

## Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Jan. 17, 2022

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Read *AMA Morning Rounds*®' most popular stories in medicine and public health from the week of Jan. 17, 2022–Jan. 21, 2022.

### **CDC says cloth masks not as effective as surgical masks, respirators against COVID-19**

The New York Times (1/14, Mandavilli) reported, “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Friday clarified its stance on various kinds of masks, acknowledging that the cloth masks frequently worn by Americans do not offer as much protection as surgical masks or respirators.” The Times added, “According to the CDC’s new description of masks, loosely woven cloth products provide the least protection and layered finely woven products offer more. Well-fitting disposable surgical masks and KN95s...are more protective than all cloth masks, and well-fitting respirators, including N95s, offer the highest level of protection.”

The AP (1/14, Stobbe) reported CDC officials “removed concerns related to supply shortages and more clearly said that properly fitted N95 and KN95 masks offer the most protection,” but they “noted some masks are harder to tolerate than others, and urged people to choose good-fitting masks that they will wear consistently.”

### **Administration begins taking orders for free rapid at-home COVID-19 tests**

The Wall Street Journal (1/18, Abbott, Subscription Publication) reports the Biden administration on Tuesday began taking orders for free rapid at-home COVID-19 tests, one day ahead of the planned launch of the website for ordering and distributing tests to people in the United States. The site is expected to launch officially mid-morning on Wednesday.

Bloomberg (1/18, Epstein, Wingrove) reports, “The website to request tests, CovidTests.gov, is operating at limited capacity to accept orders.” Its “early launch is standard practice to troubleshoot, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Tuesday.”

The AP (1/18, Miller, O'Brien) reports, “There were isolated reports Tuesday afternoon of issues relating to the website’s address verification tool erroneously enforcing the four-per-household cap on apartment buildings and other multi-unit dwellings.”

## **Administration to provide Americans with 400M free N95 masks beginning next week**

The Washington Post (1/19, Diamond, Sun) reports, “The Biden administration plans to distribute 400 million high-quality N95 masks for adults free of charge at thousands of pharmacies and other locations starting next week, a White House official said.” Officials will begin “to ship masks at the end of this week,” and “the program will be fully up and running by early February.” The Post adds, “There will be three masks available per adult. Also, ‘we anticipate making additional, high-quality masks for children available in the near future,’ the official said.”

USA Today (1/19, Garrison) reports these “masks will come from the U.S.’s Strategic National Stockpile, which has tripled its supply of N95 masks to 750 million in the one year since Biden took office.”

## **Survey finds 20% of adults report using medications that cause weight gain**

Healio (1/20, Welsh) reports, “One in five adults in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey [NHANES] 2017-2018 reported prescriptions for obesogenic medications, according to results published in Obesity.” Investigators “assessed cross-sectional data of 52,340 adults aged 20 years and older from the 1999 to 2018 NHANES” and “20.3% of adults reported using at least one obesogenic medication, which was a significant increase from the 13.2% observed in 1999-2000.”

## **HHS awards grants to address health care worker burnout, improve mental health, well-being.**

Modern Healthcare (1/20, Goldman, Subscription Publication) reports HHS has chosen the 45 "grantees for \$103 million to address health care worker burnout and improve employees' mental health and well-being, the department announced Thursday." The grants "will fund projects including hiring resiliency trainers to support health care staff, establishing health system-wide wellness programs and devising initiatives to overcome the stigma associated with health care workers seeking mental health treatment."

Fierce Healthcare reports the program "will give \$28.6 million to 10 grantees to help healthcare organizations create or expand mental health and well-being programs. Another \$68.2 million will go towards 34 grantees to create evidence-based training development in health and nursing training activities."

MedPageToday also reports.

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