KQED: Education Push to Help Doctors Field Patients’ Assisted-Death Requests
Now that California has legalized physician-assisted suicide, advocacy groups are planning statewide education campaigns so doctors know what to do when patients ask for lethal medication to end their lives. One of the first stops for doctors new to the practice is a doctor-to-doctor toll-free helpline. It’s staffed by physicians from states where the practice is legal, who have experience writing prescriptions for lethal medication. (Dembosky, 10/12)

Los Angeles Times: Gov. Jerry Brown Targets His Next Priorities as He Decides on Final Slate of Bills
Sprinkled throughout his signing statements and veto messages were clear indications of his next priorities. Brown emphasized his wish to find firmer financial footing for public healthcare; ease voter-approved restrictions on the cost of water in the face of an unrelenting drought; and begin a wide-ranging examination of the state's criminal justice system. ... The governor needed lawmakers on the impasse over a healthcare tax while vetoing legislation such as proposed expansions of Medi-Cal benefits, saying they would be unwise "until the fiscal outlook … is stabilized." The tax is a key issue for next year, when California faces the loss of $1 billion in funding from Washington unless lawmakers agree to broaden a levy on healthcare plans so it complies with federal law. (Mason and Megerian, 10/12)

The San Jose Mercury News: 'Right To Try' Bill: Brown Rejects Proposal to Let Terminal Patients Use Unapproved Drugs and Devices
Despite his landmark decision last week to grant terminally ill patients the right to end their lives with a doctor's help, Gov. Jerry Brown took a different course on Sunday and rejected Assembly Bill 159, the so-called "Right To Try" bill. The latter measure sought to allow terminally ill patients who have exhausted all other options to access experimental drugs, products or devices that have not yet been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (Seipel, 10/11)

A new law signed by Gov. Jerry Brown Friday cements California's expansion of public healthcare to children who are in the country illegally, underscoring the state's immigrant-friendly tilt. The measure implements the $40 million allocated in this year's budget to provide state-subsidized Medi-Cal coverage to children aged 18 and younger who do not have legal status. (Mason, 10/9)

CAPITOL HILL WATCH

Politico: What It Would Take for Ryan to Run
Paul Ryan has made it abundantly clear he does not want to be speaker of the House. He enjoys the wonkery that comes with being Ways and Means chairman and believes he'd lose that as ringleader of the unwieldy Republican Conference. But there's one remote scenario, people close to him say, in which Ryan would consider abandoning his long-laid career plans and go for the speakership: if he was the true consensus choice of the party. That means no opposition, no sniping, no acceding to demands in exchange for support. (Sherman, 10/12)
Since taking over in 1997, [Thomas J.] Donohue has transformed the chamber into a powerful lobbying force, an evolution most starkly epitomized by its aggressive advocacy for tobacco. While the organization represents a variety of industries, its strategy has been a boon for cigarette makers, which have relied heavily on the chamber to push their agenda at home and abroad. (Hakim, 10/9)

CAMPAIGN 2016

CNN: Bernie Sanders: Raise Taxes to Fund Pricey Proposals
Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders says the federal budget deficit is a "serious problem" -- but he's not backing away from potentially pricey policy proposals. In an interview with NBC's Chuck Todd set to air Sunday on "Meet the Press," the Democratic presidential contender said he'd pay for his plans -- including $1 trillion for infrastructure and a "Medicare for all" health insurance system -- through higher taxes on wealthy Americans and corporations that keep profits outside the country. (Bradner, 10/11)

