

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 \(FPM\)](#)

ACADEMY ACTION

- **Primary Care Groups Will Consider Public Option—with Caveats**

HealthLeaders Media, June 30, 2009

“While the AMA has garnered most of the attention in recent weeks about its healthcare reform views, other groups representing physicians have also been vocal about what they would and would not like to see in healthcare reform legislation.”

http://www.healthleadersmedia.com/content/235294/topic/WS_HLM2_PHY/Primary-Care-Groups-Will-Consider-Public-Optionmdashwith-Caveats.html

ACCESS TO CARE

- **Advocates are back with real health care stories**

AP, July 7, 2009

“We should not have to be begging for health care in this country,” said Arlene Holt Baker, executive vice president of the AFL-CIO. The union recently collected 6,000 stories of personal health care experiences from people who took an online survey. Some of them went to Washington last week to lobby Congress. The stories are what moves people. This is the way we'll get this health care reform we so desperately need.”

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hVVMlw2cWIuzVCom5RYeumPU12ZgD996FA6G0>

- **Secretary Sebelius Announces Availability Of \$40 Million In Grants To Help Insure More Children**

Medical News Today, June 7, 2009

“HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced the availability of up to \$40 million in grants to help reach families whose children qualify but are not yet enrolled in state Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP). Sebelius was joined for the announcement by Colorado Governor

Bill Ritter. Colorado has been a leader in the effort to provide health insurance coverage to more children.”

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/156562.php>

- **The Family Doctor: A Remedy for Health-Care Costs?**

Business Week, June 25, 2009

“Battles may be breaking out left and right over the various health-care bills emerging from Congress, but reformers on both sides agree that general practitioners should be given a central role in uniting the fragmented U.S. medical system.”

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/09_27/b4138034173005.htm

CMS

- **Primary Care Wins, Imaging Loses, Under New CMS Proposal**

HealthLeaders Media, July 2, 2009

“Primary care physicians are cheering—and radiologists are jeering—a new CMS proposed change to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule that will cut reimbursements for imaging services by as much as 30% and use the savings to raise reimbursements for primary care by as much as 8%. CMS says the change is needed to address concerns from the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission and the Government Accountability Office about the rapid growth and high cost of imaging services.”

http://www.healthleadersmedia.com/content/235386/topic/WS_HLM2_PHY/Primary-Care-Wins-Imaging-Loses-Under-New-CMS-Proposal.html

CONSUMER DIRECTED HEALTHCARE

- **Consumer-Directed' Plans Rise In Popularity As Businesses Scramble To Cut Health Costs**

Hartford News, July 6, 2009

“High-deductible health insurance plans coupled with health savings accounts (tax-advantaged funds for covering medical costs), are becoming the plan of choice for Connecticut's small businesses newly offering insurance to employees, Hartford Business reports. The plans, called "consumer-directed health plans," make up 60 percent of the insurance company Aetna's new small business sales.”

<http://www.hartfordbusiness.com/news9412.html>

EMPLOYERS

- **Health Care Reform: What Small Business Wants**
CNN Money, July 3, 2009

"As Congress prepares to do battle over health reform, a parallel dispute is shaping up among small-business groups that are staking out opposing positions on a key element of reform proposals: whether Uncle Sam will take on a bigger role in offering insurance coverage or leave the field to the private market.”

http://money.cnn.com/2009/07/02/smallbusiness/small_business_health_care_plans.smb/

- **Wal-Mart Backs Employer Mandate On Insurance**

WSJ, July 1, 2009

"In a major break with most other large companies, Wal-Mart Stores Inc. Tuesday told the White House that it supports requiring employers to provide health insurance to workers, a centerpiece of President Barack Obama's effort to provide near-universal coverage to Americans," The Wall Street Journal reports."

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124640564559176649.html>

FAMILY PHYSICIANS IN THE NEWS

- **Physicians find challenges in providing quality care**

National Public Radio (text and audio)/All Things Considered (6/30)

"Physicians say they are frustrated with administrative tasks and production targets that take away from their ability to provide quality patient care. Two experts also agreed that new technologies, tests and therapies have made medicine more complex and also have led to rising health care costs..."

