California Healthline: Californians Speak after GOP's Obamacare Repeal Attempt Falls Flat
Relief, disappointment, unassuaged worry, political swagger, straightforward determination. From the state Capitol to the halls of academia, and from the interior to the coast, Californians reacted strongly on Friday to the dramatic news that the ACA would be around “for the foreseeable future,” as House Speaker Paul Ryan conceded after being forced to withdraw the Republican repeal bill for lack of support within his own party. (3/27)

Ventura County Star: Camarillo Hospice and Livingston Memorial to Merge
The volunteer boards of Camarillo Hospice and Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice have agreed to merge the two nonprofits in a move to broaden the continuum of care for Ventura County residents. The closing of the merger is expected in April, with Camarillo Hospice operating as a program of Livingston. The organizations have long shared a mission of providing care for people who have serious life-threatening or terminal illnesses. By bringing their services together, they say they are creating a unique community-based health system for end-of-life care throughout the county. (3/24)

Los Angeles Times: L.A. Officials Push for New Steps to Address Health Risks from Homebuilding Near Freeways
In a new push to address health risks from a surge in residential construction near freeways, Los Angeles officials have requested a study of development restrictions, design standards and other steps to protect residents from traffic pollution. Planning, transportation and other officials should prepare “strategies to address the hazard of freeway pollution affecting residents of new and existing structures,” according to a motion filed this week by councilmen Jose Huizar and Paul Koretz. These could include buffer zones and barriers, air filtration requirements and regulations on building design. (Barboza and Zahniser, 3/24)

KPCC: Bill Would Require State Colleges to Provide Medical Abortions
A bill in the California legislature would require all public universities and community colleges in the state to provide medical abortions at student health centers. Sen. Connie Leyva (D-Chino) introduced the measure; she said it's important to make medical abortions available on campus. (Lavender, 3/24)

CAPITOL HILL WATCH

Politico: Sanders to Offer Single-Payer Health Care Plan
Sen. Bernie Sanders said Sunday he planned to introduce a single-payer health care plan to Congress, inviting Republican leaders to negotiate the measure. “I'm going to introduce a Medicare-for-all single-payer program,” Sanders told anchor Dana Bash on CNN's "State of the Union.” The Vermont senator, who has repeatedly stated his support for such a plan in the past, said he hoped to garner bipartisan support for the plan. (Lima, 3/26)

The Associated Press: Failure on Health Bill Also Hurts Prospects for Tax Overhaul
House Republicans' failure to repeal Barack Obama's health care law deals a serious blow to another big part of President Donald Trump's agenda: tax reform. Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., say they will soon turn their attention to the first major re-write of the tax code in more than 30 years. But they will have to do it without the momentum of victory on health care. (Ohlemacher, 3/25)
ADMINISTRATION NEWS

ProPublica: Heritage Foundation Alum Critical of Transgender Rights to Lead HHS Civil Rights Office
The Trump administration has quietly appointed a Heritage Foundation staffer who has railed against civil rights protections for transgender patients as director of the federal agency charged with protecting the civil rights of all patients. Though the administration did not issue a formal announcement, Roger Severino is now listed on the website of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as director of the Office for Civil Rights. (Ornstein, 3/24)

HEALTH LAW

Politico: Trump’s Obamacare Stumble Empowers Pelosi
Nancy Pelosi is suddenly relevant again. The implosion of the all-Republican effort to lay waste to Obamacare showed that President Donald Trump might need the San Francisco Democrat to salvage the rest of his agenda. The self-professed master negotiator couldn’t get it done with his own party, despite a 44-seat House majority, and hinted afterward he might start to look across the aisle. (Caygle, 3/27)

Politico: How a Secret Freedom Caucus Pact Brought Down Obamacare Repeal
Speaker Paul Ryan and House leaders had been toiling behind closed doors for weeks assembling their Obamacare repeal bill as suspicion on the far-right simmered to a boil. So on March 7, just hours after Ryan unveiled a plan that confirmed its worst fears, the House Freedom Caucus rushed to devise a counterstrategy. The few dozen true believers knew that pressure from House leaders and President Donald Trump to fall in line would be immense and they were intent on not getting boxed in. (Bade, Dawsey and Haberkorn, 3/26)

The Associated Press: New Anxieties as Trump Says Obamacare Will 'Explode'
Americans who have benefited from the ACA are feeling some relief at the failure of Republican efforts to repeal it, but they face new anxieties with President Donald Trump tweeting that "ObamaCare will explode." Premiums have risen and major insurers have backed out of the state markets where people can buy insurance online under Obama's signature health care law. But people who say it saved their lives or helped them start a business want lawmakers to fix these problems, not encourage them. (3/26)