HEALTH LAW ISSUES AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Associated Press: US Boosts Privacy Protection on Health Insurance Website
Responding to criticism from civil liberties advocates, the Obama administration said Friday it has strengthened consumer privacy protections on the government's health insurance website as a new sign-up season nears. HealthCare.gov CEO Kevin Counihan said in a blog post that the web page will have a new 'privacy manager' that lets consumers opt out of embedded connections to third-party advertising, analytics and social media sites. (Alonso-Zaldivar, 10/9)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Los Angeles Times: Sky-High Price of New Stem Cell Therapies is a Growing Concern
The public uproar about high drug prices has focused on outlandish cases such as single pills jacked up in price by 5,000%, miracle cures marketed for tens of thousands of dollars per treatment. But how will people feel when they're confronted with treatments that are even more astronomically expensive? That's certain to become a growing concern at California's incubator of some of the most advanced and potentially costly medical therapies under development. (Michael Hiltzik, 10/9)

Bloomberg: Paid Family Leave's Conservative Lineage
When the Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio unveiled a proposal last month to subsidize family leave via a system of tax breaks for businesses, Democrats scoffed. Expanding protection of mothers and infants? Isn't that Democratic turf? (Stephen Mihm, 10/9)

DHNRE is a daily compilation of news stories from GCHP's Communications Department.

Certain news organizations are protected via a paywall requiring the purchase of a subscription to view their content.
CALIFORNIA WATCH

California Healthline: Vaccinations for Day Care Workers, CCS Extension among Avalanche of Signings
Day care workers will be required to be immunized against whooping cough and measles, and to a lesser extent they will be required to get a flu shot, thanks to legislation signed over the weekend by the governor. (Gorn, 10/13)

California Healthline: Brown Vetoes Medi-Cal Bills, Citing Expected $1.1B Budget Deficit
Citing the state Legislature's failure to rework the expiring managed care organization tax and the resulting budget deficit, Gov. Jerry Brown (D) on Saturday vetoed several bills, six of which were related to Medi-Cal, KQED's "The California Report" reports.(Myers/ 10/10).

CAPITOL HILL WATCH

The Texas Tribune: Cornyn: Mental Health Legislation Provides New Tools
When it comes to loved ones with mental health problems, U.S. Sen. John Cornyn says, families have traditionally faced two troublesome options: do nothing or institutionalize their relatives. And as a result, families don't have the tools to help provide the treatment needed, Cornyn said Monday in Austin, as he promoted federal legislation that would require mental health checks before denying anyone the ability to purchase firearms. (Silver, 10/12)

CAMPAIGN 2016

The Associated Press: Bush Offers Plan to Repeal, Replace Federal Health Care Law
Republican presidential candidate Jeb Bush on Monday proposed repealing and replacing President Barack Obama's health care law with one that would increase tax credits for individuals, allowing them to buy coverage protection against "high-cost medical events." But the two-page proposal, which would give more power to states to regulate health insurance, contained no specific details on how many people could be left without coverage. (Bustos, 10/13)

HEALTH LAW ISSUES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Acknowledging at least tacitly the difficulties of some health care consumers, the Obama administration plans major changes to Healthcare.gov this year to make it easier for shoppers to find health insurance plans that include their doctors and to predict their health care costs for the coming year. With substantial premium increases coming in some states in 2016, administration officials are expecting that many consumers already in the Affordable Care Act's networks will have to switch health plans and find new doctors as they scramble for cheaper alternatives. (Pear, 10/12)
EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Forbes: Missing From Election Debates: Healthcare
Tonight, the first Democratic debate of the election season will kick off. With two GOP debates in the rearview mirror, the first of the debates on the left should offer an opportunity to see how the candidates will distinguish themselves. In particular, one issue that’s been largely absent (at least from the GOP debates beyond “repeal and replace”) is health care. In this coming debate, and in the later GOP debates, the moderators ought to seek out the candidates’ positions on a slew of health care issues. (Yevgeniy Feyman and Alex Verkhivker, 10/13)

Huffington Post: Jeb’s Obamacare Repeal-And-Replace Plan Is More Repeal than Replace
Jeb Bush on Tuesday will introduce a plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. But “replace” may not be quite the right word. The Bush plan calls for a familiar mix of conservative ideas on health care, according to campaign documents obtained by The Huffington Post. ... The Bush plan would weaken those standards on insurance: People buying coverage would have more freedom to buy less-generous policies that cover only catastrophic costs. And the tax credits that Bush would provide, by design, guarantee access only to these catastrophic policies. (Jonathan Cohn, 10/12)

DHNR is a daily compilation of news stories from GCHP's Communications Department.

