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## Daily Health News Report

From the GGHP Communications Department



### CALIFORNIA WATCH

MARCH 7, 2016

#### California Health Report: Breathing Air into Asthma Prevention in Long Beach

When Olga Santana's 7-year-old daughter, Emma, had trouble breathing during a serious asthma attack—something that would happen about every three weeks—she would take her to the emergency room for costly treatment. The visits to the hospital stopped, however, when Santana, a mother of six, made a few changes to her home that made a big difference to her daughter's health. She swapped her rug for a mat and switched out drapes for blinds to minimize particulates in the air. She also made the house fragrance-free and hypoallergenic. ... Santana knew what changes to make after Maria Garcia, a community health worker with the Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma, came to her door last year. For more than a decade, Garcia has been one player in a dedicated network of local government agencies, childrens' clinics and community health organizations in Long Beach that have been tenacious—and successful—in identifying and treating the disproportionately high number of residents who suffer from asthma in the seaside city. Now, their main source of funding, the Port of Long Beach, is drying up, even as air quality in the Los Angeles-Long Beach area was rated among the worst in nation, according to the American Lung Association's 2015 State of the Air Report. (Portner, 3/7)

#### California Healthline: State Regulator Cites Price, Access as Top Concerns in Proposed Anthem-Cigna Merger

Health care access, quality and affordability will be among the top concerns for the state's Department of Managed Health Care as it vets the proposed \$54 billion merger of insurance giant Anthem Inc. and rival Cigna Corp., the department's director, Shelley Rouillard, said during a public hearing in Sacramento Friday. Those questions, as well as the handling of grievances and appeals, "are serious issues that I personally feel very strongly about," Rouillard said. "That's something we'll be in discussions with the plans about going forward." (Ibarra, 3/7)

#### California Health Report: The Dementia Dilemma: California Prepares to Handle Influx of Alzheimer's Cases

By the year 2030 when the last of the Baby Boomers turns 65, the number of Californians ages 65 and older is expected to increase to almost 9 million. And as the state experiences a "silver tsunami," the number of older residents with Alzheimer's disease is also expected to significantly grow. Currently there are 588,208 Californians living with Alzheimer's disease; by 2030 this number is expected to grow to more than 1.1 million. Within the next two decades, the Alzheimer's Association says the degenerative brain disease will not only pose an increased public health threat to the state, it will also disproportionately affect certain ethnic groups. Compared to whites, blacks have twice the risk of developing Alzheimer's and Latinos have 1.5 times the risk. (Childers, 3/7)

#### The Ventura County Star: Ventura County Mental Health Advocates Continue Support for Laura's Law

It might not be as wide-ranging as some had hoped, but passing even a pilot Laura's Law program will go a long way toward helping a population that can't or won't seek the help it needs. That's the assessment of several mental health advocates and providers who hope the Ventura County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approves the program aimed at getting treatment to people with severe mental illness. Laura's Law became state law in 2002, but it's up to each county to fund and develop its own program. The law is named after Laura Wilcox, who was fatally shot by a mentally ill man who had refused medication and other treatment. (Martinez, 3/5)



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### **CAMPAIGN 2016**

#### **The Washington Post: Mental Health Patients to Bernie Sanders: Don't Compare Us to The GOP Candidates**

Mental health was mentioned twice during Sunday's Democratic presidential debate. First, in connection to mass shootings. "I don't want to hear anything about tougher laws for mental health or criminal backgrounds, because that doesn't work," Gene Knopf, the father of 14-year-old shooting victim Abigail Knopf, asked in a question to former secretary of state Hillary Clinton and Sen. Bernie Sanders (Vt.), both of whom responded with calls for gun control. Second, in a jab at the Republican presidential candidates. "You know, we are, if elected president, going to invest a lot of money into mental health," Sanders said. "And when you watch these Republican debates, you know why we need to invest in that." (Wang, 3/7)

