



# 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

CMS [will give states a year](#), up from six months, after the COVID-19 public health emergency ends to redetermine Medicaid enrollee eligibility... CMS is [not yet penalizing hospitals](#) that are non-compliant with price transparency requirements... Texas [refused](#) a CMS [offer to continue a DSRIP program](#) that pays Texas providers billions for another year after CMS recently rejected the state's Medicaid waiver request.

HHS [invested \\$19M to expand telehealth](#) in rural/underserved communities.

HHS could [recommend common billing codes for biosimilars](#) and their brand biologics.

OIG [reported that CMS paid new hospitals three times](#) more for capital costs than it would have under the IPPS and recommended removing the existing capital cost exemption.



## Healthcare law and policy news

US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit overturned a lower court decision, ruling that [actuarial equivalence did not apply to a Medicare Advantage overpayment rule](#).

UnitedHealth and Change Healthcare [agreed to not complete their \\$8B merger](#) until 120 days after both companies certify compliance with Justice Department (DOJ) requirements... Humana [completed its acquisition of Kindred at Home](#)... Illumina [closed its \\$8B acquisition of Grail](#), despite lacking FTC or EU clearance... Inovalon [will go private](#) in a \$7.3B deal... Verily [will acquire SignalPath](#)... SSM Health and Medica [plan to form a strategic partnership](#)... Cigna and Fresenius [extended their value-based kidney care partnership](#) through 2023... In a letter to HHS, DOJ, and FTC, the [AHA argued that hospital mergers present no competitive issues](#).

Merck [plans to withdraw 340B discounts](#) to most [contract pharmacies](#)... Eli Lilly is [splitting its Bio-Medicines unit](#) into neuroscience and immunology units.

States must [decide by Saturday whether to join](#) a \$26B opioid-related settlement.

A [Pediatric study found](#) that almost half of children/adults under age 21 given opioid prescriptions fit high-risk patterns known to increase overuse/overdose risks... A KFF analysis found that [per-enrollee spending in Medicare Advantage](#) is higher and growing faster than fee-for-service Medicare... A KFF/Epic Health Research Network analysis found [hospital admissions have not rebounded as expected](#) in early 2021... Altarum reported that [healthcare employment is approaching](#) pre-pandemic highs... A [JAMA study found](#) that healthcare spending on White Americans accounted for 72% of all spending from 2002-2016, despite accounting for just 61% of the population.





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

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# COVID-19 News Supplement

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## COVID-19 by the Numbers

There have now been [over 37.3 million confirmed COVID-19 cases](#) in the US, with a death toll over 625,000... The country is [averaging over 130,000 new cases/day](#) over the past week... Cases [rose in nearly every state](#) over the past week, with no state seeing a decline in cases... *Wall Street Journal* reported that COVID-19 hospitalizations [among people in their 30s hit a record high](#) (2.5 per 100,000 individuals)... NIH Director Francis Collins warned that the Delta variant is [“going up steeply with no signs of having peaked.”](#)

360 million COVID-19 [vaccine doses have been administered](#) in the US (roughly 823,000/day over the past week)... Nearly 200 million Americans ([70.4% of Americans 12 and older](#) and 91.1% of Americans 65 and older) have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine; 169.6 million Americans are fully vaccinated (59.8% of Americans 12 and older)... More than [one million Americans received a dose of a COVID-19 vaccine on Thursday](#) for the first time in nearly seven weeks.

## Executive and Administrative Action

The Biden Administration [recommended a third dose of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna’s COVID-19 vaccines](#) eight months after a second dose, and will start offering booster shots on September 20<sup>th</sup> to all vaccinated US adults.

CDC [provided \\$47 million to the nonprofit Task Force for Global Health](#) to expand access to COVID-19 and influenza vaccines in developing nations.

The Transportation Security Administration [will extend the mask mandate for air travelers and passengers on public transit](#) to January 18, 2022.

The CDC launched [a Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics](#).

## Healthcare Regulatory News

CMS, in collaboration with CDC, will [issue an emergency regulation requiring all nursing homes to vaccinate their staff](#) against COVID-19 or risk losing Medicare and Medicare funding; the requirement could take effect as soon as September.

## Healthcare Law, Business, and Policy News

A KFF analysis found that [72% of the two largest health insurers in each state and DC](#) have stopped waiving cost-sharing requirements for COVID-19 treatment.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Access to Covid-19 Tools Accelerator [launched a \\$11.5 billion appeal](#) for COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines... WHO and Unitaid urged Roche to ensure existing doses of Actemra, which is being used to treat COVID-19 patients, [are equally available to low- and middle-income](#) countries.

An Axios/Ipsos poll found that [69% of Americans support mandating masks in schools](#), while 64% support state and local government mandates requiring mask wearing in public areas.

Association for Accessible Medicines [urged COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers to license generic/biosimilar companies](#) to manufacture the vaccines in order to help meet global demand.

AMA has [created new billing codes to reimburse providers](#) for administering a third dose of Moderna's or Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine.

### Surveillance, Testing, and Treatment

The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices [unanimously voted in favor](#) of recommending that immunocompromised individuals receive a third COVID-19 shot... The [committee postponed a meeting scheduled for next week](#) to discuss booster shots for all Americans.

Pfizer-BioNTech [submitted early stage clinical trial data to the FDA](#) on the safety and efficacy of a third dose of their COVID-19 vaccine... An Israeli study found that a [booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine can improve immunity](#) for those aged 60 and above.

A UK study found that the [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine loses effectiveness over time](#), dropping from preventing 85% of infections to 75% after 90 days.

Federal officials are exploring reports that [Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine may be linked to a higher risk of heart inflammation](#) in younger adults than previously thought.

CDC released studies finding that with respect to effectiveness of preventing infection, [Pfizer-BioNTech's and Moderna's COVID-19 vaccines dropped](#) from 75% among nursing home residents in March-May to 53% in June-July; that the effectiveness of those vaccines [did not change significantly from March to July](#) at 21 hospitals; and that effectiveness of Pfizer-BioNTech's, Moderna's, and Johnson & Johnson's vaccines [dropped from 92% in early May to 80% at the end of July](#), but effectiveness against hospitalization remained stable.

A *Health Affairs* study concluded that [early uptake of COVID-19 vaccines saved nearly 140,000 lives](#) across the US through early May... A [pre-print study suggests that the Lambda variant could be vaccine resistant](#).

AstraZeneca reported that its [monoclonal antibody treatment was 77% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19](#) in high-risk individuals and that it plans to seek emergency use authorization.