Certain news organizations are protected via a paywall requiring the purchase of a subscription to view their content.
The San Jose Mercury News: Daughters Of Charity Deal: State Consulting Firm Imposes Similar Conditions
With about five weeks to go before California Attorney General Kamala Harris must decide on a proposed deal between the struggling Daughters of Charity Health System and BlueMountain Capital Management, a consulting firm hired by the state is again recommending that approval be granted only if the hedge fund continues to operate most of the hospitals as acute-care medical facilities for at least a decade. (Seipel, 10/13)

California ends its legislative season having enacted some of the country's most aggressive social policies: Laws requiring student vaccinations, granting terminally ill people the right to take life-ending medications, and mandating equal pay for women were among dozens approved. The range of sweeping new laws in the most populous state reflects legislators' desire to set a national trend on progressive social and environmental issues while sidestepping more thorny economic matters. (10/13)

CAMPAIGN 2016

The Huffington Post: What Democrats Said about Obamacare during the Debate (Not Much)
President Barack Obama's landmark health care reform law -- one of the most contentious political issues of the past six years -- received all but no attention during the Democratic debate Tuesday tonight. But considering that all five Democrats on the stage were supporters of the Affordable Care Act, perhaps it's not surprising that CNN opted to raise issues more likely to provoke confrontation. (Young, 10/14)

The Washington Post: Clinton, Sanders Dominate Democrats’ First Go On The Debate Stage
The Democrats’ differences were focused largely on issues and policies, though there was far more engagement than some had predicted. The debate included discussions about climate change and renewable energy, college affordability, prescription drugs, terrorism and civil liberties, and the most serious threats to U.S. security in a world awash in conflicts. (Balz and Gearan, 10/13)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

The Wall Street Journal: Alzheimer’s Research Effort Is Ensnared In Legal Dispute
Caught in the crossfire of the legal dispute is the Alzheimer’s Disease Collaborative Study, a $100 million-plus research effort to test new drugs, formed between the University of California, San Diego and the National Institute on Aging, a federal agency, and partly funded by corporate grants from companies like Eli Lilly & Co. Neither the companies nor the NIH are named as defendants. (Wang and Loftus, 10/14)
Los Angeles Times: Planned Parenthood Stops Accepting Payment For Fetal Tissue Used For Research

“Over the last two months, opponents of safe and legal abortion have turned patently false claims about our role in fetal tissue donation into fodder to advance their extreme political agenda,” Richards wrote in the letter, which was released Tuesday. The results of that campaign, she said, included “votes in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate that would have blocked Planned Parenthood from receiving federal reimbursements for providing cancer screenings and other preventive care.” (LaGanga and Muskal, 10/13)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

USA Today: Democratic Debate Takeaways: Our View

Like most debates, this one touched on a wide range of topics. But when it focused on issues such as Social Security, Medicare and college tuition, it seemed to have settled on a new slogan: “Spend, baby, spend.” The indefatigable Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, of course, led the pack. He pushed his plans to increase Social Security benefits by an average of $65 per month, pay every dime of the cost of students attending public universities, and expand Medicare to make it available to anyone. But the others weren’t far behind. [Hillary] Clinton and former Maryland governor Martin O’Malley, the most plausible of the three lesser-known candidates, want to expand Social Security. Both would pour money into subsidizing tuition. And O’Malley has a sweeping health plan that makes Obamacare look tame. (10/14)
California Healthline: Scope of Practice Legislation to Fight another Day
Amid the deluge of health care bills signed and vetoed by the governor in recent days, absent were several bills that would have expanded the scope of practice of mid-level health clinicians. (Vesely, 10/15)

