

# ACR DAILY NEWS SCAN

Prepared exclusively for  
members of



Today's News for the American College of Radiology from Newspapers, TV, Radio & Journals

November 7, 2012

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## Leading the News

### Obama's Reelection Ensures Affordable Care Act Will Remain.

In its front-page story on Obama's reelection, the [New York Times](#) (11/7, A1, Zeleny, Rutenberg, Subscription Publication) reports, "For Mr. Obama, the result brings a ratification of his sweeping health care act, which Mr. Romney had vowed to repeal. The law will now continue on course toward nearly full implementation in 2014, promising to change significantly the way medical services are administered nationwide." President Obama's victory and Democrats' retention of the Senate majority ensures that "ObamaCare is here to stay."

In its front-page story, the [Washington Post](#) (11/7, Farenthold) reports "Obama's victory seems to guarantee that the landmarks of his first term," like the Affordable Care Act, "will remain in effect."

In a separate report, while acknowledging that "Obama's re-election ensures the survival of his landmark health care law," [Kaiser Health News](#) (11/7, Galewitz) says that the states represent another potential obstacle to its full implementation. Kaiser notes that "predominantly Republican state officials will get a big say in how it is carried out."

**Exit Polls Show Voters Divided Over Affordable Care Act.** In the [New York Times](#) (11/7) "Campaign Stops" blog, Thomas B. Edsall writes, "One surprise: the survey of voters as they leave polling places around the country suggests that Obamacare was not the albatross for Democrats that many thought it would be." Edsall notes, "Forty-seven percent of voters said they would like to see the law remain as is on the books or expanded, two percentage points more than the 45 percent who said the law should be fully or partially repealed."

[The Hill](#) (11/7, Viebeck) "Healthwatch" blog also reports on the exit poll figures, writing, "Voters remain divided on President Obama's signature healthcare law." The Hill adds, "Exit polls found an almost even split between supporters and opponents of the health law Tuesday." The Hill also notes that "healthcare was first in the minds of 17 percent of voters."

**HHS Expected To Release Major ACA Regulations Soon.** The [National Journal](#) (11/7, Sanger-Katz, Subscription Publication) reports, "While Congress wrangles over the fiscal cliff and scrambles to find money for the perennial 'doc fix' payment formula problem, the professional staff at the Health and Human Services and Treasury departments are also expected to have a full plate, with legislative deadlines for implementing health reform looming and many of the political considerations that slowed regulatory release before the election now off the table." The article lists several "rules likely in the coming month," which include those focusing on insurance exchanges, essential health benefits, and Medicaid expansion.

[Medscape](#) (11/7, Lowes) reports on Obama's victory, focusing on the challenges he will face in his second term and how they will impact the healthcare industry. Some upcoming issues affecting the medical industry include the fiscal cliff and implementing the Affordable Care Act. Medscape notes that if sequestration goes through, Medicare reimbursements will be cut by two percent across the board. It also will trigger a SGR cut of 26.5% to Medicare reimbursement for physicians. Medscape adds that soon key provisions of the ACA will begin, such as the individual mandate and Medicaid eligibility expansion. [WebMD](#) (11/7, Zamosky) looks further into the effects Obama's second term will have on the medical industry.

**Missouri Adopts Limit On Insurance Exchanges.** [The Hill](#) (11/7, Viebeck) "Healthwatch" blog reports, "Voters in Missouri approved a measure Tuesday that will hamper its governor's ability to implement President Obama's healthcare law." The new law "will prohibit the governor from creating an insurance exchange unless the move is authorized by the state legislature or by a ballot

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initiative." The Hill notes that the measure's approval, combined with the makeup of the statehouse, "all but ensures that Missouri will have a federally run exchange."

## From the American College of Radiology

### Upcoming ACR Meetings

#### ACR Annual Meeting on Quality & Safety

Feb. 15-16, 2013

InterContinental Montelucia Resort & Spa  
Scottsdale, AZ

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#### RLI Expedition

Feb. 22-24, 2013

Magnolia Hotel  
Dallas, TX

[Register today ...](#)

#### ACR 6th Annual PET/CT Symposium

Feb. 28-March 1, 2013

The Ritz-Carlton Chicago  
Chicago, IL

[Register today ...](#)



## ACR News

### International Day Of Radiology – Let's Celebrate Together!

International Day of Radiology is tomorrow. Help us celebrate by taking a picture of your hand with the iconic 'ring' and uploading it to Instagram using the hashtag #IDoR2012. Instagram is free and available for download on your smart phone. Just search for the Instagram application in your app store to download. For detailed instructions, please visit the [IDoR Facebook page](#).

