

Private Sector Environmental Scan

From
AAFP Private Sector Advocacy Staff

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www.aafp.org/privatesector

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[AAFP NEWS NOW](#)

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

ACCESS TO CARE

- **California Family Physicians Urge State Leaders: "Don't Ask Poor, Frail, Elderly, Or Children To Solve Budget Crisis"**
California AFP, March 16, 2009
“Family physicians oppose reducing health services and benefits for people living in poverty, people with disabilities, and others who rely on the State for health care services. “Trading the health of the people of California for a balanced budget is unconscionable,” said Kakutani, a family physician who practices in Winters, CA.”
<http://www.familydocs.org/files/CAFPPrReIFINAL2009031609.pdf>
- **Med schools grow as economy tanks**
AP/Yahoo News, March 12, 2009
“Responding to warnings of a looming doctor shortage, existing medical schools are increasing enrollment, and new ones are opening or under development across the county. Medical school expansion plans are rushing ahead despite the severe economic downturn, even in the battered home of the nation's struggling auto industry.”
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090312/ap_on_he_me/medical_school_boom;_ylt=ArdpAfehIb7pUmSIff_XJQNZ24cA
- **Many putting off needed surgery**
The New York Times, March 14, 2009
“Patients who fear losing health insurance are moving up surgery. Others are putting it off, to the point that one Florida hospital system is seeing five or six patients a day in dire condition that could have been avoided had they gone to surgery earlier, officials say.”

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/14/us/14surgery.html?_r=3&th&emc=th%20%3Chttp://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/14/us/14surgery.html?_r=1&th&emc=th%3E

DISEASE MANAGEMENT

- **Study: Florida would save money by boosting primary care**
Miami Herald, March 16, 2009
Florida legislators are expected to receive a research paper that concludes the state could save \$700 million a year in healthcare costs by making sure Floridians had a place to go for primary care. More basic screenings and preventive care would keep many people out of expensive trips to the emergency room, wrote four researchers from The George Washington University. The Florida Association of Community Health Centers plans to use the study to make a case that the Legislature should double funding for public clinics next year—from \$15.3 million to \$31 million.
<http://www.miamiherald.com/business/story/949169.html>

E-HEALTH

- **EHR (Electronic Health Record)**
 - **Information technology holds promise for advancing healthcare**
LA Times, March 15, 2009
“**Dennis Saver** looks every bit the **family doctor** as he steps into the examining room of his small practice on Florida's Treasure Coast. When Saver begins to examine his patient, however, the 56-year-old physician does something that four out of five doctors in America do not: He pulls out a computer.”
<http://www.latimes.com/technology/la-na-health-it15-2009mar15,0,6567568,full.story>
- **USF offers free e-coaching for doctors**
Florida Health News March 16, 2009
“A lot of doctors say they can't afford to adopt electronic prescribing. Others need technical help. Today, USF and Allscripts Inc. announced an end to both barriers with free software and 1-on-1 in-training in doctors' offices in up to 10 counties.”
<http://www.floridahealthnews.org/index.cfm/go/public.articleView/article/11227>

HEALTH PLANS

- **Health insurance industry works on image makeover**
Kansas City Star/AP, March 15, 2009
“The health insurance industry is working on a transformation that could come right out of "Extreme Makeover." Long cast as villains for denying coverage or refusing to pay for treatment, insurers now are representing themselves as indispensable partners in health care overhaul.”
<http://www.kansascity.com/438/story/1087550.html>

- **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota Puts New Online Shopping Tool In Hands Of Consumers**

BCBSA, March 16, 2009

“Consumers can now easily find accurate health care cost and quality information through Care Comparison®, a new online tool introduced today by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. Care Comparison allows nearly two million Blue Cross members in Minnesota to evaluate total treatment costs as well as quality, safety and accessibility information for dozens of common elective procedures at facilities throughout the country.”

<http://www.bcbs.com/news/plans/blue-cross-puts-new-online-shopping-tool-in-hands-of-consumers.html>

MEDICAL LIABILITY (TORT) REFORM

- **Malpractice changes are a part of health debate**

AP/Yahoo News, March 17, 2009

“As they search for savings to redo the nation's \$2.4 trillion health system, key congressional Democrats and administration officials are indicating they're open to changing a system that's a burden for doctors but a boon to attorneys and some victims of medical error. "The cost issue is the thing that we actually think is the big driver in this whole debate," Obama told business leaders last week. Research, prevention and "medical liability issues—I think all those things have to be on the table," the president said.”

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090317/ap_on_go_ot/health_overhaul_malpractice_4

NATIONAL TRENDS

- **Comparison Shopping for Medicine**

Washington Post, March 17, 2009; Page A02

“What's best for insomnia -- Lunesta, at about \$6 a pill, or Zolpidem, at \$2?

Should a man with prostate cancer choose radiation, surgery or "watchful waiting"?

Is it better to operate on a bad knee or get an injection of the joint fluid known as Visco.

To help doctors and patients decide, President Obama has dedicated \$1.1 billion in the economic stimulus package for federal agencies to oversee studies on the merits of competing medical treatments.”

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/16/AR2009031602913.html>

PAYMENT

- **Massachusetts Studies Reveal Importance of Incentives in Healthcare Technology Adoption**

PRNewswire, March 17, 2009

"The research clearly shows the progress that has been made in the state to increase adoption of clinical information technology," said Greg LeGrow , director of e- Health Innovation for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

<http://news.prnewswire.com/DisplayReleaseContent.aspx?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/03-17-2009/0004989766&EDATE=>

PHARMACEUTICAL

o E-prescribing

o E-prescribing to soar with new spending

Reuters/Yahoo News, March 17, 2009

“As many as 75% of U.S. doctors will be writing electronic prescriptions within five years, thanks to new federal spending to encourage e-prescribing, according to a forecast. The economic stimulus bill signed by President Barack Obama last month included about \$19 billion to promote the use of healthcare information technology, including e-prescribing. An estimated 13% of U.S. doctors prescribe drugs electronically, leaving the vast majority writing paper prescriptions, according to Surescripts, which operates the largest U.S. electronic prescribing network.”

http://tech.yahoo.com/news/nm/20090316/tc_nm/us_healthcare_usa_electronic_4

RETAIL HEALTH CLINICS

o Sick flocking to Massachusetts in-store clinics

Boston Globe, March 12, 2009

“Six months after the first CVS MinuteClinics opened in Massachusetts, thousands of residents have visited the in-store clinics for treatment. With MinuteClinics opening at a rate of more than two a month in Massachusetts, company executives said they have taken off there faster than in the 24 other states where the company owns clinics. Nurse practitioners at the 16 Massachusetts clinics open so far have treated more than 10,000 patients with acute problems and given about 10,000 flu shots, the executives said. One major factor in the clinics' success is that the state's three largest insurers cover the visits without a physician's referral, they added.”

http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2009/03/12/sick_flocking_to_in_store_clinics/?page=2

Reminder: Chapter Executives

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

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
August 20, 2009

1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time
1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time