#### **Kaiser Health News: TrumpCare Takes It on the Chin**

There may finally be one thing Republicans hate more than ObamaCare: TrumpCare. The GOP front-runner, after weeks of talking in vague terms about his plans for the health care system, put out a seven-point proposal Wednesday night. But within hours, Republican opinion leaders in health care were already piling on. "It has the look and feel of something that a 22-year-old congressional staffer would write for a backbencher based on a cursory review of Wikipedia," wrote Avik Roy, the opinion editor at Forbes who has advised several GOP presidential candidates on health policy, including Mitt Romney in 2012. (Rovner, 3/4)

### **HEALTH LAW ISSUES AND IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **The New York Times: Health Law Insurance Plans to be Rated by Network Size**

The Obama administration, responding to consumer complaints, says it will begin rating health insurance plans based on how many doctors and hospitals they include in their networks. At the same time, the maximum out-of-pocket costs for consumers under the Affordable Care Act will increase next year to \$7,150 for an individual and \$14,300 for a family, the administration said. Consumer advocates said those costs could be a significant burden for middle-income people who need a substantial amount of care. Under new rules to be published Tuesday in the Federal Register, insurers will still be allowed to sell health plans with narrow networks of providers. But consumers will know in advance what they are getting because the government will attach a label indicating the breadth of the network for each plan sold on HealthCare.gov. (Pear, 3/6)

### **PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION**

#### **Capital Public Radio: Can't Get In to See Your Doctor? Many Patients Turn to Urgent Care**

Though the majority of Americans have a primary care doctor, a large number also seek treatment at urgent care centers, statistics show. For many people, the centers have become a bridge between the primary care doctor's office and the hospital emergency room. Urgent care is not meant for life-threatening emergencies, such as a heart attack, stroke or major trauma, doctors say. But it is designed to treat problems considered serious enough to be seen that day — conditions like a cut finger, a sprained ankle, severe sore throat, or the sort of infection 25-year-old Dominique Page recently experienced. (Neighmond, 3/7)



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### **The Associated Press: Evidence of Zika's Risk to Pregnant Women Continues to Grow**

Researchers report that the Zika virus may be linked to a wider variety of "grave outcomes" for developing babies than previously reported — threats that can come at any stage of pregnancy. The findings released Friday are preliminary results from the first study tracking pregnant women in Brazil from the time they were infected, and do not prove that Zika is to blame. But they come as separate laboratory research released Friday strengthens the case that Zika causes a serious birth defect called microcephaly — babies born with abnormally small heads — by targeting embryonic brain cells. (3/5)

### **Los Angeles Times: Supreme Court Majority Blocks Louisiana Law Restricting Abortion Providers**

The Supreme Court handed abortion rights advocates a victory Friday by blocking a Louisiana law they said would leave the state with only one doctor licensed to perform the procedure. The court, with only Justice Clarence Thomas dissenting, issued a brief order that restores an earlier judicial ban on enforcing the 2014 state law. The ruling is a good sign for abortion rights groups in Louisiana and nationwide. Coming shortly after the justices debated a similar Texas law, the order indicates a majority of the high court is unwilling to permit conservative states to enforce stringent regulations, at least for now. (Savage, 3/4)

## **EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS**

### **The New York Times: Raise the Legal Age for Cigarette Sales to 21**

California could soon raise the legal age for buying cigarettes and other tobacco products to 21, from 18. That change could help prevent many young people from becoming addicted and reduce premature deaths from lung cancer and other tobacco-related diseases. ... The biggest reason to raise the legal age to 21 is to reduce young people's access to tobacco when they are more likely to become addicted and when their brains are still developing. Studies have found that nicotine, the main addictive ingredient in cigarettes, can impair cognition among young people. About 90 percent of adult smokers first use cigarettes before turning 19, and almost all smokers start before age 26, according to an Institute of Medicine study published last year. (3/5)

