



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



February 2, 2024 | Issue 307

### Editor's note

*This note is produced every Friday by [KPMG](#) 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](#).*

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### Healthcare regulatory news

CMS released the [2025 Medicare Advantage \(MA\)/Part D Advance Notice](#), proposing a net increase in MA plan payments (3.7%), and [Part D-related Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\) implementation](#) updates (e.g., reducing the out-of-pocket expense cap to \$2,000 and eliminating the Coverage Gap Discount Program)... CMS sent [its initial offer price to pharmaceutical manufacturers](#) for the 10 drugs selected for the first year of the Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program.

CMS announced [increased 2024 Medicare ACO](#) participation, including [19 new](#) Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) ACOs receiving \$20M in Advance Investment Payments to care for rural/underserved populations... CMS announced [sickle cell disease](#) as the initial focus of the Cell and Gene Therapy (CGT) Access Model for testing outcomes-based agreements of cell and gene therapies among Medicaid beneficiaries.

FDA released its [Quality Management System Regulation \(QSMR\) final rule](#) for medical devices aligning to device quality standards set by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

A SAMHSA [final rule](#) makes certain pandemic-related flexibilities permanent, including allowing virtual prescribing of opioid treatments.



## Healthcare law and policy news

HCSC plans to [acquire Cigna's Medicare business](#) (\$3.7B)... Cardinal Health will [acquire Specialty Networks \(\\$1.2B\)](#) to expand its pharmaceutical and specialty segments.

Novo Nordisk to [discontinue US sales of Levemir](#), a long-acting form of Insulin, eight months after the company reduced prices by 65%... Biogen will not seek full FDA approval of its' [Alzheimer's treatment, Aduhelm](#) and will discontinue sales after mixed results in early human trials and price concerns.

A *JAMA* study found COVID-19 contributed to substantial [healthcare workforce turnover](#); average quarterly exit rates increased almost 2% from 2018-2021.

A joint AHIP-BCBS survey found No Surprises Act (NSA) protections [prevented 10M+ surprise medical bills](#) in the first nine months of 2023... A BDO survey found [provider cash reserves](#) remain low despite reported increases in profitability in 2023; less than a third of providers surveyed had more than 60 days cash on hand.

Department of Justice is [investigating use of AI embedded in electronic health records](#) to drive physician prescribing decisions.

[A new CDC report](#) shows syphilis cases increased 17% in 2022, reaching a 70-year high, with largest increases observed in cases of congenital syphilis (31%), leading some health departments to [ration penicillin](#).



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KPMG LLP, 3 Chestnut Ridge Road, Montvale, NJ 07645

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