

The World

Developing Countries Urged to Produce TB Vaccines Locally

Tuberculosis is a widespread, and in many cases fatal, infectious disease which typically attacks the lungs, but which can also affect other parts of the body. It is spread through the air when people who have an active TB infection cough, sneeze, or otherwise transmit respiratory fluids through the air.

But most people infected do not have symptoms, in which case it is referred to as latent tuberculosis. About one in ten latent infections eventually become active which, if left untreated, is fatal for more than 50% of those infected.

"According to the World Health Organisation, 2 billion people, or one-third of the global population, are infected with tuberculosis bacilli, the microbes that cause TB," Ditiu said. "So it's a huge number and we cannot stand passive and just look at it. The problem we have is that consistently over the years, people have not been diagnosed, treated or received proper follow-up and God knows what kind of treatment they take." [Read more](#)

The Nation

Analysis Finds Physician Payment Website Riddled With Errors

Data about drugmakers' payments to doctors within CMS' physician payment website are riddled with errors, *ProPublica/New York Times*' "The Upshot" reports (Ornstein et al., "The Upshot," *ProPublica/New York Times*, 1/22).

Background

In September, CMS launched its Open Payments System, which is required under the Affordable Care Act's Sunshine Act and aims to boost transparency by making public payments health care providers have received from drugmakers and medical device manufactures. The first round of data included payments made between Aug. 1, 2013, and Dec. 31, 2013. Overall, the data showed manufacturers made 4.4 million payments to physicians and teaching hospitals during the time frame valued at \$3.5 billion (*California Healthline*, 9/30/14).

[Read more](#)

Obamacare Drug Coverage Descriptions May Confuse Consumers about Costs, Study Finds

Square peg, round hole. More than a third of silver plans offered on the federal health insurance marketplace may be listing inaccurate or incomplete prescription drug cost-sharing information because their formularies don't fit neatly into the federal government's online template, a recent analysis found.

Healthcare.gov is the online gateway for consumers in 37 states to compare the health plans available to them on the individual market.

The website's prescription drug formulary information is divided into four tiers: generics, preferred brands, non-preferred brands and specialty drugs. The analysis by Avalere Health, a research and consulting organization, found that 35 percent of silver-level plans offered this year on the federally facilitated exchange don't follow this model. [Read more](#)

Rx Trends 2015: Rising Generic Drug Prices

JANUARY 20, 2015 | BY JIM FREDERICK

NEW YORK — Generic drug prices are going up. Spurred by market opportunities, short-term market exclusivity for some newly launched single-source generics and rising costs for manufacturing, quality control and raw materials, me-too drug manufacturers have escalated a series of price hikes, some of them significant.

With copycat medicines now comprising roughly 85% of all prescriptions dispensed in the United States, the impact is significant. “We’re back to double-digit growth that we haven’t seen in 10 years ... because of specialty drugs and price inflation,” said Doug Long, VP industry relations for IMS Health. “There’s a lot of generic price inflation; it’s the No. 1 issue on the minds of many payers.”

For pharmacy retailers, the price inflation is a double-edged sword, offering higher top-line growth but potential snags both in bottom-line profitability and consumer and plan payer resistance. In a report on its 2014 fiscal results, Walgreens Boots Alliance acknowledged the challenge. [Read more](#)

Rx Trends 2015: Specialty Drug Costs

JANUARY 21, 2015 | BY JIM FREDERICK

NEW YORK — With specialty and biotech drugs claiming an ever-greater share of the pharmaceutical market and spawning a backlash from payers and patients over their high price tags, pharmacy operators are smack in the middle of a growing tug of war between the drug industry, the public and private health plans struggling to keep up with the new drug-cost paradigm.

Few question the effectiveness and life-saving potential of breakthrough bio-engineered drugs like Gilead’s \$1,000-a-pill Sovaldi, which not only treats but also can cure hepatitis C. But with “pharmaceutical prices going up tremendously, ... the sustainability of specialty drugs is really in question,” said Dr. Steven Miller, SVP and chief medical officer at Express Scripts.

Health plans are feeling the pinch. “By 2019 or 2020, specialty drugs are expected to represent 50% of plan sponsors’ overall drug spend,” Express Scripts reported. Doug Long, VP industry relations for IMS Health, called the effort to control specialty drug costs “the biggest challenge for managed care between now and the end of the decade.” [Read more](#)

Boehringer Ingelheim's Spiriva Respimat Now Available At Pharmacies

JANUARY 21, 2015 | BY RYAN CHAVIS

RIDGEFIELD, Conn. — Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals on Wednesday announced that its Spiriva Respimat (tiotropium bromide) inhalation spray is now available by prescription through pharmacies across the United States.

The drug was recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat bronchospasm associated with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease — including chronic bronchitis and emphysema — and to reduce exacerbations in COPD patients, the company stated. The company's Spiriva Handihaler (tiotropium bromide inhalation powder) will still be available for patients. [Read more](#)

National Events & CE

[IACP Educational Conference \(February 2015\)](#)

[MHA Business Summit \(March 2015\)](#)

[Armada Specialty Pharmacy Summit \(May 2015\)](#)

[Compounders on Capitol Hill \(June 2015\)](#)

National Websites

[ASCP](#)

[Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#)

[CMS Region IX](#)

[FDA](#)

[FDA Guidance Documents](#)

[IACP](#)

[NASP](#)

[NIOSH List of Antineoplastic and other Hazardous Drugs in Healthcare Settings 2014](#)

[U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)

Webinar-Top Health Industry Issues of 2015 - Tuesday, January 27, 2015, 2:00 PM ET / 11:00 AM PT

In its annual Top health industry issues report, PwC's Health Research Institute (HRI) explores the top 10 trends that are expected to shape the sector in 2015 including insights from a survey of 1,000 U.S. consumers and interviews with health industry leaders. [No CE will be given, but should be informative webinar] [Register](#)

California

Judge Rules on Medi-Cal Backlog Suit, Orders State to Adhere to 45-Day Deadline

On Thursday, an Alameda County Superior Court judge issued a preliminary injunction requiring the state to adhere to a 45-day limit for processing Medi-Cal applications.

