



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

Center for Healthcare Regulatory Insight



February 18, 2022 | Issue 209

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

FDA [approved/tentatively approved 776 generic drug applications](#) in 2021, down from 2020 (948) and 2019 (1,014) totals.

FTC [failed \(2-2\) to pass a motion](#) to probe PBMs' business practices.

HHS [awarded \\$55M to 29 HRSA-funded health centers](#) to increase virtual care access/quality.

CMS is seeking [comments on Medicaid/CHIP access/coverage](#).



## Healthcare law and policy news

The Senate [confirmed](#) (50-46) Robert Califf as FDA Commissioner; Califf [tweeted his priorities](#)... Senate [passed a continuing resolution](#) funding the federal government through March 11.

VillageMD [acquired Healthy Interactions](#)... ChristianaCare [will acquire Crozer Health](#)... BCBS Louisiana must [face class action claims it violated state antitrust laws](#) by honoring negotiated rates from other BCBS affiliates... A [class action suit alleges](#) Hartford Health [engaged in anticompetitive behavior](#); Hartford [denied the allegations](#)... [FTC](#) sued to block the Lifespan-Care New England merger.

STAT reported [more than one-in-four biotech firms that went public in 2020](#) are trading below cash.

A [district court ruled](#) HHS violated procedural rules in [demanding AstraZeneca provide 340B discounts](#) to contract pharmacies... Bristol Myers Squibb became the 14<sup>th</sup> drug manufacturer to [restrict such 340B discounts](#)... A federal appeals court [upheld a ruling](#) prohibiting [Teva's use of generic "skinny labels"](#); Teva [will appeal to the Supreme Court](#).

A [NBER working paper estimated](#) drug copay coupons increase negotiated prices for multiple sclerosis drugs by 8% and increase spending on couponed drugs without generics by up to 30%.

Modern Healthcare reported [state/federal funding to hospital/health systems doubled over the past two years](#), as compared to historical averages... A CDC study found [41% of the 59 million Part D antibiotic prescriptions in 2019 came from the top 10%](#) of prescribers... AHIP [reported costs for Medicare Part B drugs](#) administered in hospitals were an average of \$7,000 more than those purchased through specialty pharmacies.

A [JAMA study found](#) that remote clinical trials with online recruitment resulted in more racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity among study participants... Centivo reported [48% and 37% of individuals](#) with the highest health insurance deductibles skipped/delayed specialist and primary care visits, respectively, due to costs.

"[Excess deaths](#)" in the US since the start of the pandemic [exceed 1 million per CDC](#), including 13 non-COVID causes (e.g., heart disease, hypertension) higher than historical trend.



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

---

[kpmg.com/socialmedia](https://kpmg.com/socialmedia)



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

This email was sent by KPMG LLP, 3 Chestnut Ridge Road, Montvale, NJ 07645

© 2022 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. NDP295619-1A

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 Policy Insight



## COVID-19 by the Numbers

[Over 78 million COVID-19 cases](#) have been documented in the US, with a death toll exceeding 930,000... The country [averaged just over 120,000 cases/day](#) over the past week, down from over 300,000/day just two weeks ago; however, COVID-related deaths remain above 2,000/day.

More than [10.4 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered across 184 countries](#)... Over 548 million COVID-19 [vaccine doses have been administered](#) in the US... Over 252 million Americans ([approximately 81% of Americans 5 and older](#)) have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose; roughly 214 million Americans are fully vaccinated (roughly 69% of Americans 5 and older); over 92 million Americans have received a booster or additional dose (just 43% of those fully vaccinated).

## Executive and Administrative Action

HHS signaled to Congress that it [needs \\$30 billion in additional COVID-19 funding](#) to keep its wide-ranging pandemic response efforts active, including meeting commitments to [increase access to COVID-19 vaccines](#) in low- and middle-income countries... The Administration will [“surge” more than \\$250 million in COVID-19 vaccination support](#) to 11 sub-Saharan countries.