California Healthline: Blue Shield of Calif. Agrees to Limit Premiums, Recalculate Rebates
Blue Shield of California has agreed to limit its premiums for certain policies next year and in 2017, Payers & Providers reports. On Oct. 5, the California Department of Managed Health Care issued an order addressing Blue Shield's premiums and medical loss ratio calculations. (10/15)

HealthIT Security: California Adopts Statewide Data Breach Notification Laws
In the wake of several recent large-scale data breaches, such as the UCLA Health System, California Governor Jerry Brown recently signed a law that would provide statewide regulations for data breach notification. The law, which comes as a three-bill package, describes standards for data encryption, the language with which an entity provides data breach notification, and standards for defining personal information. (Heath, 10/12)

CAPITOL HILL WATCH

The Associated Press: GOP Lawmaker Obtains Planned Parenthood Videos
Anti-abortion activists have given Congress lengthy, unedited videos they recorded showing Planned Parenthood officials discussing their retrieval of fetal tissue, a Republican House committee chairman said Wednesday. Democrats complained that the recordings seemed to be copies and not originals. That could mean they wouldn't help resolve conflicting claims about whether the videos — including shorter versions that abortion foes began posting online this summer — were misleadingly edited. (Fram, 10/14)

CAMPAIGN 2016

The Wall Street Journal’s Washington Wire: Democratic Debate Spotlights Health Care for Illegal Immigrants
The Democratic debate made clear that the two leading candidates for the party’s presidential nomination both would allow illegal immigrants to buy coverage on government websites, but not much more. That's about the same as the status quo. The 2010 health-care overhaul — supported by all the candidates on the stage Tuesday night — requires people to prove legal residency to shop for coverage on HealthCare.gov or obtain tax credits to help pay premiums. They also can't enroll in Medicaid, the state-federal program for the poor that also locks out many legal immigrants. The Obama administration extended those rules to children granted immigration enforcement reprieves under a 2012 executive action, and has said it would do the same for adults. (Radnofsky, 10/14)
MARKETPLACE

Valeant Pharmaceuticals International, which has come under fire for aggressively increasing the prices of its drugs, said late Wednesday that it had received two federal subpoenas related to its pricing, distribution and patient support practices. The subpoenas were issued by the United States attorney’s offices in Manhattan and Massachusetts. (Pollack, 10/14)

The Associated Press: Employers Offer Cash to Push Shopping Around for Health Care
Paula Bennett pockets about $3,000 a year from her employer mainly for driving around 80 miles roundtrip for a deal on doses of her Crohn’s disease treatment Remicade. The extra income comes through SmartShopper, a program offered by some employers to provide cash to workers who choose quality health care options with lower prices. (Murphy, 10/14)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Stateline: Should The Smoking Age Be 21? Some Legislators Say Yes
While a growing number of states have turned their attention to marijuana legalization, another proposal has been quietly catching fire among some legislators—raising the legal age to buy cigarettes. This summer, Hawaii became the first state to approve increasing the smoking age from 18 to 21 starting Jan 1. A similar measure passed the California Senate, but stalled in the Assembly. And nearly a dozen other states have considered bills this year to boost the legal age for buying tobacco products. (Bergal, 10/14)

KPCC: Still too many C-sections at California Hospitals
For some pregnant women, giving birth by Cesarean section is critical, even lifesaving. But at far too many hospitals in California and across the nation, lots of women are having C-sections when the procedure is not medically indicated, according to newly released data. (Plevin, 10/14)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

About 32 million people in the U.S. remained uninsured as of early 2015, a Kaiser Family Foundation analysis of federal survey data has found, with about half of them eligible for Medicaid or subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. With the high-profile resistance in some states to Medicaid expansion and the ACA generally, you may think those places are the main obstacle to covering more of the uninsured. But the uninsured remain a problem in both red and blue states. (Drew Altman, 10/14)

DHNK is a daily compilation of news stories from GCHP’s Communications Department.