### **The New York Times: Paying Employees To Lose Weight**

If your employer offered you \$550 to lose weight, an amount that would be deducted from your health insurance premiums next year, would that provide the motivation to help you finally shed those pounds? Roughly four out of five large employers in the United States now offer some sort of financial incentive to employees to improve their health. The Affordable Care Act has encouraged the creation of such programs by significantly increasing the amount of money, in the form of a percentage of insurance premiums, that employers can reward (or take away) to improve factors such as body mass index, blood pressure and cholesterol, as well as for ending tobacco use. These programs make intuitive sense. But do they work? (Mitesh S. Patel, David A. Asch and Kevin G. Volpp, 3/4)

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### CALIFORNIA WATCH

MARCH 8, 2016

#### **California Healthline: State Finalizing Plans to Close Centers for the Severely Disabled**

The final countdown has begun for the last of three large state-run institutions that care for the severely disabled: In less than six years, almost all of their residents are likely to be transferred to other settings. The public comment period ended last week on a plan to move 776 patients currently housed at the three development centers into smaller community-based homes. The state expects the move to save it roughly \$250 million a year. (Gorn, 3/8)

#### **Los Angeles Times: Deadly Superbugs from Hospitals Get Stronger in the Sewers and Could End Up in the Pacific Ocean**

Every day Southern California hospitals unleash millions of gallons of raw sewage into municipal sewers. The malodorous muck flows miles to one of the region's sewage plants, where it is treated with the rest of the area's waste and then released as clear water into a stream or directly to the Pacific. Scientists at the Environmental Protection Agency recently announced they had discovered a lethal superbug — the same one that caused outbreaks at UCLA and two other Los Angeles-area hospitals — in sewage at one of those plants. They declined to name the facility. (Petersen, 3/7)

### CAMPAIGN 2016

#### **The New York Times: Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton Draw Sharp Questions at Fox News Forum**

The night after a testy Democratic debate, Senator Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton had the chance to confront another adversary: Fox News. ... Pressed on his budget-busting plans for universal health care, Mr. Sanders reiterated his belief that health care is a right for all people. "Excuse me, where does that right come from, in your mind?" Mr. Baier asked. "Being a human being," Mr. Sanders replied, "being a human being." (Chozick, 3/7)

### MARKETPLACE

#### **STAT: Inside the \$100 Million Ad Blitz for a \$1,100-a-Pill Drug for Hepatitis C**

A \$100 million ad blitz has whipped up patient demand for Harvoni, the \$1,100-a-pill hepatitis C treatment, even as the drug's price has drawn a barrage of lawsuits, state investigations, and sharp condemnation from members of Congress. STAT analyzed data from media research firms for the most detailed look to date at the aggressive consumer marketing strategy for Harvoni, made by Gilead Sciences of Foster City, Calif. (Robbins, 3/8)

#### **Kaiser Health News: Retail Clinics Add Convenience but Also Hike Costs, Study Finds**

Retail clinics, long seen as an antidote to more expensive doctor offices and emergency rooms, may actually boost medical spending by leading consumers to get more care, a new study shows. Rather than substituting for a physician office visit or trip to the hospital, 58 percent of retail clinic visits for minor conditions represented a new use of medical services, according to the study published Monday in the journal *Health Affairs*. Those additional visits led to a modest increase in overall health care spending of \$14 per person per year. (Terhune, 3/8)



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### WOMEN'S HEALTH

#### **KPCC: Postpartum Depression Often Overlooked or Misdiagnosed in New Moms**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says one in ten women experience symptoms of it within a year after giving birth. But a lot of women and their doctors simply don't catch it, experts say. Earlier this year, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force for the first time recommended depression screening for all pregnant and postpartum women as part of its screening guidelines. Mental health experts applaud the decision and say they hope it will help break down some of the barriers that still prevent women like Bloomfield from getting help for depression during and after pregnancy. (Plevin, 3/8)

#### **The New York Times: Unplanned Pregnancies Hit Lowest Level in 30 Years**

The rate of unintended pregnancy in the U.S. has declined to its lowest level in the last three decades. The level in 2008 was 54 per 1,000 women and girls aged 15 to 44. By 2011, it was 45 per 1,000. Of the 6.1 million pregnancies in 2011, 2.8 million were unintended. A recent analysis in The New England Journal of Medicine found variations in rates of unintended pregnancy by income, race, ethnicity, education and age. (Bakalar, 3/7)

