



# 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

[President Biden](#) and [HHS announced](#) that one million Americans have signed up for ACA coverage through the special enrollment period.

A [CMS interim final rule](#) requires long-term care facilities to educate/offer the COVID-19 vaccine to residents, clients, and staff and to [provide weekly](#)

[reports](#) of vaccination rates... CMS [guidance details](#) how states can receive a temporary 10% Medicaid FMAP increase for home- and community-based services.

CMS [warned hospitals failing to report](#) payer-negotiated rates and gave them 90 days to correct issues... CMS [encouraged stakeholders](#) to respond to an [RFI on advancing equity](#) for underserved communities.

FTC is sending 51,875 payments [totaling \\$59.1M to victims of a Reckitt Benckiser-Indivior scheme](#) to thwart competition to Suboxone.



## Healthcare law and policy news

The Senate [confirmed Andrea Palm](#) as HHS Deputy Secretary... The Senate [advanced Chiquita Brooks-LaSure's nomination](#) as CMS Administrator, a final vote is expected soon.

HHS [urged the Supreme Court to uphold](#) Trump Administration rules on site neutrality and 340B reimbursement cuts.

HHS will [enforce healthcare-related protections for LGBTQ](#) Americans.

Missouri Governor Mike Parson [ended plans to expand Medicaid](#) in the state following legislative resistance... An NBER paper found [that increases in premiums resulted in beneficiaries dropping](#) out of Michigan's Medicaid program... 32 hospitals in Medicaid non-expansion states [sued HHS](#) for [additional DSH payments](#).

Dignity Health and University of Miami will pay [\\$10M](#) and [\\$22M](#), respectively, to settle Medicare fraud allegations... Anthem was [sued \\$50M](#) over [holding back post-acquisition escrow payments](#)... Alvotech [alleged in a lawsuit that Abbvie deployed a "patent thicket"](#) to prevent biosimilar competitors to Humira.

Allergan Aesthetics [will acquire Soliton \(\\$550M\)](#)... St. Francis Medical Center [intends to join Capital Health](#)... Ginkgo Bioworks will [go public through a \\$17.5B SPAC](#) merger... Cedar [acquired OODA Health](#) (\$425M)... Amedisys plans to [take over Visiting Nurse Association's](#) home health and hospice services... Mayo Clinic and Kaiser Permanente [will invest \\$100M in Medically Home's](#) hospital-at-home model.

10 moderate House Democrats [urged Speaker Pelosi to pursue bipartisan](#) drug pricing reform.

World Health Organization and the International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities [urged drug manufacturers to make clinical trial data public](#) with redactions... National Funeral Directors Association and CDC estimated that the [average "cost of dying" in the US](#) is \$19,566.



Questions or comments, please send to [us-hcinsight@kpmg.com](mailto:us-hcinsight@kpmg.com).

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# COVID-19 News Supplement

Center for Healthcare Regulatory Insight



## COVID-19 by the Numbers

There are now over 32.8 million confirmed COVID-19 cases in the US, with a [death toll of nearly 585,000](#)... The US averaged [fewer than 40,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases/day over the past week](#), down 21% from the week before and the lowest point since September; cases declined in 37 states, while cases did not increase in any state... Deaths from COVID-19 are at [their lowest point \(600/day\) since July](#).

267 million COVID-19 [vaccine doses have been administered](#) in the US (2.09M/day over the past week)... 154.6 million Americans ([58.9% of Americans 18 and older](#) and 84% of Americans 65 and older) have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine; 119 million Americans are fully vaccinated (45.6% of Americans 18 and older)... CDC reported on [demographic and social disparities](#) with COVID-19 vaccination rates... AP reported that several states have asked the federal government to [send them just a fraction of allotted](#) COVID-19 vaccine doses.

Eight members (players and staff) of the New York Yankees [tested positive for COVID-19 more than 14 days after being fully vaccinated](#), prompting serious questions from public health experts.