Certain news organizations are protected via a paywall requiring the purchase of a subscription to view their content.
California Healthline: Record Medicaid Growth, Reforms
Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act in 29 states, including California, has driven record enrollment and spending for the program in fiscal year 2015, according to a report by the Kaiser Family Foundation. (Vesely, 10/16)

The San Jose Mercury News: Daughters of Charity Deal Draws Low-Key Crowd at Public Meeting
Nine months after supporters and protesters clashed outside public hearings held to discuss the proposed sale of the Daughters of Charity Health System to a controversial Southern California firm, the mood on Thursday at O'Connor Hospital couldn't have been more different. In their first chance to comment on a New York City-based hedge fund's interest in salvaging the struggling Catholic hospital system, a few dozen O'Connor employees, local residents and others calmly addressed the pros and cons of the transaction to state regulators for two hours. (Seipel, 10/15)

Bloomberg: Here's What Washington Could do to Combat High Drug Prices
On the campaign trail, Hillary Clinton is proposing to force pharmaceutical companies to spend more on research. In California, the push is on for a law to contain government spending on drugs. And on the front pages of national newspapers, stories keep appearing about high medicine prices. (Cortez, Edney and Koons, 10/14)

The Associated Press: UnitedHealth Dives Deeper into Public Insurance Exchanges
UnitedHealth will jump into 11 more public insurance exchanges next year, as the nation's biggest health insurer grows more comfortable with one of the health care overhaul's main ways of expanding coverage to millions of people. The once-reluctant exchange participant now draws 550,000 customers from that market and predicts that business will improve next year, helped by double-digit price hikes. (10/15)

The Obama administration is again dramatically scaling back projected enrollment in health plans purchased through the Affordable Care Act, predicting that about 10 million people will have coverage through the health law's marketplaces by the end of next year. (Levey, 10/15)

Department of Health and Human Services officials Thursday predicted that about an additional 1 million Americans would sign up for coverage under the federal health law next year and acknowledged that prospective enrollees are worried about the cost of health insurance, even with the law's financial help. (Carey, 10/15)
NPR: States That Declined to Expand Medicaid Face Higher Costs
The 22 states that didn't expand Medicaid eligibility as part of Obamacare last year saw their costs to provide health care to the poor rise twice as fast as states that extended benefits to more low-income residents. It's a counterintuitive twist for those states whose governors, most Republicans who opposed the Affordable Care Act, chose not to accept federal funds to extend Medicaid to more people. (Kodjak, 10/15)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Bloomberg: Ask Investors Whether Obamacare is Working
Since the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act took effect two years ago in the rockiest of rollouts, American health-care companies outperformed every industry in the U.S. Taken together, they are the best collection of stocks among worldwide peers. The impact of Obamacare on the U.S. economy and its health-care system remains a matter of intense debate. More Americans have health insurance, but the long term effects on the cost of medical care and on government spending are still unknown. For health-care companies, though, one thing is clear: Instead of being the economic catastrophe predicted by congressional Republicans, all of whom voted against it, Obamacare, at worst, is benign for U.S. business and, at best, is making global investors rich. (Matthew A. Winkler, 10/16)

For years, this blog has been warning about how the high cost of Obamacare-sponsored insurance would limit the law's expansion of health coverage. Well, the chicken has come home to roost. Today, the Obama administration announced that it projected dramatically lower enrollment growth for Obamacare's exchanges in 2016: only 1.3 million, compared to a prediction of 8 million when the law was passed five years ago. ... The problem is fairly easy to understand. Obamacare imposed thousands of pages of new federal regulations on the market for private-sector health insurance purchased by individuals. These regulations mandated that all plans had to pay for a wide range of services, even if policyholders didn't want them. They forced young people to pay double, and sometimes triple, what they had been paying before for coverage. And plans were required to provide higher financial payouts than they previously had to. (Avik Roy, 10/15)

DHNR is a daily compilation of news stories from GCHP's Communications Department.
Certain news organizations are protected via a paywall requiring the purchase of a subscription to view their content.