



# Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup>

## Newsletter

[www.healthwatchusa.org](http://www.healthwatchusa.org) Aug 15, 2016

Member of the National Quality Forum and a designated  
"Community Leader"

for Value-Driven Healthcare by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

## Healthcare Finances

### United States Suing to Block Insurance Mergers.



"Within a three-week span last summer, four of the five biggest health insurers announced two mergers totaling \$85 billion. Suddenly, what was five would be three, reshaping the industry." "United States Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch announced that the government had filed lawsuits to block the deals, between Aetna and Humana and Anthem and Cigna." <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/22/business/dealbook/us-sues-to-block-anthem-cigna-and-aetna-humana-mergers.html>

### Fixing the insurance exchanges

Modern Healthcare: "UnitedHealth Group, which is abandoning most of the exchanges, reported an additional \$200 million of ACA plan losses in the second quarter. Aetna soured on its ACA business after claims data showed higher use of pricey specialty drugs. The company expects to lose \$300 million on the marketplace this year..."

<http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20160806/MAGAZINE/308069989>

### Hospital execs earn bigger bonuses as value-based care takes hold

Modern Healthcare: "Year-over-year increases in median total cash compensation for the top 10 C-suite positions ranged from a high of 15.3% for chief information officers at all hospitals to a low of 0.3% for chief medical officers at stand-alone hospitals,..."

<http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20160806/MAGAZINE/308069982>

## Medical Devices

### Expensive robots may not be making surgeons — or patients — much better

Washington Post on Robotic Surgery: "The study found that — at 12 weeks follow-up — there was no significant difference in patients' sexual function or urinary control. The group that had robotic

surgeries had less pain at a day and a week after surgery, but both groups returned to work equally as fast."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/07/28/expensive-robots-may-not-be-making-surgeons-or-patients-much-better/>

## Healthcare Quality



### CMS star ratings: Helping Consumers Make Care Choices through Hospital Compare

"...ratings include the Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating that reflects comprehensive quality information about the care provided at our nation's hospitals. The new Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating methodology takes 64 existing quality measures already reported on the Hospital Compare website and summarizes them into a unified rating of one to five stars.."

[Click on picture to enlarge](#)

-- Kate Goodrich, MD, MHS, Director of Center for Clinical Standards and Quality.

<https://blog.cms.gov/2016/07/27/helping-consumers-make-care-choices-through-hospital-compare/>

Some have criticized the ranking system, asking how can a single ranking accurately reflect all of the functions of a hospital. However, in the disjointed, non-unified, often-cost driven system which provides healthcare in the United States, metrics often share a common theme, reflecting the culture of safety in the institution and the willingness of the institution to invest in safety and in nursing.

### Patient Perspective, Consent Forms Fall Short of Providing Information to Guide Decision Making.

Journal of Patient Safety: "This study provides evidence from the patient perspective that consent forms are too complex and fail to achieve comprehension. Future studies should be conducted using patients' suggestions for form redesign and inclusion of supplemental educational tools to optimize communication and safety to achieve more informed health care decision making."

[http://journals.lww.com/journalpatientsafety/Abstract/publishahead/From\\_the\\_Patient\\_Perspective,\\_Consent\\_Forms\\_Fall.99588.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/journalpatientsafety/Abstract/publishahead/From_the_Patient_Perspective,_Consent_Forms_Fall.99588.aspx)

### Nurses and Doctors Are Fighting Back Against Corporate Healthcare by Unionizing

The Nation: "Overwork, once a proud hallmark of the medical profession, now symptomizes systemic rot." " Getting safe-staffing ratios codified into all union contracts is a top priority for PASNAP, but it's not enough to go contract by contract, warns Eakin, when many facilities remain non-unionized and management keeps trying to squeeze staff to pump up profits. So PASNAP is pushing for state legislation to mandate staffing ratios at Pennsylvania hospital facilities.

" <https://www.thenation.com/article/nurses-and-doctors-are-fighting-back-against-corporate-healthcare-by-unionizing/>

## Report: Overloaded nurses, dangers at U of L Hospital

Courier Journal: "Triggered by a surgeon's complaint that University of Louisville Hospital is dangerous, a state inspection found deficiencies in nursing services specifically endangered three patients." "A dozen nurses and doctors also told state inspectors that nursing and other staff shortages put patients at risk, according to the state's 30-page report released Monday by KentuckyOne Health, which manages the hospital."

