



Around the world of US healthcare in 360 words or less



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Editor's note

This series is produced by KPMG Healthcare and is intended to be short and succinct, less than 360 words, to provide a weekly digestible bite of healthcare regulatory, policy, and industry news relevant to our clients. Links are provided to source material (proposed and final regulations, agency guidance and press releases, reports, research, etc.) when available. Please share this email with colleagues and other interested individuals, and encourage them to [subscribe to our mailing list here](#).

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Healthcare regulatory news

CMS is [recalling](#) around 3,000 staff furloughed due to the federal government shutdown to return to work on October 27, partially to support the Medicare and Marketplace open enrollment periods. The agency will pay staff with fees collected from researchers to use CMS data and said it plans to repay the fund once the normal appropriations process resumes.

A memo from CMS [instructed](#) all Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) to lift the hold on paying claims for Medicare physicians, ground ambulance, federally qualified health centers, and telehealth for behavioral health services impacted by the expiration of certain healthcare provisions effective October 1. However, the pause is still in place for non-behavioral telehealth and acute Hospital Care at Home.

FDA delivered a [split decision](#) on GSK's blood cancer drug Blenrep, approving its use in combination with other products for adults with relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma who have had at least one prior therapy. The agency, however, did not approve the other Blenrep combination submitted, reflecting the drug's complex regulatory history that includes a prior market withdrawal.



Healthcare law and policy news

Private Medicare and Medicaid plans frequently exaggerate the availability of in-network mental health providers, according to HHS-OIG [report](#) findings that 55% of mental health professionals listed by MA plans and 28% listed by Medicaid managed care plans were not actually in-network. The investigation [revealed](#) "ghost networks" where providers were listed inaccurately due to lack of contracts, retirement, or non-participation, leading to challenges for patients seeking timely care.

The New England Journal of Medicine and the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy are [launching](#) a new digital alternative to the CDC's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#) (MMWR), which has faced disruptions due to staff layoffs and other communications pauses.

According to a new Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER) [analysis](#), the median net launch price for 154 newly approved drugs rose by 51% between 2022 and 2024, significantly outpacing inflation, while the median list price increased by 24%.



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