

KHN Morning Briefing

Summaries of health policy coverage from major news organizations

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FULL ISSUE

Perspectives: VA's Bulk Buying Drug Model Could Create Sorely Needed Bipartisan Pathway Toward Lower Costs

Read recent commentaries about drug-cost issues.

The Hill: VA Could Lead Way For Nation On Lower Drug Pricing

It is no secret that prescription drug prices are a hot-button issue — and understandably so. When Donald Trump announced his desire to lower prescription drug prices at the this year's State of the Union, House Democrats chanted "H.R.3," in reference to House Bill 3, which aims to fulfill the president and the late Elijah Cummings' stated ambition at reducing drug prices. And yet the bill has sat in Mitch McConnell's legislative graveyard in the Senate since its passing through the House. And then, one day after the SOTU, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie delivered a gut punch to the pharmaceutical industry. (Robert Weiner and Wesam Farah, 2/25)

Stat: Will The New PrEP Pill For HIV Prevention Fuel Progress — Or Profits?

Four decades after the HIV epidemic began, there's finally hope it might end. Indeed, "Getting to Zero" — meaning zero new HIV infections — is a slogan used by the World Health Organization and others in fighting the epidemic. A major factor driving this optimism is pre-exposure prophylaxis, commonly known as PrEP, in which people who are HIV-negative take a medication to prevent HIV infection. For Gilead Sciences, the manufacturer of the only two FDA-approved pills for PrEP, the most important zeroes seem to be those the company is adding to its bottom line. (Douglas Krakower, Kenneth Katz and Julia L. Marcus, 2/26)

Boston Globe: Big Pharma's Unconscionable Insulin Racket Endangers People With Diabetes

Nearly 100 years ago, Dr. Frederick Banting used insulin to treat patients with diabetes and shared a Nobel Prize for its discovery. He sold the patent rights to the University of Toronto for \$1. "Insulin does not belong to me, it belongs to the world," Banting proclaimed. Yet, here we are in 2020 and insulin does not belong to the world. Instead, greedy corporations are using it to line their pockets. Who will be the one to release insulin back where it belongs? (Erinne Magee, 2/24)

RealClearPolitics: Efforts To Cut Drug Prices Would Harm Rare-Disease Patients

Government policy changes sometimes have all the subtlety of a steam roller, barreling forward without sufficient regard for everything in its path. Such is the case today with proposed changes to the Medicare prescription drug benefit (Part D), one of health care's success stories. In an attempt to cut prescription drug costs for some plan participants, now numbering around 45 million, the proposal has the potential to crush an entire, fragile market designed to help some of the most ill among us. (Mike Eging, 2/25)

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