

Private Sector Environmental Scan

From

AAFP Private Sector Advocacy Staff

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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 \(FPM\)](#)

ACCESS TO CARE

- **Doctor is out: 1 in 5 of us don't have one**
Chicago Sun-Times, April 13, 2009
“One in five Americans does not have a family doctor and even many who do are often shut out of care, translating to higher rates of illness and death, and higher costs. A Scripps Howard News Service review found that access to primary care.”
http://www.suntimes.com/stng_article.search?page_size=20&query=lee+bwoman&pub=cst
- **Coalition to push quality, affordability**
Managed Healthcare Executive E-News, Apr 10, 2009
“Stand for Quality, a public-private coalition consisting of more than 165 organizations, recommends to new administration and Congress:
 - Set national priorities;
 - Endorse and maintain nationally standardized measures;
 - Develop new quality measures to fill gaps in priority areas;
 - Ensure that providers and other stakeholders have a role in developing policies on use of measures;
 - Collect, analyze, and make performance information available for improvement; and
 - Support a sustainable infrastructure for quality improvement.”<http://managedhealthcareexecutive.modernmedicine.com/mhe/News+Analysis/Coalition-to-push-quality-affordability/ArticleStandard/Article/detail/591451?ref=25>

DISEASE MANAGEMENT

- **Healthcare forum focuses on chronic illness**
Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, April 9, 2009

“Working to prevent and manage chronic disease was one of the key themes at the third in a series of forums on healthcare reform being held throughout the country. The session, held in Wisconsin, touched just occasionally on tough issues such as expanding coverage for the long-term uninsured and restructuring the way in which doctors and hospitals are paid, according to the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel.”

<http://www.jsonline.com/business/42641672.html>

FAMILY PHYSICIANS IN THE NEWS

- **Fixing a Broken Health Care System**

- How the Mayo Clinic Improved Patient Care and Lowered Health Care Costs**

- ABC News, April 9, 2009

- “Instead of consulting with their primary care doctors, many patients in this country who need medical care wind up in the emergency room.

- Renowned hospital undergoes overhaul to cut costs and improve patient care.

Even the famed Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., which provides quality health insurance to 130,000 employees and their families, was shocked to discover how many of them approached their own routine medical care.”

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/Story?id=7300173&page=1>

HEALTH PLANS

- **Novel Approach to Health Plans Gains Traction**

- Hospitals and Nonprofits Offer Packages of Basic Care Directly to Small Businesses

- WSJ.com, April 14, 2009

- “As the Obama administration wrestles with how to expand health-care coverage to the millions of uninsured Americans, some local organizations are finding creative ways to help cover one of the most affected groups -- employees of small businesses.”

- http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123966635800515273.html#mod=todays_us_nonsub_pj

- **Health Insurance Giant Changes Physician Payment Rules**

- AAFP, Others Slam UnitedHealthcare's Decision*

- AAFP News Now*, April 9, 2009

- On April 1, UnitedHealthcare, or UHC, one of the nation's largest health insurance plans, implemented a new fee schedule methodology for its physician contracts that bases physician payment on Medicare's 2008 resource-based relative value units, or RVUs. The move has sparked protest from the AAFP and four other medical specialty groups.

- <http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/publications/news/news-now/practice-management/20090409uhc-fees.html>

- **Generic Drugs Can Be Good For Your Health And Your Wallet**
BCBSA press release, April
“BCBSA found that generic drug use among Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plan members increased from 60 percent to 65 percent between 2007 to 2008 – an increase of more than 8 percent. The analysis of prescription use by 51 million subscribers in 32 Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies found that expanded use of generic drugs generated at least \$2.5 billion in savings. BCBSA believes the marked increase in generic drug use among Blue Plan members stems from a variety of factors including increased education and promotion, benefit design and provider incentives.”
<http://www.bcbs.com/news/bcbsa/generic-drugs-can-be-good-for-your-health-and-your-wallet.html>

HOSPITAL

- **Self-service kiosk use grows**
Managed Healthcare Executive, April 10, 2009
“Efficiency and patient satisfaction are fueling the growth of self-service kiosks in ambulatory and ER settings.”
<http://managedhealthcareexecutive.modernmedicine.com/mhe/News+Analysis/Self-service-kiosk-use-grows/ArticleStandard/Article/detail/591454?ref=25>

IMMUNIZATIONS

- **New Merck Programs Address Uncertainty of Insurance Coverage for HPV Vaccination**
AAFP News Now, April 9, 2009
“Merck & Co. Inc. is launching two new programs for its quadrivalent human papillomavirus, or HPV, vaccine, in an attempt to take the uncertainty out of insurance coverage issues for patients and payment issues for physicians.”
<http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/publications/news/news-now/clinical-care-research/20090408gardasil-prog.html>

MEDICAL HOME

- **Medical home approach brings back managed care**
Boston Globe, April 9, 2009
“A decade after HMOs provoked an angry public backlash for being too focused on the bottom line, managed care is making a comeback, particularly among Democratic policymakers now shaping a proposed overhaul of the nation's healthcare system. The "medical home" is based on the idea that high quality care and stronger relationships between patients and their primary care doctors will save money in the long run.”
http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2009/04/08/medical_home_approach_brings_back_managed_care/

NATIONAL TRENDS

- **AMA to lay off 100 employees**
Chicago Tribune, April 7, 2009
“The American Medical Association is laying off about 100 workers, or 8% of its staff, to "offset declining revenues amid the ongoing economic downturn." The staff cuts at the doctor group will trim "open and existing staff positions" at both its Chicago headquarters and Washington offices effective May 4, the AMA said. The AMA has about 1,200 staffers.”
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/chi-ama-layoffs-0406-0,2952481.story>

PHARMACEUTICAL

- **Express Scripts to buy WellPoint prescription unit**
Reuters, April 13, 2009
“Express Scripts Inc. will buy health insurer WellPoint Inc.'s NextRx prescription business for \$4.68 billion in a significant expansion for the large U.S. pharmacy benefit manager. The deal would give Express Scripts new bulk to compete against chief rivals Medco Health...
[http://e.ccialerts.com/a/tBJ46XxAHkctc8AHoauT\\$OfCJF51/bi99](http://e.ccialerts.com/a/tBJ46XxAHkctc8AHoauT$OfCJF51/bi99)

PRACTICE DESIGNS

- **X Prize offers \$10M prize in health care contest**
Reuters, April 14, 2009
“The X Prize Foundation is offering a \$10 million reward to the winner of a contest to transform the health of people in a small U.S. community. The group said it would choose five plans for a three-year trial. The contest will measure outcomes based on a community health index of measures such as fewer ER visits and lower health costs.”
<http://www.reuters.com/article/scienceNews/idUSTRE53D6FA20090414>

Reminder: Chapter Executives

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

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