### Help Spread the Word: Online Communications Toolkit for International Day of Radiology.

Help spread the word about the first annual International Day of Radiology - Nov. 8, 2012, with free customizable materials from the ACR. The online toolkit includes op-eds, press releases, e-news articles and print and electronic advertisements for you and your facilities to use. [Access the toolkit now ...](#)

## Diagnostic Radiology

### Imaging Center Reduces CT Radiation Dose By Up To 90%.

[Aunt Minnie](#) (11/7, Barnes) reports, "A San Diego imaging center was able to reduce CT radiation dose by as much as 90% using a combination of dose reduction strategies with or without iterative reconstruction techniques, thus minimizing patient risk, researchers wrote in the November Journal of the American College of Radiology." Focusing "on CT scans of the chest, abdomen, and pelvis because these are the most frequently performed studies, as well as the ones with the highest radiation dose," radiologists at the "center ended up revising every one of its CT imaging protocols using one or more of the following techniques: decreased peak kilovoltage," low-dose automatic dose modulation, decreased coverage length, pitch, and iterative reconstruction and noise reduction software. Other tips include limitations on "multiphase and double scans, and use [of] low-dose scans

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for follow-up and CT-guided biopsies."

## **Amyloid May Be Present Even Without Memory Problems.**

[Medscape](#) (11/7, Anderson) reports, "Approximately 30% of healthy people in their mid-70s without memory problems nevertheless have amyloid on brain imaging, according to the latest results from the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative (ADNI)," according to research presented at the Clinical Trials on Alzheimer's Disease (CTAD) 2012 conference in Monaco. "From more than 1000 amyloid scans obtained to date, researchers have also determined that about 60% of participants with MCI [mild cognitive impairment] have amyloid in the brain and that 20% to 30% of these develop Alzheimer's disease (AD) dementia. Few participants with MCI without brain amyloid convert to AD, they report."

## **Brain Anatomy May Be Factor In PTSD In Veterans.**

[HealthDay](#) (11/7, Preidt) reports, "In combat veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD], the area of the brain that controls fear and anxiety responses is much smaller than normal," according to a study published Nov. 5 in the journal Archives of General Psychiatry. "For the study, MRI brain scans were conducted on 200 combat veterans, half with PTSD and half without, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. MRI brains scans of the participants showed that both the right and left amygdala were smaller in those with PTSD."

[MedPage Today](#) (11/7, Bankhead) reports, "Amygdala volumes were not associated with the chronicity of PTSD, degree of trauma experienced/reported, or depression severity." The study authors concluded, "The lack of correlation between trauma load or illness chronicity and amygdala volume suggests that a smaller amygdala represents a vulnerability to developing PTSD or the lack of a dose-response relationship with amygdala volume." The study was funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

## **Analysis: Imaging Market Growth To Reach \$4.5B By 2017.**

[Healthcare IT News](#) (11/7, Miliard) reports that despite "reimbursement cuts and radiation dosing concerns," growth in the volume of procedures will help the US "diagnostic imaging system market increase to roughly \$4.5 billion through 2017," according to an analysis released by the Millennium Research Group. In the report titled, "US Markets for Diagnostic Imaging Systems," MRG concluded that a "few more premium priced imaging sectors - most notably specialized ultrasound systems and nuclear medicine - will show much stronger growth over this period." MRG researchers explained that the "comparatively low cost of ultrasound systems means that cost-cutting measures have less effect on their purchases, and this segment will continue to grow, reaching a value of \$1.8 billion by 2017, with particular growth in cardiology, radiology and emerging applications."