Stat: In Trump Country, Voters Know Who’s to Blame for the Health Bill Debacle. And it’s Not Their President.
They blame the establishment. They blame the Democrats. They blame the media. But it seems that few voters in Trump country blame President Trump for the stunning collapse of the Republican-led effort to repeal and replace Obamacare. “He did all he could, I think,” said Edward Reede, 73. “You can only do so much as president. You can only twist so many arms.” (Siegelbaum and Martin, 3/25)

Los Angeles Times: Failure of Their Healthcare Bill Leaves Republicans Running Obamacare. That Could Open the Way for Bipartisan Changes
Unable to kill the Affordable Care Act, Republicans may now have to fix it. The White House and even GOP members of Congress risk a huge political backlash if they allow the healthcare law to come apart, as President Trump has predicted it will. That leaves Republicans with a strong incentive to take steps to shore up Obamacare insurance markets, keep premiums in check and preserve consumer protections in a way that would be acceptable to both sides of the aisle in Congress. (Levey, 3/25)
Reuters: Planned Parenthood Sees Brief Reprieve after Healthcare Bill Yanked
Planned Parenthood, the national health organization that would have lost federal funding under sweeping healthcare overhaul legislation, views the withdrawal of the bill on Friday as a temporary reprieve, not the end of a threat to its existence. (Allen and Mincer, 3/24)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

NPR: Breast-Fed Kids May Be Less Hyper, but Not Necessarily Smarter, Study Finds
Breast-feeding has many known health benefits, but there's still debate about how it may influence kids' behavior and intelligence. Now, a new study published in Pediatrics finds that children who are breast-fed for at least six months as babies have less hyperactive behavior by age 3 compared with kids who weren't breast-fed. (Aubrey, 3/27)

Kaiser Health News: Want to Live Past 100? Centenarians Share Secrets of Knee Bends and Nips of Scotch
Gertrude Siegel is 101 and hears it all the time. “Everyone says ‘I want to be just like you.’ I tell them to get in line,” she said. John and Charlotte Henderson, 104 and 102, often field questions from wannabes eager to learn their secrets. “Living in moderation,” he said. “We never overdo anything. Eat well. Sleep well. Don't overdrink. Don't overeat. And exercise regularly.” (Jayson, 3/27)

The Baltimore Sun: Study: African-Americans Don’t Trust Flu Vaccine; Whites Don’t Think Flu is That Bad
The researchers found African-Americans worried about the safety of the shot more than the health risks of the flu. The findings are important as the medical community tries to improve vaccination rates. Fewer than half of Americans get the flu vaccine, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Just 41 percent of African-Americans get vaccinated, compared with 47 percent of whites. The study, published in the journal Risk Analysis, included 800 white and 800 African-American participants. Researchers from the University of Georgia and the University of Pittsburgh also participated in the research. (McDaniels, 3/25)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

The Washington Post: The Lessons Trump and Ryan Failed to Learn from History
If President Trump and House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) had paid attention to Mitt Romney, they could have avoided the fiasco of their now dead and unmourned health-care bill. They would not now face a situation in which both of them are being blamed because they both deserve to be. And the Republican Party would not be engulfed in a festival of recriminations. (E.J. Dionne Jr., 3/26)
Sacramento Bee: California Faces Higher Medi-Cal Costs Despite Trumpcare Failure
With the feds covering most costs, Medi-Cal’s enrollment has ballooned from 7.6 million to more than 14 million in the last five years, or more than a third of the state’s 39 million residents. The Republican alternative would have cost the budget up to $24.3 billion a year by 2027. That said, the future of Medi-Cal remains very dicey because we still don’t know what administrative changes President Donald Trump might make in the Medicaid system, short of congressional action. (Walters, 3/28)

California Healthline: Repeal and Replace Hits a Roadblock. What’s Next for California?
California embraced the Affordable Care Act and in many ways became a national model for how it could work — driving uninsured rates down from about 17 percent to 7 percent since the law rolled out. The state added 3.7 million people to the rolls under its Medicaid expansion, and 1.5 million joined its state-run marketplace, Covered California. Compared to other states, the exchange’s premium increases have remained low, though they have risen substantially this year. (3/28)

The Mercury News: California Bill Would Reduce Anti-Competitive Practices by Largest Hospital Chains
A Bay Area legislator is trying to level the playing field among hospital chains, particularly in Northern California, where he said studies show consolidations have led to some of the highest healthcare prices for consumers and employers in the state. Sen. Bill Monning, D-Carmel, on Tuesday will introduce Senate Bill 538 that he said seeks “fairness, access and affordable healthcare” on behalf of patients. The legislation would, among other things, stop certain anti-competitive practices, such as gag clauses in health plan contracts, which prevent employer groups from sharing pricing data that could encourage more cost-effective care for employees. Monning points to a 2016 study by University of Southern California healthcare economist Glenn Melnick and co-author Katya Fonkych that showed how costs grew at a faster rate at the state’s two largest hospital chains. (Seipel, 3/28)