## Executive and Administrative Action

CDC updated guidance to say that [fully vaccinated Americans can gather indoors or outdoors](#) with other individuals without masks, even if some in the group are unvaccinated.

HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra [told the House Energy and Commerce Committee](#) that the department is [considering extending the deadline](#) for providers to use Provider Relief Fund allocations and that it will [demand accountability and transparency](#) from recipients of the remaining \$25 million... The Administration plans to open applications for [billions in hospital COVID-19 grants](#) before the end of May.

Treasury Department launched [a \\$350 billion state, local, territorial, and tribal aid program](#) to offset economic damages from the pandemic... The Administration [announced \\$7.4 billion in funding to expand the public health workforce](#) to conduct vaccinations, testing, contact tracing, and community outreach.

## Healthcare Regulatory News

Administration for Children and Families [issued guidelines to states, territories and tribes](#) on how to distribute \$24 billion in relief funds for child care providers.

## Healthcare Law, Business, and Policy News

Kaiser Health News reported on how some [hospitals and providers are profiting off COVID-19 test](#) through price gouging, because the CARES Act requires insurers to pay the full billed charge to the provider unless there is a negotiated rate.

An AP-NORC poll found that 71% of Americans [approve of President Biden's handling of the pandemic](#)... An Axios/Ipsos poll found that for the first time, [less than half \(43%\) of Americans say returning to their "normal" pre-pandemic lives](#) would pose a large or moderate risk... 61% of [respondents to a STAT-Harris poll believe that the Biden Administration is correct](#) to support a waiver of intellectual property rights in order to broaden access to COVID-19 vaccines in low and middle income countries... 74% of young adults (age 18-29) believe [COVID-19 vaccination should be required to return to work or campus](#).

KFF reported that Hispanic Americans are roughly twice as likely as White adults to say [they want to get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible](#), suggesting the need for increased outreach and access... CDC reported that over [40% of Hispanic adults have reported symptoms of depression](#) during the pandemic.

Uber and Lyft will [offer free rides to and from COVID-19 vaccine sites](#) through the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

18 international scientists [criticized the World Health Organization's \(WHO\) investigation](#) into the origin of the pandemic and called for a more extensive review.

## Surveillance, Testing, and Treatment

FDA [revised the emergency use authorization](#) for Pfizer and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine to permit its use in children ages 12 to 15; CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) [recommended the expanded use](#) and CDC Commissioner Rochelle Walensky approved it... CDC will also amend its clinical guidance to [allow COVID-19 vaccines and other childhood vaccines to be co-administered](#) on the same day or within 14 days of each other.

BioNTech said that [there is "no evidence" to support the need to adapt](#) the COVID-19 vaccine developed with Pfizer to improve effectiveness against emerging variants.

David Kessler, chief science officer of COVID-19 response at HHS, told a Congressional committee that [a COVID-19 vaccine booster will likely be needed](#) and that the federal government is planning to have doses available for all Americans.

States [won't receive any doses of Johnson & Johnson's](#) COVID-19 vaccine next week... CDC has [identified just 28 people who have developed](#) rare but serious blood clotting issues after receiving Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine, out of roughly 8.7 million doses administered... meanwhile, the US government is [considering joint production of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine with India](#), including arranging for necessary raw materials.

WHO [authorized China's Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine](#) for emergency use, the sixth vaccine to receive WHO authorization.

AstraZeneca could skip asking FDA for emergency use authorization for its COVID-19 vaccine and pursue [full marketing approval instead](#)... Novavax said that it will not seek regulatory authorization for its COVID-19 vaccine [until July at the earliest](#) and that it is behind in meeting production targets.

The COVID-19 vaccine produced by China's Sinovac Biotech was [94% effective at protecting against symptomatic infection](#) in a real-world study.

Eli Lilly [signed licensing agreements with three Indian generic drug manufacturers](#) (Cipla, Lupin, and Sun Pharma) to make and sell its baricitinib arthritis drug in the country for treating Covid-19 patients.