



# 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.

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## ***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 Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure said CMS [will prioritize expanding coverage and health equity](#)... CMMI Director, Liz Fowler, suggested [greater use of mandatory](#) alternative payment models... CMS is [reevaluating Georgia's approved 1332 waiver](#) to leave HealthCare.gov.

OMB is [reviewing an ACA exchange proposed rule](#) rolling back Trump Administration policies.

FDA approved the [first KRAS-blocking lung cancer drug](#)... FDA [alerted providers to stop using](#) a Medtronic heart implant... FDA [recommended improving data exchange](#) between drug tracing systems.

FTC [reported on the impacts of "rebate walls"](#) on drug price competition.

ONC [will invest \\$80M in training/certification programs](#) for institutions serving underrepresented populations.



### Healthcare law and policy news

President Biden's FY22 budget [proposed](#) increasing [HHS spending by 23%](#).

HHS [filed a motion to dismiss a PhRMA lawsuit](#) to block Florida's plan to import prescription drugs from Canada.

Supreme Court [rejected Johnson & Johnson's request to review](#) an appeals court decision requiring a \$2.1B payment over links between its talcum powder and ovarian cancer.

Oklahoma's Supreme Court [ruled that the governor's plan](#) to privatize much of the state's Medicaid program is unconstitutional... Nevada will enact legislation creating an [ACA exchange public-option](#) plan.

Walgreens [completed sale of its Alliance Healthcare business](#) to AmerisourceBergen... Doximity [filed](#) for a [\\$100M IPO](#)... Quorum Health [sold its consulting division](#) to Grant Avenue Capital... Abiomed [acquired preCARDIA](#)... MorphoSys will [acquire Constellation Pharmaceuticals \(\\$1.7B\)](#)... Babylon will [go public via a SPAC merger](#) (\$4.2B)... Sentara Healthcare and Cone Health [ended merger plans](#).

Milliman reported that employer-sponsored PPO [healthcare costs fell 4.2% in 2020](#), but projected a 8.4% increase in 2021... 81% of West Health-Gallup survey respondents [believe the government needs to play a major role](#) in negotiating Medicare prescription drug prices... ONC [reported](#) that 70% of hospitals enabled patients to access their health information using mobile or other software applications in 2019, up significantly from 46% in 2018... A [JAMA study found](#) that privately insured individuals were more likely than publicly insured individuals to report care access challenges, higher costs, and less satisfaction... A [PLOS study found that manufacturer payments](#) to physicians were associated with increased prescribing of expensive, long-acting insulin.

An NIH [phase 1 trial will evaluate the safety](#) of a universal influenza vaccine.



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 33.3 million confirmed COVID-19 cases](#) in the US, with a [death toll of over 600,000...](#) The US averaged [roughly 16,500 new COVID-19 cases/day over the past week](#), down 30% from the week before and the lowest since last March; cases declined in 43 states, while staying steady in all others.

298 million COVID-19 [vaccine doses have been administered](#) in the US (1M/day over the past week)... 169 million Americans ([60.3% of Americans 12 and older](#) and 86% of Americans 65 and older) have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine; 136.6 million Americans are fully vaccinated (48.8% of Americans 12 and older)... CDC [data show that counties with the highest social vulnerability](#) had a vaccination rate of 49%, compared to 59.3% in the least vulnerable countries... More than [2 billion COVID-19 doses have been administered](#) across the world.

## Executive and Administrative Action

President Biden [declared June a “National Month of Action”](#) to try to meet his goal of vaccinating 70% of the US adult population by July 4; efforts include extended hours at vaccination sites, free ride-sharing to sites, childcare coverage to allow parents to get vaccinated, and competition among cities.

The Biden Administration [announced plans for distribution of the first 25 million COVID-19 vaccines](#) that it will donate to low- and middle-income countries, including 19 million to COVAX for countries in South and Central America, Asia, and Africa and 6 million to allies and regional priorities, including Mexico, Canada, West Bank and Gaza, Ukraine, Egypt, and Iraq... The Administration is [considering donating states’ leftover vaccine doses](#) to foreign countries.

As part of President Biden’s proposed budget, CMS requested creation of a [\\$25 million health equity fund](#) to implement Administration Executive Orders related to identifying systemic barriers to agency programs and taking steps to address the pandemic’s disproportionate impacts on communities of color.

HHS launched an upwards of [\\$500 million venture capital partnership](#) to develop and bring to market [innovative technologies to support](#) the country’s response to future pandemics.

## Healthcare Regulatory News

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [updated guidance](#) to say that employers [can mandate employees receive COVID-19 vaccinations](#), with reasonable accommodation, and can offer incentives to receive vaccines.

## Healthcare Law, Business, and Policy News

World Health Organization (WHO) [announced simplified names](#) for COVID-19 variants based on the Greek alphabet... WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus recommended that countries [develop an international treaty](#) to prepare for and respond to pandemics.

Several US-based personal protective equipment suppliers have [scaled back production of medical gowns and masks or decreased workforce](#) as a result of potentially unfair competition from Chinese manufacturers.

An [NIH study found a less than 0.001% chance](#) than an individual will transmit COVID-19 through blood donation, concluding that [donation screening requirements are sufficient](#) to prevent spread... A study found that [contact tracing efforts had a suboptimal impact](#) on COVID-19 transmission because 2 of 3 cases were not reached for interview or named no contacts when interviewed.

A KFF survey found that [just 4% of unvaccinated US adults want a COVID-19 vaccine](#) as soon as possible; 32% of unvaccinated individuals said [a full FDA approval would make them more likely](#) to get vaccinated.

## Surveillance, Testing, and Treatment

Moderna applied for [full FDA approval of its COVID-19 vaccine](#) in people 18 and older... Thermo Fisher Scientific [will help manufacture and package Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine](#) beginning in Q3... Moderna will begin [producing a revamped version](#) of its vaccine in the Netherlands in partnership with Lonza.

Israeli health officials found a [probable link between Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine and dozens of cases of heart inflammation](#) in young men following a second dose of the vaccine.

AstraZeneca is [investigating whether 60 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine](#) set to be donated to other countries may have been cross-contaminated with Johnson & Johnson's vaccine... AstraZeneca is negotiating with the US government [to move production of its vaccine](#) to a factory owned by Catalent... Serum Institute of India will [increase production of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine](#) from about 65 million to 90 million per month.

NIH began a [phase 1/2 clinical trial testing whether mixing and matching COVID-19 vaccines](#) can strengthen immunity and combat variants.

WHO, International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group and the World Trade Organization [jointly called for a \\$50 billion plan](#) to provide vaccines for the developing world... World leaders [pledged \\$2.4B](#) to support the [Gavi COVAX Advance Market Commitment \(AMC\)](#), aimed at delivering 1.8B COVID-19 vaccine doses to lower-income countries in 2021 and early 2022.

WHO [listed China's Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use](#), meaning it can be distributed by COVAX.

NIH Director Francis Collins wrote in a blog post that two new studies confirm that COVID-19 [mRNA vaccines "appear to be completely safe for pregnant women."](#)

FDA [updated Regeneron's COVID-19 monoclonal antibody](#) emergency use authorization to permit use at half the dose as originally authorized and to be given subcutaneously when intravenous infusion is not possible.