Ventura County Star: Ventura County Joins ID Program for Welfare Benefits
Ventura County has joined a pilot project to test a new — and quicker — way of verifying the identity of public assistance recipients to prevent fraud. The state is evaluating a web-based system that could replace the collection of fingerprints from people applying for programs providing cash aid to indigent adults and poor families. Ventura County will test the system for applicants of CalWORKs, which provides income and work training for 5,000 low-income households in the county. (Wilson, 3/26)

ADMINISTRATION NEWS

The Hill: Price Faces Unwanted Task of Administering ObamaCare
Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price came into office last month ready to lead the charge on repealing ObamaCare. Now, that effort has run into a brick wall, leaving him to oversee a law he fiercely opposes. President Trump last week predicted that ObamaCare “soon will explode,” stirring speculation that the administration could seek to undermine the law. Yet there are also signs that Price and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will take a more pragmatic approach. (Sullivan, 3/28)
HEALTH LAW

The New York Times: 2018 Dilemma for Republicans: Which Way Now on Obamacare?
As they come to terms with their humiliating failure to undo the Affordable Care Act, Republicans eyeing next year's congressional campaign are grappling with a new dilemma: Do they risk depressing their conservative base by abandoning the repeal effort or anger a broader set of voters by reviving a deeply unpopular bill even closer to the midterm elections? (Martin, 3/28)

Politico: Spicer Compares GOP Health Care Bill to a 'Bad Deal'
White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer on Monday likened President Donald Trump’s decision to abandon the House Republican proposal to repeal Obamacare — which Trump had supported — to walking away from a “bad deal.” (Conway, 3/27)

Politico: Gallup: Trump Hits New Low after Health Care Flop
President Donald Trump’s approval rating slipped to a new low Monday in the Gallup daily tracking poll, the first measure of Trump’s job performance following his administration’s failure to move a new health care law through Congress. Only 36 percent of Americans approve of the way Trump is handling his job as president in interviews conducted last Friday through Sunday, a time period entirely after Republicans abandoned their bill to replace the 2010 Affordable Care Act. (Shepard, 3/27)

NPR Fact Check: Trump Says Obamacare is 'Exploding.' That's Not Quite True
President Trump is doing his best to put a good face on defeat in his party's attempt to replace the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. His strategy is simple: declare that the law is failing. And he is selling that message in his own distinctly Trumpian way: concocting it out of simple, bold words and then hammering that message home, over and over: Obamacare, in his words, will "explode." (Kurtzleben and Kodjak, 3/27)

MEDICAID

The New York Times: In Health Bill’s Defeat, Medicaid Comes of Age
When it was created more than a half century ago, Medicaid almost escaped notice. Front-page stories hailed the bigger, more controversial part of the law that President Lyndon B. Johnson signed that July day in 1965 — health insurance for elderly people, or Medicare, which the AMA had bitterly denounced as socialized medicine. The New York Times did not even mention Medicaid, conceived as a small program to cover poor people’s medical bills. (Zernike, Goodnough and Belluck, 3/27)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Kaiser Health News: New Vaccine Recommendation Cuts Number of HPV Shots Children Need
You’d think that a vaccine that protects people against more than a half-dozen types of cancer would have people lining up to get it. But the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which can prevent roughly 90 percent of all cervical cancers as well as other cancers and sexually transmitted infections caused by the virus, has faced an uphill climb since its introduction more than a decade ago. Now, with a new dosing schedule that requires fewer shots and a more effective vaccine, clinicians and public health advocates hope they may move the needle on preventing these virus-related cancers. (Andrews, 3/28)
WOMEN'S HEALTH

Nine days after Nikolas Michaud's latest heroin relapse, the skinny 27-year-old sat on a roof deck at a new drug rehabilitation clinic here. He picked up a bong, filled it with a pinch of marijuana, lit the leaves and inhaled. All this took place in plain view of the clinic's director. … The new clinic is experimenting with a concept made possible by the growing legalization of marijuana: that pot, rather than being a gateway into drugs, could be a gateway out. (Richtel, 3/27)

The Hill: WH Won't Commit to Defunding Planned Parenthood in Spending Bill
The White House refused to commit Monday to defunding Planned Parenthood in an upcoming must-pass spending bill, a sign it’s looking to avoid a government shutdown over the hot-button issue. President Trump viewed the now-dead Republican healthcare bill as “an opportunity to defund” Planned Parenthood, according to press secretary Sean Spicer, who wouldn’t say whether the president would demand defunding in future legislation. (Fabian, 3/27)

