

Private Sector Environmental Scan

From

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Note, to comply with intellectual property laws, news stories below will be summarized and when appropriate, include a web link that may require either a paid subscription or free registration for access.

[AAFP NEWS NOW](#)

[Family Practice Management \(FPM\)](#)

CMS

- **Doctors plead for 10% Medicare bonus in stimulus package**

Wall Street Journal (blog), December 18, 2008

"American College of Physicians President Jeffrey Harris has sent a letter to HHS nominee Tom Daschle asking that the Obama administration's economic-stimulus package include a 10% pay bonus for all services provided by primary care docs under Medicare for a period of 18 months. The letter also requests that primary care practices, especially small ones, get a piece of the funding pie for health information technology that Obama has pledged to spend billions of dollars on."

<http://blogs.wsj.com/health/2008/12/18/doctors-plead-for-10-medicare-bonus-in-stimulus-package/#more-3826>

E-HEALTH

- **HIMSS: \$25 billion needed for health care IT**

Healthcare IT News, December 17, 2008

"The incoming Obama administration should invest \$25 billion in health care IT to help non-governmental hospitals and physicians adopt electronic medical records, according to recommendations by the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society. The group's report says the government also should allocate additional monies to help federal and state-owned health care providers adopt e-records. "

<http://www.healthcareitnews.com/story.cms?id=10603>

- **The doctor will e-mail you now**

Newsweek, December 18, 2008

"Doctors offering second opinion consultations online are becoming more popular with patients. Patients e-mail or fax medical records and other relevant documentation, and the online doctor gets back to them in one or

two weeks with a report. Though the online second-opinion market currently comprises only a fraction of the patients seeking information about diagnoses and treatment options for various health problems, it's likely to be a growing trend, according to this Newsweek article."

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/173874>

HEALTH PLANS

- **Aetna cuts 1,000 jobs in response to downturn**

CNN Money, December 18, 2008

"Hartford, CT-based Aetna plans to eliminate 1,000 positions, almost 3% of its work force. The company has warned that it isn't immune to the economic downturn, despite a preliminary forecast of 3%-5% growth in 2009. Employees were notified of the possible staff cuts last month."

http://money.cnn.com/news/newsfeeds/articles/djf500/200812171707DOWJONESDJONLINE000976_FORTUNE5.htm

- **UnitedHealth gets preliminary OK to pay \$895 million to settle stock options suit**

Minneapolis Star Tribune, December 19, 2008

"A federal judge has given preliminary approval for UnitedHealth Group Inc. to pay \$895 million to settle a class-action lawsuit over backdated stock options. The settlement also has the company's former chief executive William McGuire paying \$30 million and another former executive, general counsel David Lubben, paying \$500,000."

<http://www.startribune.com/business/36396284.html?elr=KArksLckD8EQDUoaEyqyP4O:DW3ckUiD3aPc: Yyc:aUUsr>

- **Blue Cross, Zagat to rank doctors**

Raleigh New & Observer, December 23, 2008

"Blue Cross and Blue Shield will soon join Zagat dining guide to provide doctor rankings for its members. This is the latest in a push for more data and transparency in the nation's healthcare system. In the program, Zagat will collect and compile survey information on physicians from Blue Cross members based on four criteria: trust, communication, availability, and office environment."

<http://www.newsobserver.com/business/story/1342375.html>

MEDICAL HOME

- **Doctors get the time they crave with patients**

Seattle Post-Intelligencer, December 22, 2008

"A survey this year found that only 2% of all graduating medical students plan on going into primary care, because of the grinding hours and relatively low pay. Primary care, considered the backbone of American medicine, is crumbling nationwide from an increasing demand of aging boomers and a decreasing supply of physicians. Some healthcare reformers say the need for the medical home model of primary care is huge."

Patricia Boiko became a family doctor because she liked the connection with patients -- she enjoyed delivering babies and knowing people into their old age -- but she wanted to quit..."

http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/393129_medicalhome22.html

PRACTICE DESIGNS

- **At more U.S. employers, the doctor is in**

San Francisco Chronicle, December 22, 2008

"A number of large corporations, including Walt Disney Co., Harrah's Entertainment, Dow Chemical Co., Toyota Motor Corp., Pitney Bowes Inc., now offer on-site clinics as a way to improve their employees' health, cut medical costs and reduce the amount of time workers spend out of the office for doctor appointments. Virtually all large employers are self-insured, meaning they pay for medical care themselves and can reap the benefits of a healthier employee population. Nearly 30% of large employers had a clinic on campus or planned to open one by 2009."

[http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/12/21/BUPR14LPC3.DTL)

[bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/12/21/BUPR14LPC3.DTL](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/12/21/BUPR14LPC3.DTL)

Reminder: Chapter Executives

AAFP-AAFP chapter Private Sector Advocacy call schedule, 1-888-271-3491, press "3"

January 15, 2009	1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time
March 19, 2009	1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time
April 16, 2009	1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time
May 21, 2009	1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time
June 18, 2009	1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time
July 16, 2009	1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time
August 20, 2009	1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time