#### **The Sacramento Bee: Latinas' Cancer Risk Rises with Meat Eating, Study Suggests**

In one of the few studies to analyze meat consumption among Latinas, researchers from the University of Southern California discovered that Latinas may be more likely than white women to develop cancer from eating processed meats such as sausage and bacon. In the study, Latinas who consumed about 20 grams of processed meat per day (the equivalent of a strip of bacon) were 42 percent more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer compared with Latinas who ate no or little processed meats, according to a USC news release. (Caiola, 3/7)

#### **The New York Times: Hopeful Start for First Uterus Transplant Surgery in U.S.**

A 26-year-old woman from Texas, became the first in the United States to receive a uterus transplant, in a nine-hour operation here at the Cleveland Clinic. Born without a uterus, she hopes the transplant will enable her to become pregnant and give birth. (Grady, 3/7)

### PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

#### **Capital Public Radio: Medicaid Rules Can Thwart Immigrants Who Need Dialysis**

In most states, including Indiana, hospitals can't bill Emergency Medicaid until they know for sure they're dealing with an emergency. So for kidney disease, doctors will often wait until there are dangerous levels of potassium in the blood or fluid in the lungs — levels they deem urgent enough to merit hospitalization. ... For many doctors who treat kidney disease, it's an ethical issue. In fact, the Renal Physicians Association published a statement saying that dialysis for noncitizens should be covered. (Harper, 3/8)

#### **The Washington Post: You've Never Heard of the Powerful Doctors Making Decisions about Your Health**

They are the most powerful group of doctors no one has ever heard of — 16 physicians who decide which checkups and tests Americans need to stay healthy. But increasingly, their work is more controversial than obscure. The doctors sit on the national task force that told most women to forget about yearly mammograms until they turn 50, raising an uproar that had barely quieted by the time the group then decided most men shouldn't be screened for prostate cancer. (Sun, 3/7)



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### **Los Angeles Times: As Measures of Health, Fitness and Fatness Matter More than Weight**

Researchers are nurturing a growing suspicion that body mass index, the height-weight calculation that distinguishes those with "normal healthy weight" from the overweight and obese, is not the whole picture when it comes to telling who is healthy and who is not. Two new studies drive that point home and underscore that BMI offers an incomplete picture of an individual's health. Fitness matters, as does fatness. And the BMI is an imperfect measure of both. (Healy, 3/7)

### **Kaiser Health News: Managing Depression a Challenge in Primary Care Settings, Study Finds**

Often referred to as the "common cold of mental health," depression causes about 8 million doctors' appointments a year. More than half are with primary care physicians. A new study suggests those doctors may not be the best to treat the condition due to insurance issues, time constraints and other factors. The paper, published Monday in the March issue of Health Affairs, examines how primary care doctors treat depression. More often than not, primary care practices fall short in teaching patients about managing their care and following up regularly to track their progress. (Luthra, 3/7)

## **EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS**

### **The New York Times: We're Losing the Race Against Antibiotic Resistance, but There's Also Reason for Hope**

A century ago, the top three causes of death were infectious diseases. More than half of all people dying in the U.S. died because of germs. Today, they account for a few percent of deaths at most. We owe much of that, of course, to antibiotics. ... It is hard to overstate how much less of a threat infectious diseases pose to us today. But we take antibiotics for granted. We use them inappropriately and indiscriminately. This has led many to worry that our days of receiving benefits from them are numbered. (Aaron E. Carroll, 3/7)

### **Los Angeles Times: GOP Plans to Repeal Obamacare Won't Bring the Change You're Hoping For**

For the third time in eight years, the presidential campaign is doubling as a referendum on the U.S. healthcare system. And once again, the debate will revolve around the rising cost of health insurance and the number of people struggling to obtain or maintain coverage. The obvious difference this time, though, is that the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, better known as Obamacare, is now fully in effect. Although the 2010 law has helped slow some cost increases, the continuing rise in premiums and prescription drug costs and the uptick in healthcare spending growth show that there's much work left to do. The question for voters this year is whether that work would be easier if the Affordable Care Act were repealed, and the answer is no. (3/7)