The Washington Post: How A Protein Called ‘NFL’ Could Help the NFL with Brain Injuries
Brain injuries are a danger in many sports, but for none more than football and its most profitable enterprise, the National Football League. The NFL is spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a concussion-lawsuit settlement and has poured tens of millions into research on measuring and preventing head trauma. (Bieler, 3/27)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Los Angeles Times: Can Trump Be Stopped from Making Obamacare ‘Explode’?
Supporters of the Affordable Care Act may have celebrated prematurely at the demise last week of the House Republicans’ proposal for its repeal. Yes, the most immediate threat to the future of Obamacare is dead, for now. And in the wake of the House fiasco, President Trump as well as some Senate Republicans have made noises about reaching out to Democrats to shore up the health insurance program. But the Trump White House and congressional Republicans still have it within their power to damage the prospects of health coverage for millions of Americans, whether by actively undermining the Affordable Care Act by administrative fiat or by letting it wither by neglect. (Michael Hiltzik, 3/27)
KPCC: Should Medical Records Be Free for Low-Income Patients?
Low-income people applying for Medi-Cal or other social services often need their medical records to prove their eligibility, but in many cases they have to pay to get them. A bill in Sacramento would do away with those fees. (Lavender, 3/29)

Ventura County Star: Medi-Cal Plan Hires Chief Diversity Officer
After a process that began more than a year ago, the Ventura County Medi-Cal Managed Care Commission has hired a chief diversity officer, officials announced Monday. The commission governs the Gold Coast Health Plan, which administers Medi-Cal health insurance to more than 200,000 Ventura County residents. Douglas Freeman will lead diversity efforts at Gold Coast, commission Chairman Darren Lee said. ... Efforts to hire a chief diversity officer and to accelerate diversity efforts at the plan began last year after allegations involving workplace environment, including allegedly racist posters displayed in the workplace. (Kisken, 3/28)

Capital Public Radio: Covered California, Medi-Cal Still Operating after Failed Health Care Bill
California officials say its health insurance exchange and Medicaid expansion will continue operating without any changes after the House Republican health care bill failed to garner enough support. Covered California was developed as part of the Affordable Care Act. Under the health care law, states could also expand their Medicaid programs to single people without children. (Johnson, 3/28)

Politico: California Charges Creators of Planned Parenthood Undercover Videos
Daleiden’s sting videos, released two years ago through the Center for Medical Progress, accused Planned Parenthood clinics of profiting from the sale of fetal tissue. Planned Parenthood has strongly denied the accusations, and numerous investigations into the organization since the videos were released haven’t found any wrongdoing. The videos strengthened efforts in Congress to cut off federal funding to Planned Parenthood — efforts that are still underway. (3/28)

Los Angeles Times: California GOP Lawmakers Introduce Bills to Boost Healthcare and Jobs for Veterans
Republican state lawmakers unveiled a package of six bills Tuesday aimed at improving job training and healthcare services for California veterans. "Our veterans have served this country bravely and it is only right for us to recognize their contribution and see that when they do come home they receive the care and assistance they deserve," said state Sen. Janet Nguyen of Garden Grove, who authored three of the measures. (Dillon, 3/28)

San Jose Mercury News: Dialysis Centers: California Bill Proposes to Improve Staffing, Inspections
California could become one of almost a dozen states in the country to require higher staffing levels at dialysis clinics that help treat tens of thousands of these patients if a bill by a Southern California legislator becomes law. The proposal also would mandate annual inspections of each facility. (Seipel, 3/28)
ADMINISTRATION NEWS

Stat: Executive Order Lays Out Blueprint for Trump Opioid Commission
An executive order being prepared by the Trump administration would set an ambitious timetable for new recommendations to address the nation's opioid crisis and appoint top administration officials to oversee the effort, according to a draft obtained by STAT. (Scott, 3/28)

The Washington Post: Opioid Crisis: McCaskill Demands Documents from Manufacturers
“This epidemic is the direct result of a calculated sales and marketing strategy major opioid manufacturers have allegedly pursued over the past 20 years to expand their market share and increase dependency on powerful — and often deadly — painkillers,” McCaskill, who is the ranking Democrat of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, wrote to company executives. “To achieve this goal, manufacturers have reportedly sought, among other techniques, to downplay the risk of addiction to their products and encourage physicians to prescribe opioids for all cases of pain and in high doses.” (Bernstein and Higham, 3/28)

HEALTH LAW

Politico: Trump Could Blow Up Obamacare with One Move
President Trump says that Obamacare is going to explode. But if that happens, it is likely because his administration supplies the spark that detonates the marketplaces. The White House could decide at any time to eliminate subsidies relied upon by insurers to lower costs for Obamacare’s poorest customers, as a result of a court win by House Republicans last spring. (Demko, 3/29)