"...Dr. Greg Darrow, a family physician from New Mexico, and Dr. George Knaysi, a surgical oncologist from Virginia, have each practiced medicine for more than 30 years. They spoke with NPR's Melissa Block about the changes they've seen in health care, and where the system might be headed."

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=106100326>

HEALTH PLANS

- **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mass. Rewards Docs for Efficient Quality of Care**

HealthLeaders Media, July 2, 2009

"Many primary care physicians practicing under contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts received a total of \$27 million as a reward for meeting certain cost and quality goals in an annual incentive program that was among the first of its kind in the country when it began in 2000, the health plan said this week."

http://www.healthleadersmedia.com/content/235395/topic/WS_HLM2_PHY/Blue-Cross-Blue-Shield-of-Mass-Rewards-Docs-for-Efficient-Quality-of-Care.html

- **Insurers defend rescissions, take heat for lack of transparency**

AM News, July 6, 2009

"The House Energy and Commerce subcommittee was focused on why health plans rescind coverage from members who become ill. According to AHIP spokesman Robert Zirkelbach, "Health plans are committed to this

process and are working hard to help make this goal a reality. This statement was countered by a former healthcare executives statement that”
"For 20 years, I worked as a senior executive at health insurance companies, and I saw how they confuse their customers and dump the sick -- all so they can satisfy their Wall Street investors "

<http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/2009/07/06/bisb0706.htm>

MEDICAL HOME

- **Physician Shortage Could Hinder Health Reform**

Dallas Morning News, July 6, 2009

“The number of new primary care doctors each year has fallen nearly 50 percent since 1997, the Dallas Morning News reports, leaving a shortage that could hinder Congress's ambition to reform health care and cover millions of uninsured Americans.”

http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/bus/stories/DN-paygap_06bus.ART.State.Edition1.3cf46f4.html

PATIENT MANAGEMENT

- **It's time for a new model of health management**

Managed Healthcare Executive, July 1, 2009

“Only by targeting the health of each individual can we create meaningful change in the "total" population. Most importantly, individuals who are encouraged to become and remain healthy now, will be less likely to have high cost illnesses in the future. This is a lesson not only for health plans, but for our nation as a whole as we seek to reform our current healthcare system.”

<http://managedhealthcareexecutive.modernmedicine.com/mhe/Exclusives/Its-time-for-a-new-model-of-health-management/ArticleStandard/Article/detail/601157?ref=25>

PHARMACEUTICAL

- **Thriving MTM programs target outreach, coordinate care**

Managed Healthcare Executive, July 1, 2009

“Proposed Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) changes for Medication Therapy Management (MTM) include more lenient eligibility requirements; an annual, interactive person-to-person comprehensive consultation and medication review; and quarterly, targeted medication reviews to assess drug use and monitor any problems.”

<http://managedhealthcareexecutive.modernmedicine.com/mhe/Medicare%20FMedicaid+products/Thriving-MTM-programs-target-outreach-coordinate-c/ArticleStandard/Article/detail/607967?ref=25>

PHYSICIAN MEASUREMENT & REPORTING

- **Data-Driven Health Care: An Interview with Jerry Reeves, MD**

Health Care Blog, June 8, 2009

“We align incentives in the benefit designs of our health insurance coverage to engage beneficiaries in taking their medications, getting their tests, and seeing the same doctor regularly. We collaborate with doctors, hospitals and utilization management firms to modify behaviors that generate excessive costs and to minimize payments for low value services to achieve better control of costs and outcomes.”

http://www.thehealthcareblog.com/the_health_care_blog/2009/06/datadriven-health-care-an-interview-with-jerry-reeves-md.html

PRACTICE DESIGNS

- **McAllen Critics, Obama Target Physician Entrepreneurs**

HealthLeaders Media, June 30, 2009

“Fairly or not, healthcare reform advocates—including President Barack Obama—have made McAllen, TX, Exhibit A for much of what is driving the high cost of healthcare in the United States. At the same time, some experts say the climate in Washington, DC, is making business disadvantageous for the physician entrepreneur.”

http://www.healthleadersmedia.com/content/235297/topic/WS_HLM2_PHY/McAllen-Critics-Obama-Target-Physician-Entrepreneurs.html

Reminder: Chapter Executives

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

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
September 17, 2009	1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time
October 15, 2009	1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time
November 19, 2009	1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time
December 17, 2009	1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. Central time