



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 [the attached special supplement](#).

Breaking News: Inflation Reduction Act

Following passage by the US Senate over the weekend, the [House of Representatives is expected to pass](#) the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) today, which would, among other things, impose rebates on drug manufacturers raising Medicare prices faster than inflation beginning in 2023, cap Medicare beneficiary insulin costs at \$35/month beginning in 2023, cap beneficiary Part D out-of-pocket costs at \$2,000 beginning in 2025, allow limited Medicare drug price negotiation beginning in 2026, and extend enhanced ACA subsidies through 2025.

Healthcare regulatory news



CMS [suspended Georgia's ACA 1332 waiver](#), which permitted alternatives to using federal enrollment efforts, including Healthcare.gov... CMS [removed prior authorization](#) for [select orthopedic devices](#).

OMB [completed review](#) of FDA's over-the-counter hearing aid final rule.

HHS launched an [environmental justice index](#).

HRSA announced \$60M to [strengthen the rural healthcare workforce](#) and \$88.6M to advance equity through [community health center data modernization](#).

US [surpassed 10,000 confirmed](#) monkeypox cases... FDA [granted emergency use authorization](#) for administering Bavarian Nordic's monkeypox vaccine via intradermal injection, [increasing supply up to five-fold](#).



Healthcare law and policy news

A federal judge [approved BCBS companies' \\$2.67B](#) antitrust settlement... A federal judge [ruled Mylan must face antitrust claims over delaying](#) EpiPen generics... Endo International will [likely file for bankruptcy](#) due to opioid-related lawsuits... A federal judge [found Walgreens liable for fueling](#) the opioid epidemic in San Francisco... A district court [dismissed a suit to overturn](#) the *No Surprises Act*.

Pfizer [plans to acquire Global Blood Therapeutics](#) (\$5B)... HCSC [will acquire Trustmark Health Benefits](#)... CVS is [considering acquiring Signify Health](#)... Availity will [acquire Diameter Health](#)... Catalent plans to [acquire Metrics Contract Services](#) (\$475M)... Amazon will [partner with Ginger to add behavioral health services](#) to its offerings... HCA and Johnson & Johnson [will collaborate](#) on improving health equity in cancer care, enhancing nursing support, and improving patient outcomes... Pfizer is [offering a warranty program](#) for a [rare neurological disorder](#) treatment.

Medical inflation [year-over-year was 5.1%](#) in July, compared to 8.5% economy-wide... Mercer projected 2023 [employer health benefit costs will increase 5.6%](#).

A *Nature* study [found 58% \(218/375\) of infectious diseases worldwide](#), including cholera and malaria, have been aggravated by climate-change-driven extreme weather.

IBM [reported healthcare data breaches cost companies \\$10.1M/breach](#), up 41.6% from 2020.

MACPAC [reported only 3% of individuals](#) got ACA exchange coverage within a year of Medicaid/CHIP disenrollment... CDC [reported just 35%, 23%, and 25% of individuals](#) infected with hepatitis C with private insurance, Medicaid, and Medicare, respectively, receive curative oral treatment; OIG reported 2020 [generic hepatitis C drug coverage/usage was lower among Part D beneficiaries](#) than Medicaid enrollees, resulting in higher Medicare/beneficiary spending.

A [HIMSS survey found 55% and 54% of consumers](#) are willing to use health-related smart watches and fitness tracker apps, respectively.



Questions or comments, please send to
us-hcinsight@kpmg.com.

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COVID-19 News Supplement

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COVID-19 by the Numbers

Over [92.7 million COVID-19 cases](#) have been documented in the US, with the death toll of approximately 1.036 million... As of August 10, 2022, the current 7-day moving average of [daily new cases](#) (103,613) decreased 14% compared with the previous week's 7-day moving average (120,151); the current 7-day moving average of [new deaths](#) (400) has decreased 7% compared with the previous week's 7-day moving average (429)... The 7-day [moving average of hospitalizations](#) with a confirmed case of COVID-19 was 6,003 for the week ending August 9, down 2.6% from the previous week.

As of August 6, the BA.5 variant [accounted for 87.1% of COVID-19 cases](#), up from 84.5% the previous week.

More than [12.4 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered across 184 countries](#)... Over 604 million COVID-19 [vaccine doses have been administered](#) in the US... Approximately 262 million Americans ([approximately 83.6% of Americans 5 and older](#)) have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose; over 223.4 million Americans are fully vaccinated (71.5% of Americans 5 and older); over 107.9 million Americans have received a booster or additional dose (just 48.3% of those fully vaccinated)... Approximately 862,100 children under age 5 have received at least one vaccine dose, out of [nearly 20 million eligible](#) recipients.

Executive and Administrative Action

CDC [loosened COVID-19 guidance](#) to [no longer recommend schools and other institutions screen apparently healthy individuals](#), to de-emphasize social distancing, and to not require unvaccinated individuals to quarantine for five days when potentially exposed to the virus, but not showing symptoms.

The Biden Administration is [reportedly planning to extend the public health emergency](#), currently set to expire October 13, through the midterm elections.

Healthcare Law, Business, and Policy News

A [Pediatrics study found](#) more than 1 in 4 children hospitalized for COVID-19 or MIS-C, the multi-inflammatory syndrome that can follow COVID, had lingering symptoms or impaired activity two to four months later.

An [Annenberg Public Policy Center survey found](#) that, although 54% of Americans personally know someone who has died of COVID-19 and 31% know someone who has experienced long COVID, 54% of Americans rarely or never wear a mask indoors when with people from outside their household and 41% have already returned to their "normal, pre-COVID-19 life" (up from 16% in January).

Surveillance, Testing, and Treatment

BioNTech said its Omicron-adapted COVID-19 vaccine developed with Pfizer [should be ready as early as October](#) for fall booster campaigns.