

Health Policy

States Find Consumers Are Wary Of Healthcare Exchanges.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/8, Radnofsky, Subscription Publication) reports that as states attempt to set up the insurance exchanges that are a key part of President Obama's healthcare law, they are finding that many people do not know what an exchange is and are skeptical of them. The Journal notes that states have hired consultants and are considering alternatives to including using a word other than "exchange" to describe their program.

Reform Advocates Say Uninsured Will Suffer If States Don't Expand Medicaid.

In an [NBC News](#) (8/8) online "Vitals" column, Maggie Fox writes that states which expand their Medicaid programs will "have to start kicking in a small percentage after a few years," and some governors "say they'll have to slash education or other programs, or raise taxes," to be able to cover the additional enrollees. Fox notes Republican governors in Florida, Louisiana and Texas have already "said they'd be opting out," GOP governors in Virginia and Wisconsin "are on the fence," and even some Democratic governors are wavering. But Sen. Darrell Jackson (D-SC) says the "legislation was crafted" to help states "like South Carolina," which has a "substantial portion of working people who cannot afford health insurance." And healthcare reform advocates argue that states incur higher costs "when people go without regular healthcare and wait for an emergency to get care."

Lawmakers Warn Budget Sequester Would Limit Medical Research.

The [AP](#) (8/7, Cassata) reports, "Republicans and Democrats are sounding the alarm: The budget sequester is coming and we have to do everything to stop it." Otherwise, about "\$110 billion in cuts kick in Jan. 2." Defense Secretary Leon Panetta "says it will be devastating to the military," manufacturers say "tens of thousands of jobs" will be lost, and the White House "fears cuts in everything from cancer research to the number of FBI agents." Earlier this month, Acting Office of Management and Budget Director Jeff Zients told Congress that the sequester "could mean 100,000 children lose their place in Head Start while food safety and workplace safety inspections are reduced"; and he said the "National Institutes of Health would have to curtail research."

Medicaid, Other Fraud Penalties Surge As Charges Against Executives Dwindle.

On the front page of its Business Day section, the [New York Times](#) (8/8, B1, Schmidt, Wyatt, Subscription Publication) reports, "Pharmaceutical companies, military contractors, banks and other corporations are on track to pay as much as \$8 billion this year to resolve charges of defrauding the government." Settlements for "civil charges of fraud against the government" and for the recovery of state money attributed to Medicaid fraud are "ballooning." At the same time, however, the collections are "resurrecting questions about the relative lack of charges against executives at the companies that are getting the stiffest penalties." Although the DOJ "collected \$8.6 billion over the last three years, more than in any similar period in history," the biggest settlements resulted in "relatively few prosecutions of individuals."

Business In Medicine

Study: Safety-Net Hospitals Need To Adjust Business Model To Prepare For ACA.

[The Hill](#) (8/8, Baker) "Healthwatch" blog reports, "Hospitals that primarily serve low-income patients and underserved areas are facing a major financial risk from the sluggish economy and President Obama's healthcare law, a new study says." The study, "conducted by the Commonwealth Fund, says safety-net hospitals need to adjust their business practices to avoid taking a big financial hit." The research is "based on financial data from 150 urban hospitals that served a high share of Medicaid patients or minorities."

[CQ](#) (8/8, Subscription Publication) reports on that study, as well as another study that "examined the way that five safety net hospitals are coping with changes in the health care system." According to CQ, "Officials with the hospitals reported that health information technology and integrated systems of care improved their ability to withstand lower levels of government funding. Integrated care gave the hospitals increased purchasing power, the authors said." Both studies were published in Health Affairs.

In Today's Journals

Study: Number Of Children With High Cholesterol Declining.

A study on cholesterol levels in children received substantial coverage, both in print and online, as well as on a national news broadcast. [NBC Nightly News](#) (8/7, story 8, 0:20, Williams) reported that "the number of children with high cholesterol levels has gone down in the past ten years."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (8/8, Healy) reports, "The proportion of young people ages six to 19 with high total cholesterol dropped 28% between the two time periods sampled in the report, from 11.3% in 1988-94 down to 8.1% in 2007-10, the new study found." Meanwhile, "the average American teen's levels of 'good' HDL cholesterol, 'bad' LDL cholesterol and triglycerides -- dangerous fats that circulate in the bloodstream and slowly clog arteries -- improved too."

The [Huffington Post](#) (8/8, Chan) reports, "The new [study](#)," published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, "included 16,116 children and teens between ages six and 19, who were part of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey between 1988 and 1994, 1999 and 2002, or 2007 and 2010."

Grapefruit Juice May Increase Anti-Cancer Effects Of Sirolimus.

On its website, [Fox News](#) (8/8, Grush) reports, "A new study from the University of Chicago Medicine revealed patients taking sirolimus receive more of its anti-cancer benefits if they drink a glass of grapefruit juice every day along with the drug."

On its website, [NBC News](#) /LiveScience (8/8, Wanjek) reports that investigators "conducted a study on 138 people with incurable cancers to determine an ideal dose." One "third received only sirolimus; a third took sirolimus with eight ounces of grapefruit juice; and a third took sirolimus with another drug, called ketoconazole, which also increases sirolimus' absorption." The investigators "found that the optimal cancer-fighting dose for those taking only sirolimus was about 90 mg per week, twice as high as the side-effect threshold."

On its website, the [ABC News](#) (8/8, Lupkin) "Medical Unit" blog reports that the juice increased "sirolimus levels by 350 percent and lowering the necessary doses from 90 mg per week to between 25 and 35 mg per week."

[HealthDay](#) (8/8, Reinberg) points out that "early studies suggest that sirolimus may have tumor-fighting effects. Derivatives of the drug are used in kidney cancer and breast cancer." The study, which received funding from the National Institutes of Health, was published in Clinical Cancer Research.

Also in the News

McCaughey Urges Repeal Of Healthcare Law's Entitlement Provisions.

In an op-ed for the [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/8, Subscription Publication) Betsy McCaughey a former Lieutenant governor of New York, and author of "The Obama Health Law: What It Says and How to Overturn It," urges repeal of the expansion of Medicare and the subsidies for people purchasing private insurance created under the President's healthcare law. McCaughey argues that to reduce spending, the nation needs entitlement reform, and repealing these two entitlements is a good place to start.

Tuesday's Lead Stories

- [Sebelius Says Medicare Drug Premium To Remain The Same In 2013.](#)
- [HCA Discloses Federal Probe Of Cardiology Procedures.](#)
- [Choose The Best Procedure Or Treatment.](#)
- [ACA Decision Said To Give States Chance To Change Basic Medicaid Coverage.](#)

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