

Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Feb. 7, 2022

Read *AMA Morning Rounds*®' most popular stories in medicine and public health from the week of Feb. 7, 2022–Feb. 11, 2022.

CDC proposes new guidelines for opioid prescriptions

The New York Times (2/10, Hoffman) reports that on Thursday, the CDC “proposed new guidelines for prescribing opioid[s]...that remove its previous recommended ceilings on doses for chronic pain patients and instead encourage doctors to use their best judgment.” Although they are “still in draft form, the 12 recommendations...are the first comprehensive revisions of the agency’s opioid prescribing guidelines since 2016,” and “they walk a fine line between embracing the need for doctors to prescribe opioids to alleviate some cases of severe pain while guarding against exposing patients to the well-documented perils of opioids.”

The AP (2/10, Stobbe) reports that the proposed changes are “contained in a 229-page draft update in the Federal Register,” and “the CDC will consider comments before finalizing the updated guidance.”

The Washington Post (2/10, Bernstein) reports that in a statement, AMA Board of Trustees Chair Bobby Mukkamala, M.D., said, “for nearly six years, the AMA has urged the CDC to reconsider its problematic guideline on opioid prescriptions that proved devastating for patients with pain. The CDC’s new draft guideline—if followed by policymakers, health insurance companies and pharmacy chains—provides a path to remove arbitrary prescribing thresholds, restore balance and support comprehensive, compassionate care.”

Nearly all Americans live within one hour of emergency care for acute stroke, study indicates

MedPage Today (2/9, Phend) reports that “nearly all Americans live within an hour of emergency care for acute stroke, even if only by telestroke services,” according to a study that found that “fully 96% of

the U.S. population had access to an emergency department with any acute stroke capabilities within 60 minutes.” The findings were presented at the International Stroke Conference 2022 and simultaneously published in JAMA Network Open.

Majority of U.S. adults with chronic pain use nonopioid management techniques, data indicate

HealthDay (2/7) reports “adults with chronic pain use a variety of pain management strategies, including opioids, but the majority use nonopioid management techniques,” data indicate. Investigators “found that 54.7% of adults with chronic pain only used nonopioid pain management techniques, while 10.7, 4.4, and 30.2% used both opioids and nonopioid techniques, used opioids only, and did not report any pain management techniques,” respectively, “during the past three months.” The findings of the 31,916-participant study were published as a research letter in JAMA Network Open.

AMA, Manatt Health unveil toolkit to help combat rising U.S. drug overdoses

MedPage Today (2/7, Firth) reports, “With drug overdose deaths continuing to rise, policymakers must help people with substance use disorders access evidence-based care and treatment, said leaders from the American Medical Association (AMA) and Manatt Health during a webinar on Monday.” Their “State Toolkit to End the Nation’s Drug Overdose Epidemic” identifies “key barriers to evidence-based care, and pairs those problems with examples from states that are leading the way in eliminating a particular barrier.” Bobby Mukkamala, M.D., of the AMA Task Force on the Overdose Epidemic, said, “The point is that these policies must not just exist on paper. ... Our toolkit provides the tools and it’s up to all of us to ensure that they’re implemented and enforced.”

N95, KN95 masks provide greatest protection from coronavirus infection, CDC data suggest

The Washington Post (2/4, Bernstein, Sellers) reported that “wearing any kind of mask indoors is associated with significantly better protection from the coronavirus, with high-quality N95 and KN95 masks providing the best chance of avoiding infection,” according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Post added, “In indoor public settings, surgical masks reduce the chances of testing positive by 66%, the CDC estimated,” while “top-of-the-line N95 and KN95

masks...cut the odds of infection by 83%.”

The Hill (2/4, Weixel) reported, “The odds of infection were 56% lower for people wearing a cloth mask, but the findings were not statistically significant.”

*AMA Morning Rounds news coverage is developed in affiliation with Bulletin Healthcare LLC.
Subscribe to Morning Rounds Daily.*