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 12 to 15](#) as early as [next Wednesday](#).

Pfizer will [distribute smaller packages of its COVID-19 vaccine](#) by the end of May in order to reduce potential waste...CVS and Walgreens [accounted for most of the nearly 180,000 COVID-19 vaccines](#) that had to go to waste as of late March.

Pfizer/BioNTech [asked the FDA for full approval](#) of their COVID-19 vaccine... Moderna plans to [file for full approval](#) of its COVID-19 vaccine by the end of the month... A real-world study found that the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines [protected against two widespread COVID-19 variants](#).

Moderna [will supply 34 million](#) doses of its COVID-19 vaccine to Covax in Q4 2021 for distribution to low-income countries, with the option of up to 500 million total through 2022... A booster shot to Moderna's vaccine [has shown positive results against new virus variants](#) in an early study.

Pfizer and BioNTech will [donate their COVID-19 vaccine for participants](#) in the Tokyo Olympics in July... A [federal judge ruled](#) that Pfizer and BioNTech must face a suit alleging development of [their COVID-19 vaccine infringed](#) on a fluorescent protein patent... A [UK study found](#) that individuals who have not already been infected by COVID-19 are vulnerable to infection from variants after getting just one dose of Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine... BioNTech increased its vaccine [manufacturing capacity to 3 billion doses](#) for 2021.

AstraZeneca [remains committed to receiving emergency use authorization](#) for its COVID-19 vaccine despite setbacks... Novavax has begun a clinical trial [testing its COVID-19 vaccine in adolescents ages 12 to 17](#)... The next generation of COVID-19 vaccines in development [could be in the form of a pill or nasal spray](#), easing transport and storage.

Eli Lilly employees accused an executive of [altering government-required documents to downplay potential quality control issues](#) at a US facility manufacturing its monoclonal antibody treatment.