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### CALIFORNIA WATCH

MARCH 9, 2016

#### **Capital Public Radio: Mental Health Bill Focuses On College Students**

A new bill could help college campuses expand mental health services and hire counselors. Students are being identified as a group likely to suffer serious mental health problems. And stigma around those issues can prevent people from seeking help. Experts say more access to services could help students cope with stress and depression. AB 2017 would create the College Mental Health Services Fund, allowing the state to match money spent on mental health services via competitive grants. If a university needs \$100,000 to hire mental health faculty, the state would pay half of that amount. (Ayestas, 3/8)

### HEALTH LAW ISSUES AND IMPLEMENTATION

#### **The Associated Press: Health Law Fines Double for Many Uninsured at Tax Time**

Many people who went without health insurance last year are now seeing fines more than double under President Barack Obama's health care law, tax preparation company H&R Block said Tuesday. Among its customers who owe a penalty for the 2015 tax year, the average fine is \$383, compared with \$172 for 2014, the company said. Separately, among those who complied with the law and took advantage of its taxpayer-subsidized private health insurance, 6 in 10 are now having to pay back to the IRS some portion of their financial assistance. (Alonso-Zaldivar, 3/8)

### PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

#### **The Associated Press: San Francisco-Based Metabiota Bungled Ebola Response, AP Finds**

A U.S. company assigned a crucial role in the efforts to battle Ebola in Sierra Leone made a series of costly mistakes during the 2014 outbreak, an Associated Press investigation has found. Staffers with the San Francisco-based company Metabiota Inc. not only misread the epidemic, they contributed to botched lab results, undermined partners and put people at risk of the terrifying virus, according to leaked documents and interviews with international health responders. (Satter and Cheng, 3/7)

### MARKETPLACE

#### **Reuters: U.S. Health Agency Estimates 2015 Prescription Drug Spend Rose to \$457 Billion**

Spending on prescription drugs is projected to have risen to \$457 billion in 2015 and will likely continue to grow as a percentage of overall healthcare spending, a U.S. government health agency said on Tuesday. ... The agency forecast that total drug spending will grow to \$535 billion in 2018 and represent about 16.8 percent of all healthcare spending. The figures are based in part on National Health Expenditure Accounts estimates from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services. (Humer, 3/8)

#### **NPR: Medical Bills Still Take a Big Toll, Even with Insurance**

For Barbara Radley, there is "before" and "after." Before was when she could work — moving furniture, and driving a long-haul truck. "It was nothing for me to throw a couch on my back and carry it up a flight of stairs," says the 58-year-old from Oshkosh, Wis. Then there's after. After she herniated five disks in her back. And after, she says, her blood pressure medicine destroyed her pancreas. Now Radley is disabled, suffering from diabetes, liver failure and scleroderma. And she is bankrupt. (Kodjak, 3/8)



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### **HEALTH IT**

#### **Reuters: Health Apps Often Lack Privacy Policies and Share Our Data**

Just because a health app has a privacy policy doesn't mean the data will remain private, an analysis of mobile tools for diabetes suggests. In fact, privacy policies appear rare, and when they do exist, most state that user data will be collected and half warn that medical information will be shared with third parties. (Rapaport, 3/8)

#### **The Associated Press: This Wand Can Transmit Medical Data to a Doctor from Inside Your Home**

Doctors could keep better tabs on their patients between visits with a simple wave of a magic wand-like device being developed at Dartmouth College. The prototype, dubbed "Wanda," is part of a multi-university project to develop ways to protect patient confidentiality as health care increasingly moves out of hospitals and doctors' offices and into the home. But beyond safety, simplicity also is a key goal, said doctoral student Tim Pierson, Wanda's creator. (3/6)