The White House announced it has [shipped 50 million free at-home COVID-19 tests to households](#), about 85% of initial orders.

CDC could [update its indoor masking guidance](#) for states as soon as next week, with [a focus on COVID-19 hospitalization rates](#), not infections, as a guide for adjusting safety protocols... President Biden said it was [“probably premature” to relax indoor mask mandates](#), but that “it’s hard to say whether [governors] are wrong” to begin rolling back requirements.

The Biden Administration did not announce plans to let the public health emergency (PHE) declaration expire ([suggesting that it would be extended again in April](#) if they provide 60-days’ notice as previously promised)... Meanwhile, More than 70 Republican members of Congress asked the [Biden Administration to end the PHE](#) due to the increased availability of vaccines and treatments “so our country can get back to normal;” the Federation of American Hospitals [urged HHS to renew the PHE](#); Medicaid Health Plans of America urged appropriate notice for termination of the PHE (or Congressional action to delay maintenance of effort requirements) to [allow adequate time to prepare for Medicaid coverage redeterminations](#); and eight lobbying organizations, including Medicaid Health Plans of America and AHIP, urged Congress to [provide at least three months’ notice](#) before ending enhanced federal Medicaid funding.

The healthcare worker vaccine mandate [took effect in two dozen states](#) that challenged the policy in court.

## Healthcare Law, Business, and Policy News

Multiple states are [facing backlogs for healthcare workers to receive their licenses](#), preventing additional clinicians from providing needed support to the strained healthcare system.

A CDC studies found [mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy may prevent hospitalization for infants](#) (84% of infants who ended up in the hospital for COVID-19 were born to mothers who had not been vaccinated) and [hospitalizations rates \(7.1 per 100,000\) among children and adolescents were four times higher at the Omicron variant's peak](#), as compared to Delta's peak... A [BMJ study found that people who had COVID-19 were at increased risk](#) of mental health disorders, including anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts.

A Georgetown University report estimated that [6.7 million children could lose Medicaid coverage](#) when PHE-enhanced state Medicaid funding ends.

A [study found](#) pandemic-related unemployment led to a 2.6% decrease in medication adherence and 57.5M fewer prescriptions filled in 2020.

An economic and epidemiologic [model projected](#) that providing doses of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for every person living in lower-middle and low-income countries this year would avert 1.3 million deaths.

Anthem is [partnering with Sidekick Health to create a COVID Concierge Care app](#).

19 House Democrats urged HHS to [collect better data on long COVID-19 in children and increase funding for treatments](#).

An Axios/Morning Consult survey found [22% of healthcare workers considered leaving the industry in January](#); more than 50% of healthcare workers treating COVID-19 patients reported their mental health had gotten worse during the pandemic and more than 60% said their stress level had worsened.

## Surveillance, Testing, and Treatment

FDA cancelled a meeting of its vaccines advisory committee set to [consider authorization of Pfizer/BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine in children under age 5](#) after the agency and companies indicated that they would wait until additional data was available on how well the vaccine worked after a third dose; the additional data is expected in early April, prompting FDA to urge parents to continue taking existing precautions to help prevent spread of the virus, such as masking.

FDA [awarded priority review vouchers to Moderna and BioNTech](#) for their FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines, expediting the review process for future product applications.

BioNTech announced [plans for modular COVID-19 vaccine production hubs](#) in Africa... BioNTech's CEO said an Omicron-targeted COVID-19 vaccine [will not be ready until at least April](#).

FDA [granted emergency use authorization](#) to Eli Lilly's [monoclonal antibody treatment, bebtelovimab](#), believed to be effective against the Omicron variant, for patients with mild to moderate COVID-19.

AstraZeneca was awarded [a \\$855M modification](#) for the manufacture, distribution, and storage of its monoclonal antibody, Evusheld, authorized as a COVID-19 pre-exposure prophylaxis for patients who are unable to receive COVID-19 vaccination, including those with a compromised immune system.