USA Today: House Republicans Say They are Still Negotiating Obamacare Repeal
After the failure of the bill and some weekend reflection, Freedom Caucus Chairman Mark Meadows, R-N.C., and his caucus are trying to do things differently. The group is working with leadership and moderate Republicans to try to bring back the bill in a different form. Meadows had a meeting with Ryan on Tuesday, which was unusual because the Freedom Caucus had largely gone around leadership during the negotiation process and dealt directly with the White House. (Collins, 3/28)

The Associated Press: Hillary Clinton Calls Defeat of GOP Health Care Bill 'A Victory for All Americans'
A spirited Hillary Clinton took on the Trump administration in one of her first public speeches since she lost the presidential election, criticizing the country's Republican leaders on everything from health care to the shortage of women appointees in top administration positions. Cracking jokes about her November defeat and her months out of the limelight since, Clinton spoke to thousands of businesswomen in San Francisco, joking there was no place she'd rather be, "other than the White House.” (Knickmeyer, 3/28)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Los Angeles Times: Hepatitis B and C Can Be Wiped Out in the U.S. by 2030. Here’s How
Health experts have devised an aggressive plan to stamp out a viral disease that is fueling a sharp rise in liver cancer in the United States and killing 20,000 Americans per year. Their national strategy for eliminating two types of hepatitis by 2030 hinges on persuading the federal government to purchase the rights to one or more of the costly new medications that can essentially cure hepatitis C. (Healy, 3/28)
Kaiser Health News: Lead Poisoning’s Lifelong Toll Includes Lowering Social Mobility, Researchers Find
By the time study participants reached age 38, a pattern emerged: Children who were exposed to lead early in life had worse cognitive abilities, based on how their exposure level. The difference was statistically significant. They were also more likely to be worse off, socioeconomically, than those who had not been exposed to lead. The study found that no matter what the child’s IQ, the mother’s IQ, or the family’s social status, lead poisoning resulted in downward social mobility. That was largely thanks to cognitive decline, according to the research. (Luthra, 3/28)

WOMEN’S HEALTH

The Washington Post: Should ‘Morning-After’ Pills Be Available on College Campuses Around the Clock?
Sarah Riback doesn’t have personal experience with getting the pills on campus. But the 19-year-old at the University of Maryland knows peers who have needed them. “This is a common thing that a lot of other female students have had to do,” she said. She’s talking about emergency contraception. Riback and other advocates say morning-after pills should be available on college campuses at all hours. At U-Md., they’re available at a student health center pharmacy that is open 36 hours a week, Monday through Friday. (Larimer, 3/28)

NPR: Scientists Replicate Female Reproductive System in a Dish to Aid Research
Scientists say they’ve made a device in the lab that can mimic the human female reproductive cycle. The researchers hope the device, assembled from living tissue, will lead to new treatments for many medical problems that plague some women, ranging from fibroids and endometriosis to infertility, miscarriages and gynecologic cancers. (Stein, 3/28)

PHARMACEUTICALS

The New York Times: F.D.A. Approves First Drug to Treat Severe Multiple Sclerosis
The Food and Drug Administration approved on Tuesday the first drug to treat a severe form of multiple sclerosis, offering hope to patients who previously had no other options to combat a relentless disease that leads to paralysis and cognitive decline. The federal agency also cleared the drug to treat people with the more common, relapsing form of the disease. (Thomas, 3/28)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

Los Angeles Times: Are We Subsidizing a Public Health Crisis by Allowing the Poor to Buy Soda with Food Stamps?
A major study of the grocery-buying habits of millions of Americans released late last year found that people using food stamps generally make the same unhealthy food choices as everyone else in America. Too many sweets, salty snacks and prepared desserts. Junk food, in other words. (3/29)

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CALIFORNIA WATCH

Ventura County Star: Grand Jury Praises Ventura County Medical Center
The Ventura County Medical Center received kudos for its performance in accreditation surveys in a recent Ventura County civil grand jury report. (Kisken, 3/30)

San Jose Mercury News: California Lawmakers Lay Out Proposed Universal Health Care Plan
An ambitious proposal to create a single statewide insurance plan for every Californian — including undocumented residents, seniors on Medicare and people who now get their health coverage through work — began to take shape on Thursday when two legislators released details about what services would be covered and who would run the giant program. (Murphy, 3/30)

Sacramento Bee: California Cigarette Tax Goes Up by $2
The cost of cigarettes sold in California will go up significantly, starting Saturday. That’s when the provisions of Proposition 56 – formally known as the California Healthcare, Research and Prevention Tobacco Tax Act of 2016 and approved by voters last November– go into effect. The cigarette tax rate on Saturday spikes from the current 87 cents to $2.87 per pack of 20 cigarettes. (Glover, 3/30)