### **EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS**

#### **Bloomberg: Will Congress Get Serious about Zika?**

The more doctors learn about the Zika virus, the more dangerous it appears. Is it too much to hope that this research will prod the U.S. Congress to take action? Of course, congressional action on any issue has been hard to come by lately. In the case of Zika, however, it's worth examining what science says about its potential for harm. (3/8)

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### CALIFORNIA WATCH

MARCH 10, 2016

#### **Los Angeles Times: Are You Pre-Diabetic? 46% of California Adults are, UCLA Study Finds**

For decades, more and more Californians have put on weight and fallen sick with diabetes, prompting warnings that the disease was spiraling out of control. Now experts have data showing just how bleak the situation is. Researchers from UCLA determined that 55% of California adults have either diabetes or pre-diabetes, a condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be considered diabetic, according to a study published Thursday. (Karlman, 3/10)

#### **The Associated Press: California Lawmakers Approve Raising Smoking Age to 21**

California lawmakers voted Thursday to make the nation's most populous state the second to raise the smoking age from 18 to 21 as part of a sweeping package of measures they are considering to crack down on tobacco. Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown still must sign off on the legislation the Senate approved to make California the first state after Hawaii with the higher age limit. His spokesman said last week that the governor generally does not comment on pending legislation. The bills also would restrict electronic cigarettes the same as tobacco products. The increasingly popular devices are not regulated by the federal government. (3/10)

#### **Kaiser Health News: N.H., Calif. Seek to Help Consumers Get Details on Health Care Prices**

Two states are making inroads into revealing some of the biggest secrets of health care by publishing price information to help consumers comparison shop for doctors, dentists and prescription drugs. New Hampshire, which already had the nation's most advanced website allowing people to compare the cost of specific medical procedures, last week added prices for 16 dental procedures and 65 prescription drugs. ... California on Wednesday released an expanded version of its quality report cards on 154 large physician groups. Those cards, which already assess clinical quality and patient experiences, take a different tack than New Hampshire. (Rau, 3/10)

#### **KQED: Soda Tax is Again Before California Legislators**

California lawmakers have again introduced legislation to impose a fee on sodas and other sugary beverages — not a true tax, but a “health impact fee” to be paid by beverage distributors. Still, the presumption is that the two-cents-an-ounce fee — 24 cents on a 12-ounce can of soda — would be passed along to consumers, and, if passed, would raise \$2 billion annually. (Aliferis, 3/9)

### CAMPAIGN 2016

#### **Los Angeles Times: Tough Debate Questions, Especially for Clinton, After Her Surprise Loss to Sanders in Michigan**

Hillary Clinton's embattled status as the Democratic presidential front-runner, dented Tuesday by a surprise defeat in Michigan, faced new challenges Wednesday during a debate with Bernie Sanders that often delved into the vulnerabilities that have complicated her path to the nomination. ... Sanders, too, came in for tough questioning, particularly about a videotaped interview from 1985 in which he pointed out Fidel Castro's work to improve Cuban society, including education and healthcare. “Cuba is, of course, an authoritarian, undemocratic country, and I hope very much as soon as possible it becomes a democratic country,” he said. “But on the other hand, it would be wrong not to state that in Cuba they have made some good advances in healthcare.” (Megerian and Memoli, 3/9)



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### **HEALTH LAW ISSUES AND IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **The New York Times: Christians Flock to Groups that Help Members Pay Medical Bills**

When Chris Doyle learned that his health insurance deductible would climb to \$10,000 last year, he and his wife, both evangelical Christians, “spent a couple weeks just praying,” he said. Then they opted out of insurance altogether, joining something called a health care sharing ministry, which requires members to help cover one another’s major medical costs as they come up. While such nonprofit ministries have been around for decades, interest in them has grown since the Affordable Care Act passed in 2010, largely because the law exempts members from the requirement to have health insurance or pay a yearly fine. (Goodnough, 3/10)