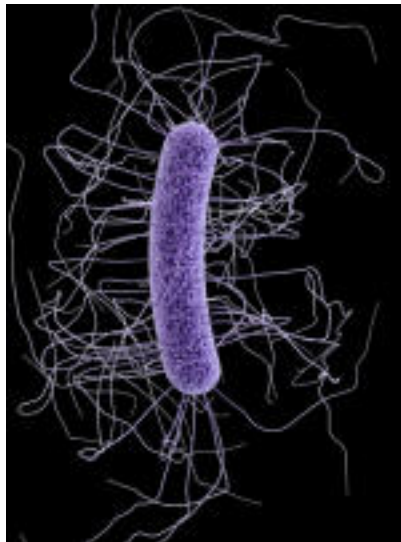
<http://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/2016/07/11/report-u-l-hospital-woes-endangered-3/86945518/>

## Medicare's Readmission Penalties Hit New High

Jordan Rau: "The government will punish more than half of the nation's hospitals — a total of 2,597 — having more patients than expected return within a month. While that is about the same number penalized last year, the average penalty will increase by a fifth, according to a Kaiser Health News analysis."

<http://khn.org/news/more-than-half-of-hospitals-to-be-penalized-for-excess-readmissions/>

## Healthcare Infections



### Are Over-the-Counter Antibiotics Causing Resistance to The Antibiotic of Last Resort?

Should topical over-the-counter antibiotic ointments which contain Polymyxin B (Neosporin Ointment, Polysporin Ointment, Triple Antibiotic Ointment, etc.) be reformulated or pulled from sale, since Polymyxin B may be causing the development of resistance to the antibiotic of last resort Colistin (Polymyxin E)? <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25505462>

Some have stated that the concentration of antibiotics in topical ointments is too low to cause resistance. However, it is low levels of antibiotics not high which is best to promote

resistance. <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/02/100211151647.htm>

One of the reasons for the proposals to curb antibiotic usage in agriculture is for the prevention of low levels of antibiotics in runoff and the contamination of the environment. If we are concerned about low levels of antibiotics in agriculture, we need to have a consistent healthcare policy and be concerned about antibiotics in topical over-the-counter antibiotics.

Even environmental pollution from the manufacture of antibiotics may be an important contributing factor to antibiotic resistance.

"EPA and Changing Markets unveils how the pharmaceutical industry's role in contributing to the spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) via pollution of the environment in a new briefing. "

<http://epa.org/pharma-pollution-shut-the-back-door-on-superbugs/>

**Webinar: The New Superbug Gene, MCR-1 (resistance to the last line antibiotic).**

View Presentation and download the slide set. A question relating to the effects of polymyxin in topical antibiotics causing resistance to colistin is asked at 58:35 on the timeline. <http://pgc-usa.org/mcr1/>

**What Healthcare-Associated Infections Are Resistant in Your State?**

1 in 4 healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) is caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria identified by CDC as urgent or serious threats to health. <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/865511>

**Basic hygienic practices and adherence to decolonization protocols can reduce MRSA infections**

News Medical: "A new study found that following basic hygienic practices and complying with protocols for Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) decolonization reduces the time to clearance of the bacteria more quickly than a treatment regimen of antibiotic ointment and antiseptic body wash" <http://www.news-medical.net/news/20160729/Basic-hygienic-practices-and-adherence-to-decolonization-protocols-can-reduce-MRSA-infections.aspx>

**Yet Another Warning On Fluoroquinolone Antibiotic Side Effects**

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/davidkroll/2016/07/31/yet-another-warning-on-fluoroquinolone-antibiotic-side-effects/#c948e4117489>

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**Health Watch USA Patient Safety Conference -- Nov. 4th, 2016**  
**Four Points Sheraton, Lexington, KY**



The conference's theme this year is the reliability of research and protocols for infectious disease, medical device safety and patient safety. Registration is \$48. Continuing education for physicians (Type I AMA), nurses, occupational therapists and physical therapists have been applied for and are included with the registration cost.

To Register Go  
To: <http://www.healthconference.org/payment.htm>

View Agenda: <http://www.healthconference.org/agenda.htm>  
For More Information Go To [www.healthconference.org](http://www.healthconference.org)

To Download the Conference Flyer Go  
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