Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Oct. 12, 2020


Coronavirus may survive for 28 days on glass, banknotes, study suggests

Bloomberg (10/11, Gale) reported, “The new coronavirus may remain infectious for weeks on banknotes, glass and other common surfaces, according to research by Australia’s top biosecurity laboratory that highlights risks from paper currency, touchscreen devices and grab handles and rails.” Researchers “showed SARS-CoV-2 is ‘extremely robust,’ surviving for 28 days on smooth surfaces such as glass found on mobile phone screens and plastic banknotes at room temperature, or 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit),” which “compares with 17 days survival for the flu virus.” The study was published in the Virology Journal.

Reuters (10/12, Bikes) reports, “Experiments done at 20, 30 and 40 degrees Celsius showed the virus survived longer at cooler temperatures, longer on smooth surfaces than on complex surfaces such as cotton and longer on paper banknotes than on plastic banknotes.”

CNBC (10/12) reports, “The researchers tested the survival rates of the virus, dried in an artificial mucous solution, at three different temperatures on six common surface areas.” All of “the experiments were carried out in the dark, however, since UV light has already been shown to kill the virus.”

AMA announces new collaborative effort with other medical groups to integrate behavioral health into overall health care

FierceHealthcare (10/13, Landi) reports the American Medical Association announced the formation of “the Behavioral Health Integration (BHI) Collaborative, a new physician collaboration to promote the integration of behavioral and mental health care into overall health care.” In addition to the AMA, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the
American Osteopathic Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and other medical groups have joined the BHI Collaborative. Dr. Patrice Harris, the immediate past president of the AMA, said in a statement, “Without a clear roadmap for success, integrating mental and physical health services has been a challenge for medical practices. The AMA is committed to accessible and equitable treatment for behavioral, mental and physical health needs, and the BHI Collaborative will provide physicians with a proven playbook for implementing a holistic approach to physical, mental and behavioral health to meet the needs of all patients.”

mHealth Intelligence (10/13, Wicklund) reports that back in July, the RAND Corporation published a study in the Annals of Internal Medicine that concluded, “Practices currently using behavioral health integration face cultural, informational, and financial barriers to implementing and sustaining behavioral health integration. Tailored, context-specific technical support to guide practices’ implementation and payment models that improve the business case for practices may enhance the dissemination and long-term sustainability of behavioral health integration.” mHealth adds that the AMA and the Commonwealth Fund commissioned that study.

Editor’s note: Learn more about the collaborative.

Analysis: Competition has dwindled for consumers in most highly concentrated commercial insurance markets

FierceHealthcare (10/14, King) reports that a new analysis released Wednesday from the American Medical Association found that “competition has dwindled for consumers in the most highly concentrated commercial insurance markets.” Furthermore, the analysis “found the number of highly concentrated markets, which largely result from mergers and acquisitions, increased from 2014 to 2019.” The AMA “is worried that consolidation among insurers has the potential to affect premiums.”

Modern Healthcare (10/14, Bannow, Subscription Publication) reports that in a statement, AMA President Susan R. Bailey, M.D., said, “For many of the 70 million Americans who live in highly concentrated health insurance markets, a lack of competition is a problem that keeps getting worse as consumers have more limited health insurance options to choose.”

HealthLeaders Media (10/14, Commins) reports that Dr. Bailey added, “The AMA strongly encourages a dialogue among regulators, policymakers, lawmakers, and others about the need for a better, more open and competitive marketplace to benefit patients and the physicians who care for them.”

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Healthcare Dive (10/14, Mensik) reports that “the five payers with the biggest share in the most markets were Anthem, Health Care Service Corp., UnitedHealth Group, Florida Blue and Highmark.”

Editor’s note: Read an overview of the analysis or to download the full text from the AMA website.

**FDA to require updated boxed warning on NSAIDs concerning potential fetal risk in women who are at least 20 weeks pregnant**

MedPage Today (10/15, D'Ambrosio) reports that “the FDA issued a drug safety communication about nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) use during pregnancy, mandating that product labels include warnings about risk of a rare but serious kidney complication in infants.” The “use of over-the-counter or prescription pain medications – including aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, diclofenac, and celecoxib – after 20 weeks of pregnancy could potentially cause fetal kidney problems resulting in low levels of amniotic fluid and pregnancy complications, the agency said.”

The AP (10/15) reports, “FDA labeling already warns that they should be avoided in the last three months of pregnancy due to the risk of other complications.”

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