### **PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION**

#### **The New York Times: First Uterus Transplant in U.S. Has Failed**

The first uterus transplant in the United States has failed, and the organ was surgically removed on Tuesday, officials at the Cleveland Clinic said on Wednesday. The recipient, a 26-year-old woman, suddenly developed a serious complication on Tuesday, according to Eileen Sheil, a spokeswoman for the clinic. She did not specify the nature of the problem but said the uterus was being analyzed by pathologists to determine what went wrong. The transplant, which used a uterus from a woman in her 30s who had died suddenly, was performed on Feb. 24. It was the first of 10 uterine transplants planned by the clinic, in an experimental program meant to enable women without a uterus to become pregnant and give birth. In a statement released Wednesday afternoon, the clinic said it would continue that effort. (Grady, 3/9)

#### **The New York Times: New Procedure Allows Kidney Transplants from Any Donor**

In the anguishing wait for a new kidney, tens of thousands of patients on waiting lists may never find a match because their immune systems will reject almost any transplanted organ. Now, in a large national study that experts are calling revolutionary, researchers have found a way to get them the desperately needed procedure. In the new study, published Wednesday in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, doctors successfully altered patients’ immune systems to allow them to accept kidneys from incompatible donors. Significantly more of those patients were still alive after eight years than patients who had remained on waiting lists or received a kidney transplanted from a deceased donor. (Kolata, 3/9)

#### **Los Angeles Times: Doctors Group Calls on Pediatricians to Address Child Poverty**

For pediatricians, a routine visit is a chance to chat with parents about their child’s vaccinations, sleep patterns, nutrition and TV time. But new guidelines say that with nearly half of American children living in poverty or close to that line, pediatricians need to broach another health-related matter with mom or dad: Are you having trouble making ends meet? “The early detection and management of poverty-related disorders is an important, emerging component of the pediatric scope of practice,” says a policy statement issued this week by the American Academy of Pediatrics. “Pediatricians can apply interventions in practice to help address the toxic effects of poverty on children and families.” The academy’s statement, undergirded by a lengthy technical report and published this week in the journal *Pediatrics*, leaves little doubt that living in poverty is a scourge with health effects across an individual’s lifespan. (Healy, 3/9)



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### **MARKETPLACE**

#### **The Washington Post: This Drug is Defying a Rare Form of Leukemia — and it Keeps Getting Pricier**

When the drug company Novartis launched its breakthrough cancer medicine, Gleevec, in 2001, the list price was \$26,400 a year. The company's chief executive acknowledged it was expensive, calling it an "uphill battle to win understanding for our decision." Today, that hill is a mountain. Since Gleevec was approved to treat a rare form of leukemia, similar drugs have come on the market — and the U.S. wholesale list price for a year's supply of that little orange pill has soared to more than \$120,000. (Johnson, 3/9)

### **EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS**

#### **Vox: Obamacare Didn't Pave the Way for Donald Trump. The GOP's Response to it Did.**

There are two ways to look at Obamacare. One is that it was more or less American politics working as it's supposed to ... But there's another popular narrative of Obamacare — that it was a hijacking of American politics in order to pass radical, unconstitutional legislation that forever transformed the country. (Ezra Klein, 3/9)

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## Daily Health News Report

From the GGHP Communications Department



### CALIFORNIA WATCH

MARCH 11, 2016

#### **Los Angeles Times: Aid-In-Dying Law to Take Effect June 9 in California**

Senate leader Kevin de Leon (D-Los Angeles) said on the Senate floor just before the adjournment vote Thursday that the law “ensures Californians have access to humane and compassionate options to limit suffering at the end of life.” The bill had failed to win needed support during the regular session, so supporters introduced it in special session, allowing it to bypass committees where opposition was strong. The approval of the law through “controversial legislative tactics” was denounced again Thursday by Tim Rosales of Californians Against Assisted Suicide. (McGreevy, 3/10)

#### **The Los Angeles Times: Kaiser Permanente's New Medical School Will Be in Pasadena**

Kaiser Permanente is moving forward with its ambitious plan to open a medical school that's more in tune with new technologies and local communities. The Oakland-based healthcare provider said Thursday its institution will be located in Pasadena. And it talked about how it will try to attract a more diverse student body. Kaiser said it chose central Pasadena because the site is close to major freeways, public transportation options and affordable housing. Kaiser is also well-established in the surrounding area, with 14 hospitals in Southern California and medical office complexes in Pasadena and Glendale. The school will also be within several miles of facilities where students will be trained. (Masunaga, 3/10)