The ruling by Judge Evelio Grillo was a victory for health care advocates in a lawsuit over the state's extensive backlog in processing Medi-Cal applications. The Medi-Cal expansion and the first open enrollment period for Covered California brought millions of applications to the door of the Department of Health Care Services, which oversees Medi-Cal.

Computer issues hampered the processing of many of those applications, and in March 2014 the backlog of unprocessed claims peaked at more than 900,000 applications. It took many months to clear the bulk of those applications. Some of them are still hanging fire almost a year later, said Jen Flory, senior attorney in the Sacramento office of the Western Center on Law and Poverty. [Read more](#)

Senate Report: Overhaul California's Long-Term Care System

California uses 112 programs spread across 20 state departments and agencies to provide long-term care for its nearly five million elderly residents. A new state Senate report says that patchwork system needs an overhaul.

Democratic Senator Carol Liu's office sorted and color-coded all those different long-term care programs by department. "It looks like a periodic table, doesn't it?" Liu says.

It does, in fact. And Liu says it's long past time to consolidate a system she calls "shattered." [Read more](#)

UC Officials Outline Plan to Address Growing Mental Health Needs

On Thursday, the University of California's Board of Regents met to discuss efforts to address mental health care needs on the university system's campuses across the state, AP/WBNS reports.

The talks were part of a two-day meeting of the board this week that also included discussions on finances and student athletes (AP/WBNS, 1/21).

Growing Demand for Mental Health Services

Gina Fleming, medical director of student health and counseling at UC's Office of the President, told the board that UC students experiencing anxiety or depression often have to wait weeks before receiving mental health treatment.

In addition, Fleming said the number of students who use the university system's counseling services has increased over the past five years, but the ratio of counselors to students has not increased to meet that demand. [Read more](#)

Optimizing the Quality of In-Home Primary and Palliative Care

For a growing number of functionally limited, seriously ill adults, primary and palliative care must be delivered in the patient's home. However, performance measures do not currently exist to track the quality of medical care provided in the home setting.

With support from CHCF and other funders, researchers with the University of California, San Francisco, and with Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine will test measures that describe the quality of care delivered in the home and develop a data collection tool to enable providers to report on their performance relative to the measures. Reported data can then be used by practices to benchmark their performance and see where they need improvement. [Read more](#)

California Pharmacists Report Progress in Move to Broaden Scope of Practice

Pharmacists are about to finish one phase and start another in the march toward broadening their scope of practice in California to include more primary care services.

Using new guidelines created in a bill signed into state law about a year ago, pharmacists have been retooling regulations to include new duties.

"We're still going through the process of creating additional regulatory framework but we're about to wrap that up at the end of this month," said Jon Roth, CEO of the California Pharmacists Association.

The California Board of Pharmacy, the regulatory agency with oversight authority over the industry in the state, meets Jan. 27-Jan. 28 in Sacramento. Roth hopes new regulations will be approved at that meeting. [Read more](#)

California Hospital News Roundup for the Week of January 23, 2015

Alameda Health System

Atlantic Philanthropies has awarded the Alameda Health System a three-year, \$10 million grant to support its youth development programs for introducing underprivileged kids in Oakland to health care careers, [according to a health system release](#).

The money will be used to expand workforce development programs at the health system's Highland Hospital and Trauma Center and boost a partnership with the Emergency Medical Technicians and Health Coach programs at Alameda County's Health Care Services Agency (AHS release, 1/22).

Daughters of Charity Health System

California Attorney General Kamala Harris (D) has been given an extension to decide whether to approve or reject the contentious sale of six safety-net hospitals operated by Daughters of Charity Health System to Prime Healthcare Services, the *San Jose Mercury News* reports. Harris now has until Feb. 20 to make a decision. [Read more](#)

California State Board of Pharmacy News

The BoP will hold its first of the year board meeting on January 27 and 28 in Sacramento, CA. Of importance (among several agenda items) is a legislative proposal from the Communication and Public Education Committee to introduce legislation that would have additional translation mandates. You may read the proposed language in the PDF attached below.



Draft Translation
legislation_BoP_2015.

State Net Capitol Journal

News and Views from around the 50 states.



sncj_011915.pdf

CA Events & CE

STERILE COMPOUNDING New Laws and Regulations-Western University-March 2015

For more information [click here](#)

West Coast Pharmacy Exchange April 2015

For more information [click here](#)

SEMINAR 2015 (October) [click here](#)

California State Board of Pharmacy

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians may earn 6 hours of CE for attending the entire day of a board of pharmacy meeting; and 2 hours of CE for each committee meeting. Please go to www.pharmacy.ca.gov for the meeting schedule.

California State Department Websites

[CAL MediConnect](#)

[California Department of Health Care Services](#)

[California Department of Insurance](#)

[California Department of Managed Health Care](#)

[California Department of Public Health](#)

[California Department of Workers' Compensation](#)

[California State Board of Pharmacy](#)

CA Legislation

While the Legislature reconvened the 2014-2015 Legislative session on January 5, 2015 (now referred to in the Daily File as the 2015-2016 session), the majority of bills will not be introduced and in print until late February. Consequently, in March the CCAP Legislative Committee will review the relevant bills and recommend positions to the board of directors.

You may always learn more information by logging onto www.leginfo.ca.gov

P.O. Box 582222 Elk Grove, California 95758 Phone: 916-647-6167