CAPITOL HILL WATCH

The Washington Post: Pence Breaks Tie to Allow States to Strip Family-Planning Dollars from Abortion Providers
The measure, a priority for groups that oppose abortion, would give a thumbs-up to Tennessee and other conservative states to resume policies blocking Planned Parenthood clinics from getting federal funding through the Title X family-planning program. Those dollars can’t be used for abortions, but conservatives feel abortion providers shouldn’t receive any taxpayer funds. While courts have not allowed states to withhold Medicaid money from Planned Parenthood, they’ve generally allowed states to redirect family-planning dollars to other health providers. (Cunningham, 3/30)

ADMINISTRATION NEWS

Los Angeles Times: Drastic Cuts to NIH Budget Could Translate to Less Innovation and Fewer Patents, Study Argue
From research on stem cells and DNA sequencing to experiments with fruit flies and surveys of human behavior, projects funded by the National Institutes of Health aim to make Americans healthier. A new analysis finds that NIH-funded research also fuels the kinds of innovations that drive the U.S. economy. Between 1990 and 2012, close to 1 in 10 projects made possible by an NIH grant resulted in a patent, usually for a university or a hospital. (Healy, 3/30)

The Washington Post: EPA Chief, Rejecting Agency’s Own Analysis, Declines to Ban Pesticide Despite Health Concerns
The chemical compound chlorpyrifos, also known as Lorsban, has been used by farmers for more than a half-century to kill pests on crops including broccoli, strawberries and citrus. The EPA banned its spraying indoors to combat household bugs more than a decade ago. But only in recent years did the agency seek to ban its use in agriculture, after mounting scientific evidence that prenatal exposure can pose risks to fetal brain and nervous system development. (Dennis, 3/29)
HEALTH LAW

Senior House Republicans said Thursday that they expected the federal government to continue paying billions of dollars in subsidies to health insurance companies to keep low-income people covered under the Affordable Care Act for the rest of this year — and perhaps for 2018 as well. (Pear and Abelson, 3/30)

The Hill: Ryan Won’t Commit to Healthcare Vote
One week after the GOP ObamaCare repeal and replacement plan collapsed, Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said Thursday he would not commit to holding another healthcare vote. "I’m not going to commit to when and what the vote is going to look like, because it’s my job to make sure that House Republicans can coalesce and come together and draw a consensus," Ryan told reporters at his weekly news conference. (Wong, 3/30)

Reuters: Anthem Likely to Pull Back from Obamacare Markets in 2018: Jefferies
Anthem Inc is likely to exit from a large portion of its Obamacare individual insurance markets next year, Jefferies analysts said, nearly a week after Republican leaders pulled legislation to overhaul the U.S. healthcare system. Anthem is one of the few health insurers that still sells plans under Obamacare. Humana Inc, Aetna Inc and UnitedHealth Group Inc pulled out after reporting hundreds of millions of dollars of losses. (Banerjee, 3/30)

Politico: White House Shuffles West Wing Staff after Health Bill Collapse
The departure of deputy chief of staff Katie Walsh, a key ally of Trump’s chief of staff Reince Priebus, caps a rough stretch for Trump, who has seen his young administration dogged by allegations of Russia ties, his travel ban executive order blocked twice in court, and the health care bill he supported go down in flames. (Goldmacher, Nussbaum, Palmeri and Isenstadt, 3/30)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

California Healthline: In Pain? Many Doctors Say Opioids Are Not the Answer
Those of you who have experienced pain, especially gnawing, chronic pain, know that it affects your happiness, outlook and ability to function. In the past couple of years, the treatment of chronic pain has undergone an earthshaking transformation as opioid addiction continues to claim — and ruin — lives. (Bazar, 3/31)

The Washington Post: A Staggering Increase in U.S. Heroin Use Has Hit Young, White Men the Hardest
Heroin use — which has been at the epicenter of a ruthless and relentless opioid epidemic sweeping the country — has increased fivefold over a decade, and dependence on the drug has tripled, researchers say. A major study released Wednesday found that the sharpest increase in heroin use and addiction was among young, white men with lower education and income levels. (Bever, 3/30)

Los Angeles Times: Having a Common Cold Feels Worse if You’re Lonely
Sometimes, life kicks you when you’re down. According to new research, that crummy, achy, sneezy feeling you get when you have a cold is worse if you are also feeling lonely. (Netburn, 3/30)
USA Today: Baby Boxes Are All the Buzz, but Are They Bunk?
If all goes to plan, more than 300,000 infants in the U.S. will sleep in cardboard boxes before year’s end. That’s according to a Los Angeles-based business, which is working with health organizations to give away thousands of boxes for parents to use as baby beds. It’s part of an educational model aimed at reducing sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS. But that idea doesn’t rest well with prominent doctors, researchers and organizations, who characterize the boxes as untested and unregulated. (Hafner, 3/30)