### CAPITOL HILL WATCH

#### **The Washington Post: Senate Passes Bill to Combat Heroin, Painkiller Abuse**

Drug abuse has been in the spotlight this political season, with presidential candidates recalling personal stories about relatives and friends who struggled with addiction and lawmakers from states dealing with the crisis highlighting their efforts to address the problem legislatively. Many of the Republican senators who have most vocally backed the bill face tough re-election battles. (Demirjian, 3/10)

### HEALTH LAW ISSUES AND IMPLEMENTATION

#### **The Associated Press: Top Republican Unveils \$98B in Cuts to Social Programs**

A senior House Republican on Thursday reprised a proposal to cut child tax credits for immigrants working in the U.S. illegally. Powerful Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady, R-Texas, also wants tougher rules to reclaim overpayments of health insurance tax subsidies under the new health care law as part of package to cut spending by \$98 billion over 10 years. The move is part of an effort designed to help GOP leaders make progress in passing the House's annual budget blueprint. (Taylor, 3/10)

#### **The Washington Post: \$1.2 Billion in Loans to ACA Health Insurance Co-Ops May Be a Loss, Report Warns**

The new report says the Department of Health and Human Services was told early by its outside financial consultant that the 12 co-ops' business plans and financial forecasts were inadequate, incomplete or based on unsupported assumptions — and yet officials approved loans anyway. After that, the report says, HHS failed to monitor the co-ops' status despite being aware of their “severe financial distress,” continued to disburse loans and allowed them to list anticipated payments through the ACA risk-balancing program as assets even after getting “credible warnings that those payments would not materialize.” (Levine and Goldstein, 3/10)



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### **PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION**

#### **The Associated Press: Things to Know about GMO Mosquito Test Proposed in Florida**

The spread of the Zika virus in Latin America is giving a boost to a British biotech firm's proposal to deploy a genetically modified mosquito to try to stop transmission of the disease. Oxitec has genetically modified the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which also transmits dengue and chikungunya, so the males produce offspring that do not live. (Kay, 3/10)

#### **KPCC: Does Raising the Smoking Age to 21 Keep More Teens Away From Cigarettes?**

As Gov. Jerry Brown ponders whether to sign into law a bill raising California's smoking age from 18 to 21, he will have little solid research on which to base his decision. But one large study predicts that making this change will lead to a significant decline in youth smoking rates and smoking-related illnesses. State lawmakers gave final approval to the smoking age measure Thursday. If Brown signs it, California will be the second state after Hawaii to raise its smoking age to 21. The legislature also sent the governor a measure that would regulate electronic cigarettes the same as tobacco. (Plevin, 3/10)

### **MARKETPLACE**

#### **Bloomberg: Drug Tests Take Cue from Travel Site to Fix Industry Headache**

Pablo Graiver aims to make signing up for a drug study as easy as booking a flight on the Web. The 47-year-old Argentinian entrepreneur, a former executive at the airfare search engine kayak.com, has designed a new tool that draws from the travel industry to match scientists looking to test experimental medicines with patients suffering from more than a dozen diseases. It pools information patients previously had to piece together from Google searches, doctors and a complicated government-run website. (Kitamura, 3/10)

### **EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS**

#### **The Hill: Working Together to Strengthen Medicaid for the Most Vulnerable**

Last year, the Medicaid program celebrated its golden anniversary. A lot has changed over the last 50 years. Originally created in 1965 as a joint federal-state program to provide health care coverage for low-income, vulnerable Americans, it is now the world's largest health insurance program. Today Medicaid is an important lifeline for so many in Michigan and across the country. It is estimated the program will expand to cover 83 million people this year – that's one in four Americans. Given its rapidly growing size, it is imperative the program is working as it is intended – providing care for folks who need it most. (Rep. Fred Upton, 3/11)

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