### **Radiation Oncology, Interventional Radiology, and Therapeutic Radiology**

## **Doxepin Rinse May Reduce Mouth Pain In Cancer Patients After RT.**

[Aunt Minnie](#) (11/7, Keen) reports, "When used as a rinse, doxepin, a tricyclic antidepressant, reduces oral mucositis pain in patients who receive radiation therapy (RT) for head and neck cancer, according to research from the Mayo Clinic presented at the recent American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) annual meeting." In a 155-patient study, "the rinse significantly decreased pain from mouth sores, a debilitating side effect caused by radiation, the researchers concluded."

## **Study: PFNs On CT Most Likely Benign.**

[Health Imaging](#) (11/7, Godt) reports, "Despite growth that typically represents malignancy, pulmonary periphery nodules (PFNs) are almost certainly benign and likely represent lymph nodes, according to a study published in the November issue of the journal Radiology." To assess the malignancy rate of PFNs in asymptomatic smokers, the researcher analyzed data from the "Dutch-Belgian Randomised Lung Cancer Multi-Slice Screening Trial" which included "2,994 current or former heavy smokers, aged 50-74," who had "CT screening for lung cancer." The study team found that at "baseline, 4,026 nodules were detected in 1,729 participants," with nearly 20 percent of the nodules "classified as PFNs." However, none of the PFNs (mean size 4.4 mm) were "found to be malignant during follow-up, even though more than 15 percent were found to have grown."

### **Economic And Health Policy**

## **Medicare Provides More Exemptions For E-Prescribing Rule.**

In continuing coverage, [MedPage Today](#) (11/7, Pittman) reports that Medicare, in its 2013 physician fee schedule, "provided two additional categories of hardship exemptions from its electronic prescribing rule." This means that "doctors and practices who achieve meaningful use of electronic health records by June 30, 2013 and those who demonstrate intent to use electronic health records (EHRs) can apply for an exemption from reimbursements cuts slated to start next year."

### Over 300,000 Physicians Have Signed Up For EHR Incentive Program.

[Modern Healthcare](#) (11/7, Conn, Subscription Publication) reports, "More than 300,000 physicians and other eligible professionals have signed up to participate in the federal electronic health-record system incentive payment programs, while more than 4,000 hospitals have enrolled in the Medicare EHR incentive program, the Medicaid incentive program or both," according to [CMS' report through September](#). In all, "\$7.7 billion has been paid out in what has been estimated will be \$27 billion in incentive payments through the lives of the two programs."

### Lifespan To Implement Full-System IT Infrastructure.

[Health Imaging](#) (11/7) reports that to "balance the image management needs across departments, meet the daily demands of access to full clinical information...with an eye on future participation in the Accountable Care initiative," Providence, Rhode Island-based Lifespan is "embarking on a multi-year journey to leverage IT infrastructure as a strategic asset and utilize a combination of an enterprise vendor neutral archive coupled with archive neutral PACS for radiology, cardiology, endoscopy and other departments." This approach will enable the "five-hospital system," to develop and "manage a defined architecture, while supporting autonomy at the department level." At present, Lifespan manages "more than 500,000 radiology and cardiology exams" annually.

### Survey: Primary Care Physician Hiring Grows More Challenging.

[American Medical News](#) (11/7, Elliott) reports, "A greater number of older patients has increased demand for primary care doctors while an aging physician population has dampened the supply"; and the "situation, amplified by a growing emphasis on primary care services, is making primary care physician jobs more difficult to fill," according to the Association of Staff Physician Recruiters' annual benchmarking report. The survey of "recruiters with hospitals, health systems and large medical groups" revealed that primary care physician "positions took 151 days to fill in 2011, up from 125 in 2010 and 115 in 2009." The article points out that "family physicians, internists and hospitalists were in the top five of requested medical professionals" in the ASPR's survey; and "filling out the top five were nurse practitioners and physician assistants." Recruiters say "difficulties are primarily a result of an aging population - both patients and physicians."

## Tuesday's Lead Stories

- [Researchers Find Earliest-Ever Warning Signs of Alzheimer's.](#)
- [International Day Of Radiology – Let's Celebrate Together!](#)
- [ECRI 2013 Hazards List Includes Medical Imaging Radiation.](#)
- [Meningitis Outbreak: Death Toll Rises To 30; Case Count To 419.](#)
- [Sources: HHS To Probe Costly Radiation Therapy Referrals.](#)
- [Some Physicians Hesitant About Using EHRs.](#)

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