NPR: Sepsis Treatment Still Lacks Rigorous Proof, Skeptics Say
Last week, a physician made the extraordinary claim that he had an effective treatment for sepsis, sometimes known as blood poisoning. Sepsis is a bodywide inflammation, usually triggered by infection, and the leading cause of death in hospitals, taking 300,000 lives a year. So, even a 15 percent improvement in survival would save 40,000 lives — the number of Americans who die on the highway each year, or from breast cancer. (Harris, 3/30)

WOMEN’S HEALTH

Kaiser Health News: Women with Coverage for IVF More Likely to Have Procedure Again, Give Birth
After four cycles of IVF, women with insurance had a 57 percent probability of giving birth while a woman without coverage had a 51 percent chance, a study in JAMA reports. (Andrews, 3/31)

PHARMACEUTICALS

The Washington Post: Quest for New Antibiotics Gets First Major Funding from Global Partnership
A major global partnership aimed at fighting superbugs announced Thursday that it is investing up to $48 million in research projects, including potentially the first new classes of antibiotics in decades, to target the deadliest drug-resistant bacteria. The investments announced by CARB-X include $24 million in immediate funding for 11 companies. The firms can receive up to $24 million in additional payments over three years if they meet specific milestones. (Sun, 3/30)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

The Washington Post: A Radical Idea for Health-Care Reform: Listen to the Doctors
Here’s a radical idea for reframing the health-care debate on the ruins of the GOP’s half-baked plan: Let’s listen to doctors rather than politicians. And let’s begin with a simple formula offered last week by the National Academy of Medicine: “Better health at lower cost.” Better and cheaper. It’s hard to argue with that prescription. Because the real health-care crisis in America is about delivery of care, more than the insurance schemes that pay the bills. Costs are continuing to rise, even as public health in America declines. We’re getting less for more. And the GOP’s proposal to starve Obamacare will make that downward spiral worse. (David Ignatius, 3/30)

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Ventura County Star: Norovirus Tally Reaches 700; New Cases Declining
A highly contagious norovirus outbreak believed to have infected to at least 700 Oxnard area elementary and middle school students is still wreaking havoc on stomachs and intestines but its grip appears to be loosening. All eight schools in the Rio School District, the epicenter of an outbreak that emerged about three weeks ago, still have students with norovirus symptoms. But the number of new cases has dropped significantly, said John Puglisi, superintendent of the district that encompasses more than 5,000 students in El Rio and north Oxnard. (Kisken, 3/30)

California Healthline: California Doctors Again Press for More Money to Treat Poor Patients
They want the state’s new tobacco tax to help pay for a raise in Medicaid rates, but so far Gov. Jerry Brown has other plans for that money. (Feder Ostrov, 3/30)

San Francisco Chronicle: California Officials, Insurers: Health Care ‘An Ongoing Battle’
Buoyed by Congress’ failed attempt last week to replace the Affordable Care Act, California officials, health advocates and insurance executives are pressing forward on a new phase of resistance against GOP efforts to weaken the health care law. California Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones sent a letter Wednesday to the White House and Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, urging the administration to enforce the law. (Ho, 3/29)

Los Angeles Times: First Southern California Child Born with Defect Caused by Zika Virus
A baby born recently in San Diego County is the first in the region to suffer birth defects after the infant’s mother contracted the Zika virus while traveling abroad. Public health officials said the case, announced Tuesday by the county government, is a reminder that the risk of Zika infection continues in warmer climates even though mosquitoes are dormant in San Diego. (Sisson, 3/29)

Los Angeles Times: L.A. Doctor Jumps Into the Race for California's Lieutenant Governor
Los Angeles physician Asif Mahmood, a Democrat and supporter of a “Medicare for all” national healthcare plan, has announced he’ll run for California lieutenant governor. Mahmood, who was raised in a small rural town in Pakistan before coming to the U.S., plans to officially declare his candidacy Wednesday and joins a 2018 race that includes at least one formidable Democrat, West Covina state Sen. Ed Hernandez. (Willon, 3/29)

