

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

- **ER visits, costs in Mass. climb**
Boston Globe, April 24, 2009
“More people are seeking care in hospital emergency rooms, and the cost of caring for ER patients has soared 17 percent over two years, despite efforts to direct patients with nonurgent problems to primary care doctors instead, according to new state data.”
http://www.theindustryradar.com/index.cfm?account=radar&page=mass_ER_costs
- **Poll Examines How Much U.S. Residents Are Willing To Pay For Health Coverage**
Medical News Today, April 27, 2009
“Nearly two out of three uninsured U.S. adults (64%) say they would be willing to pay no more than \$100 per month for health insurance; however, the average monthly cost of an individual plan is about \$400 and a family plan costs about \$1,000 per month, according to a recent poll by NPR.”
<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/147596.php>
- **Shortage of Doctors an Obstacle to Obama Goals**
The New York Times, April 26, 2009
“WASHINGTON — Obama administration officials, alarmed at doctor meet the needs of an aging population and millions of uninsured people who would gain coverage under legislation championed by the president.”
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/27/health/policy/27care.html?_r=2&hp

CMS

- **AHA Issues Member Advisory on RAC Program**

HealthLeaders Media, April 22, 2009

“With so many Medicare reimbursement dollars at stake, it is no surprise that everyone is putting in their two cents. Make no mistake—the wealth of information becoming available is a good thing. The more you know about the Recovery Audit Contractor program, the better you will be able to manage the process.”

http://www.healthleadersmedia.com/content/231894/topic/WS_HLM2_FI_N/AHA-Issues-Member-Advisory-on-RAC-Program.html

E-HEALTH

- **AMA pilot-tests web services for doctors**

Fierce News, April 27, 2009

“The American Medical Association is pilot-testing what could turn out to be a hefty portfolio of web services to doctors, including electronic prescribing capabilities, reference databases and access to online continuing medical education. To build the services, the AMA is working with the Detroit-based healthcare IT platform provider Covisint.”

<http://www.fiercehealthit.com/story/ama-pilot-tests-web-services-doctors/2009-04-27>

- **PHR (Personal Health Record)**

- **Mayo rolls out PHR with Microsoft platform**

FierceNews, April 27, 2009

“The Mayo Clinic has rolled out a personal health records system using Microsoft's HealthVault PHR platform. And in a trick that could save it a whole lot of HIPAA hassles, the new PHR will not be connected to the Mayo's existing electronic health record system. Instead, the new PHR will be branded as the Mayo Clinic Health Manager. It won't connect to the Mayo enterprise clinical EMR system at all.”

<http://www.fiercehealthit.com/story/mayo-rollouts-phr-microsoft-platform/2009-04-27>

HEALTH PLANS

- **UnitedHealth CEO's pay dips \$10 million**

Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal, April 23, 2009

“Stephen Hemsley, CEO and president of UnitedHealth Group Inc., earned \$3.2 million in 2008, a decline of almost \$10 million from what he received a year ago. UnitedHealth's stock (NYSE:UNH) declined 54 percent during 2008, falling from \$58.06 per share on December 31, 2007 to \$26.60 on Dec. 31, 2008. The firm's stock price closed Thursday at \$23.16 per share.

<http://twincities.bizjournals.com/twincities/stories/2009/04/20/daily37.html?ana=yfcpc>

MEDICAL HOME

Aetna Reconfirms Support For The Patient-Centered Medical Home Model of Primary Care

News Release, April 23, 2009

New ways to compensate physicians for primary care must support the use of health information technology to better coordinate the delivery of care “Aetna today reconfirmed its support for the Patient-Centered Medical Home. Speaking on a panel at Internal Medicine 2009, the annual scientific meeting of the American College of Physicians in Philadelphia, Don Liss, MD, FACP, Aetna regional medical director, said Aetna will push for rigorous evaluation of the Patient-Centered Medical Home and related models for delivering more effective and coordinated primary care.”

http://www.aetna.com/news/newsReleases/2009/0423_Medical_Home_Model.html

PAYMENT

- **Comprehensive Payment Reform and Solutions to Challenges Facing Primary Care Addressed in Policy Papers by Internists**

ACP, April 2009

“New policy papers addressing comprehensive payment reform and solutions to challenges facing primary care physicians were released today by the American College of Physicians (ACP). The new policy papers are:
*Reforming Physician Payments to Achieve Greater Value in Health Care Spending

*Solutions to the Challenges Facing Primary Care Medicine: Comprehensive Strategies from the American College of Physicians.”

http://www.acponline.org/pressroom/pay_reform.htm?hp

PHARMACEUTICAL

- **Drug Deals Tie Prices to How Well Patients Do**

The New York Times, April 22, 2009

“Some pharmaceutical companies are offering outcome guarantees -- pricing products based on how well their drugs work in patients. Merck and health insurer Cigna are expected to announce a deal linking payment for the diabetes drugs Januvia and Janumet to how well diabetics control their blood sugar. Two companies that sell the osteoporosis drug Actonel say they will reimburse Health Alliance for costs of treating patients who suffer fractures after taking the medicine.”

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/23/business/23cigna.html?_r=2&scp=4&sq=drug&st=cse

- Sanctions hit WellPoint Medicare enrollment

Sacramento Business Journal, April 24, 2009

“WellPoint Inc., parent company to Anthem Blue Cross, is in trouble with the feds for poor administration of its Medicare HMO and prescription drug plans — and can’t market to or enroll new members until the problems are fixed.”

<http://sacramento.bizjournals.com/sacramento/stories/2009/04/27/story5.html?b=1240804800^1817677>

PRACTICE DESIGNS

- **'Concierge' care worth the cost, patients say**

Scripps Howard News Service, April 26, 2009

“Drs. Alan Sheff and Robin Merlino were about to quit primary care.

Each was attempting to care for several thousand patients in a busy group office, seeing 20 to 25 patients a day, and losing ground financially. Both were only in their 50s, but ready to leave medicine.”

<http://www.newschief.com/article/20090426/NEWS/904265095/1053?Title=Concierge-care-worth-the-cost-patients-say>

Reminder: Chapter Executives

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

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