



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 a special supplement.



**Healthcare regulatory news**

A [CMS final rule](#) permits Medicaid to [once again contribute to home health workers' benefits](#), including health insurance and union dues.

[Tennessee](#) and [South Carolina](#) expanded [postpartum Medicaid/CHIP coverage](#) from 60 days to 12 months.

FDA [launched a program to](#) accelerate rare disease therapy development.

HHS presented its appeal to the DC. Circuit regarding its [authority to require drug manufacturers to provide 340B discounts](#) to contract pharmacies.

OIG reported [one-in-four hospitalized Medicare patients experienced adverse events \(12%\) or temporary harm \(13%\)](#) in October 2018.



## Healthcare law and policy news

President Biden released plans to address inflation, including [lowering prescription drug/healthcare costs](#).

House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee [advanced](#) FDA [user fee reauthorization, including Accelerated Approval reforms](#), and [ARPA-H authorization legislation](#).

CDC is [investigating 100+ cases of unexplained Hepatitis](#) among US children.

Department of Justice is [investigating](#) Cerebral for possible Controlled Substances Act violations... Two Ohio counties [are seeking \\$878M](#) from CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart to fund their plan to address the opioid epidemic... Teva and Allergan are [willing to pay more than \\$5B](#) to resolve opioid-related suits... A federal jury ordered Illumina [to pay BGI Genomics \\$333.8M](#) for infringing DNA sequencing system patents.

Advocate Aurora and Atrium [plan to merge into a \\$27B, 67 hospital system](#)... Pfizer [plans to buy the remainder](#) (\$11.6B) of Biohaven... Anthem [completed its acquisition of Integra](#) Managed Care.

STAT reported an [NIH oversight board](#) created in 2006 to improve agency efficiency/effectiveness [stopped meeting seven years ago](#)... Kaiser Health News reported on [inaccuracies, design flaws, and lack of guidance](#) on a [SAMHSA website](#) to help individuals find substance use disorder treatment.

A *JAMA* study found median [prescription drug rebates increased](#) from 2015-2019, reaching 18.7%, 22.3%, and 22% of drug costs for individual, small group, and large group plans, respectively.

Healthcare added [34,000 jobs in April](#), up from 23,300 in March... McKinsey [projected a shortfall of 200,000 to 450,000 nurses](#) (10% gap) for direct patient care by 2025... Kaufman Hall reported median hospital [labor expense/discharge increased 37%](#) from 2019-2022... Major hospital systems are [requesting higher health plan reimbursement](#) to help offset growing nursing salary expenses.

Provisional CDC data show a record [107,622 drug overdose deaths](#) in 2021, [up 15% from 2020](#).



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# COVID-19 News Supplement

Center for Healthcare Policy Insight



## COVID-19 by the Numbers

Approximately [82.2 million COVID-19 cases](#) have been documented in the US, with a [death toll of over 1 million](#)... The country [averaged over 75,000 cases/day](#) over the past week, up from approximately 55,000/day two weeks ago; meanwhile, COVID-related deaths averaged [approximately 325/day](#) over the past week, up from approximately 315/day two weeks ago.

The BA.2 variant accounts for [approximately 56% of COVID-19 cases](#) in the US, while a sub-lineage, BA.2.12.1, accounts for 43% of cases.

More than [11.7 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered across 184 countries](#)... Over 580 million COVID-19 [vaccine doses have been administered](#) in the US... Over 258 million Americans ([approximately 82.7% of Americans 5 and older](#)) have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose; over 220 million Americans are fully vaccinated (70.5% of Americans 5 and older); over 101 million Americans have received a booster or additional dose (just 46.1% of those fully vaccinated).

## Executive and Administrative Action

The White House convened its [second Global COVID-19 Summit](#).. President Biden announced the [NIH will license 11 COVID-19 research tools and early-stage vaccine and diagnostic technologies](#) to the Medicines Patent Pool through the World Health Organization's (WHO) COVID-19 Technology Access Pool... US and world leaders [pledged more than \\$3 billion](#) in new funding to support the global pandemic response.

White House COVID Response Coordinator, Ashish Jha, [predicted a surge of new cases in the fall and winter](#) and said the US was "vulnerable" if Congress does not quickly approve new funding for additional vaccines and treatments... the Administration increased pressure on Congress to provide [\\$22.5 billion in additional emergency COVID-19 funding](#) to prevent upwards of 100 million new cases later in the year.

HHS [urged state governors to start planning](#) for the end of the public health emergency declaration... AMA, AHA, and several other healthcare groups [urged HHS to extend](#) the COVID-19 public health emergency; HHS is expected to make a decision by Monday about whether to extend the PHE.

GAO recommended that [FDA develop a policy for the use of enforcement discretion](#) regarding unauthorized diagnostic tests in future public health emergencies.

## Healthcare Law, Business, and Policy News

After President Biden said he was ["prepared to accept" decoupling](#) of pandemic relief funding and aid for Ukraine, Congress agreed to advance standalone funding to support Ukraine... Biden did say,

however, that without additional COVID-19 relief funding, it “[will be too late to get the tools needed for protection](#)” if the country is hit with new variants in the fall... Senate Democratic leaders suggested they were willing to [allow a vote on keeping Title 42 border restrictions in place in exchange](#) for moving forward the \$10B COVID-19 relief package.

The [U.K. reported](#) almost 1.8 million people (one in 36) were experiencing “long COVID” in March and early April and the odds of reporting related symptoms were 50% lower following likely infection from the Omicron BA.1 variant than likely infection from the Delta strain... A [Lancet study](#) found 55% of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in Wuhan, China had at least one long COVID symptom (e.g., fatigue, sleep difficulties, less ability to exercise, and mental health issues) two or more years after infection.

A KFF analyses concluded that total Medicaid/CHIP [enrollment increased by 15.7M \(22.1%\) from February 2020 to January 2022](#) and projected between [5.3 million and 14.2 million low-income individuals](#) could lose Medicaid coverage after the public health emergency ends and eligibility redeterminations resume.

Leapfrog Group [reported a general decline](#) among several hospital safety measures and [patient experience](#) with inpatient care during the pandemic.

### Surveillance, Testing, and Treatment

The FDA may [accelerate convening its independent vaccine advisory panel](#) on pediatric COVID-19 vaccines should agency evaluations be completed faster than anticipated.

Following [positive clinical trial results](#) in children ages 6 to 11, Moderna [completed requests for FDA authorization of its COVID-19 vaccine in adolescents and children](#) ages six months to six years, six to 11 years, and 12 to 17 years.

Novavax sold [31 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine in Q1](#), a fraction of the 2 billion doses it planned to ship worldwide in 2022.

A Congressional report found [nearly 400 million COVID-19 vaccines have been or will be destroyed](#) at Emergent BioSolutions’ facility due to “failure to meet or maintain quality standards;” the company also hid quality control issues from federal inspectors.

Kaiser Health News [reported on ASPR’s failure](#) to accurately report how many individuals have received Pfizer’s COVID-19 antiviral pill, Paxlovid, and whether the product is reaching vulnerable and underserved populations who may need it most... WHO urged [Pfizer to make Paxlovid more accessible](#) in poorer countries across the world.

FDA approved [Lilly and Incyte’s Olumiant for treatment of COVID-19 in hospitalized patients](#) requiring supplemental oxygen, ventilation, or extracorporeal membrane oxygenation.