ADMINISTRATION NEWS

The Washington Post: Trump Administration Still Plans to Undo Parts of the ACA, Tom Price Testifies
[U]nder intense questioning from Democrats, Price outlined how his department could make insurance plans cheaper by scaling back several federal mandates, including what the ACA currently defines as “essential benefits” in coverage. And he refused to say whether the administration will keep providing cost-sharing subsidies for insurers participating in the federal marketplace. The multibillion-dollar infusion is critical to maintaining the system’s stability, insurers say. (Eilperin and DeBonis, 3/29)
Kaiser Health News: Senators Demand Answers about Possible Probe of HHS Secretary Price
Nine senators are pushing U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions to reveal what he knows about a reported investigation into Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price’s stock trades that a top federal prosecutor might have begun before being fired by the Trump administration this month. In a letter Wednesday, seven senators — six Democrats plus Vermont independent Bernie Sanders — called on Sessions to assure them that any investigation of Price — or others connected to the Trump administration — would be “allowed to continue unimpeded.” (Kopp and Bluth, 3/29)

Politico: After Pledging to Solve Opioid Crisis, Trump’s Strategy Underwhelms
As a candidate, Donald Trump promised rural towns and states hit hard by opioid addiction that he’d solve the epidemic ravaging their communities. "We will give people struggling with addiction access to the help they need," Trump vowed in October. Trump won many of those communities — often overwhelmingly. But as president, he's proposing deep cuts to research and treatment in favor of funding a border wall to stop drug traffic, while hinting at bringing back policies like criminalization of drug misuse. (Diamond and Karlin-Smith, 3/29)

Modern Healthcare: Could Trump's Top DOJ Antitrust Pick Help Seal the Anthem-Cigna Deal?
In its quest to merge with Cigna Corp., national insurer Anthem has suffered more than a few setbacks. But just days after defending the $54 billion merger in federal appeals court, Anthem finally got some good news. President Donald Trump said he will nominate former Anthem lobbyist Makan Delrahim to the top post in the Justice Department's antitrust division. The nod to Delrahim could be a boon for the Anthem-Cigna merger, which was blocked by a U.S. District Court judge for threatening to harm competition in the national employer market. Indianapolis-based Anthem has been holding out hope that its beleaguered deal will close under a new U.S. Justice Department led by the Trump administration. (Livingston, 3/28)

HEALTH LAW

The Associated Press: Poll: Americans Dislike GOP’s, Trump’s Plan on Health Care
Note to President Donald Trump and House Republicans: People really don't like your approach to overhauling America's health care. If you're hoping to revive the effort, you may want to try something different. Sixty-two percent of Americans turned thumbs down on Trump's handling of health care during the initial weeks of his presidency, according to a poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research released Wednesday. It was his worst rating among seven issues the poll tested, including the economy, foreign policy and immigration. (Fram and Swanson, 3/30)

Bloomberg: House GOP Weighing Another Try on Obamacare Vote Next Week
House Republicans are considering making another run next week at passing the health-care bill they abruptly pulled from the floor in an embarrassing setback to their efforts to repeal Obamacare. Two Republican lawmakers say that leaders are discussing holding a vote, even staying into the weekend if necessary, but it’s unclear what changes would be made to the GOP’s health bill. They described the discussions on condition of anonymity. (House and Kapur, 3/29)
The Washington Post: Liberals See Fresh Opportunity in Health Care after GOP Meltdown
Liberals are pushing in from the left with their own health-care solutions, looking to gain new ground after last week’s Republican meltdown over an Obamacare replacement. The Progressive Change Campaign Committee, a political action committee that aims to represent the “Elizabeth Warren wing of the Democratic Party,” began circulating a petition Wednesday calling for every person to have access to a Medicare-type plan — an idea supported by the party’s left wing but viewed with some skepticism by moderates. (Cunningham and Weigel, 3/29)

MEDICAID

USA Today/FactCheck.org: Fact Check: Medicaid’s Doctor Participation Rates
It’s a common criticism of the Medicaid program — that the doctor participation rate is lower than the rate for Medicare beneficiaries or the privately insured. The implication is that Medicaid patients cannot access care and that it has gotten worse since the Affordable Care Act expanded the health care program for the low-income and disabled. But experts say that implication is misleading. (Robertson, 3/29)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Climate change is not only harmful to our physical health — it can be debilitating for our mental health as well, according to a report published Wednesday. Severe weather events and natural disasters linked to climate change have the most dramatic impact on mental health, according to the report by the American Psychological Association and EcoAmerica: Natural disasters cause intense negative emotions in people who are exposed to them, primarily fear and grief. Anxiety, depression and unhealthy behavior are also common responses. (Naqvi, 3/29)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

President Trump has discovered that trying to work with Republicans, like trying to work on health care policy, is complicated. So with all his big campaign pledges in limbo following last week’s Obamacare fiasco, he reportedly is contemplating overtures to a party that actually wants to govern: the Democrats. This new tack comes, mind you, after Mr. Trump blamed Democrats for refusing to help him and House Speaker Paul Ryan eviscerate Obamacare. With zero support from Democrats, the pair had no margin for error as Republicans started to defect and were forced to pull their bill. (Will Marshall, 3/30)

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