

Three Minute Read™

Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

August 2022-2



From the Editor: This issue opens with monkeypox, seasonal flu and polio updates, followed by Long-Covid concerns and the good news that America's percentage of uninsured residents has reached an all-time low. To access each article, just click on the headline.



[Monkeypox Is Declared a US Health Emergency, Freeing Up Funding](#), by Madison Muller, Bloomberg, 8/4/22

TMR Topline – In declaring monkeypox a public health emergency, HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said, “We urge every American to take monkeypox seriously and to take responsibility to help us tackle this virus.” Monkeypox has spread to 26,000 cases globally in just a few months and the WHO [declared the outbreak](#) a PHE on July 23. HHS’s PHE declaration will free up federal funding for health agencies and can also fast-track the development and shipment of therapeutics and diagnostics.

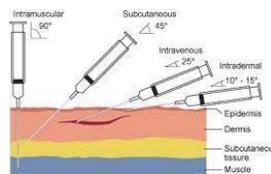


[Can monkeypox spread through the air? What we know so far](#), by Erica Carbajal and Nika

Schoonover, Becker’s Hospital Review, 8/4/22

TMR Topline – Current messaging has been that monkeypox spreads through sustained physical contact. To date, 98% of U.S. cases are among men who have sex with men. The same is true globally according to the [WHO](#). The CDC does list contact with respiratory secretions as a method of transmission, but notes “*scientists are still searching*” for “*how often*” it’s spread this way and when an infected, symptomatic person “*might be more*

likely to spread the virus through respiratory secretions.” Infectious disease specialist Dr. Robert Pitts of NYU Langone Health notes that there is at least some level of transmission risk tied to respiratory secretions people should be aware of: “*These aren’t secretions that are airborne for long periods of time... I wouldn’t consider it the highest risk of transmission, but something that we need to consider as we learn more about monkeypox.*” In a July UK study published ahead of peer review in [medRxiv](#), researchers found the virus in air samples collected after changing bedding in isolation rooms used for infected patients, supporting the theory that the virus may be present in suspended skin particles or dust.



[U.S. Moves to Stretch Out Monkeypox Vaccine Supply](#), by Sharon LaFraniere and Noah Weiland, New York Times, 8/8/22

TMR Topline – To stretch out the limited supply of monkeypox vaccine, the Biden administration is investigating the feasibility of intradermal injection of the vaccine that will use one-fifth of the dose compared with subcutaneous injection. To do so, HHS needs to issue a new emergency declaration allowing regulators to invoke the FDA’s emergency use powers. The approach is based on a [2015 NIH study](#) that showed that when the vaccine was injected between skin layers, it induced an immune response comparable to that from a standard injection into the fat underneath the skin. The intradermal method can be complicated for vaccinators, who must guide a needle into a thin space. If a vaccinator goes too deep and inserts the dose into fat, the patient might not receive enough vaccine, experts say. If the needle is not inserted far enough, some vaccine could leak out. Such shots have previously been used in polio vaccination campaigns, for rabies and with tuberculosis skin tests.

TMR’s Take: Criticized for a slow start after the first US monkeypox case was confirmed May 18, the Biden administration is catching up fast. Kudos for exploring creative ways of stretching the vaccine supply.



[Why US may be in for a severe flu season](#), by Mackenzie Bean, Becker's Hospital Review, 8/4/22

TMR Topline – Seasonal flu in the Southern Hemisphere often is a harbinger of what's to come for the US this fall. Flu season started earlier than usual in Australia and the country is experiencing its worst flu season in five years. The CDC is on high alert for signs of an aggressive flu season in the US. Vaccine shipments to pharmacies and physician's offices are expected in the next few weeks for fall vaccinations.



[Polio fears rise in New York amid possible community spread](#), Associated Press, 8/4/22

TMR Topline – State Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett is sounding an alert after an unvaccinated Rockland County adult has tested positive for polio and suffered paralysis. It is the first confirmed case in the US [in nearly a decade](#). Rockland and Orange counties both have lower polio vaccination rates – 60% by age two – compared with the statewide 79% rate. Declared eliminated in the US in 1979, a small percentage of those contracting polio suffer paralysis.

TMR's Take: There's no rest for the weary! As Covid-19's BA.5 summer surge begins to subside, public health officials remain on high alert given the monkeypox PHE, the potential for a virulent seasonal flu and the possibility of community spread of polio.



[Biden Administration Calls for an 'All-Hands-on-Deck' Effort to Study Long Covid](#), by Jamie Ducharme, TIME, 8/3/22

TMR Topline – HHS is calling for a new Office of Long Covid Research and Practice to direct an *“all-hands-on-deck, whole-of-government approach”* to [researching Long Covid](#). One in five U.S. adults with a known prior case of Covid-19 currently [has symptoms of Long Covid](#). These symptoms can include fatigue, cognitive dysfunction, chronic pain, neurologic issues, organ damage, and many others. According to [one recent estimate](#), 4 million people in the U.S. are currently [out of work because of Long Covid](#). HHS Assistant Secretary for Health Dr. Rachel Levine stresses that *“These initial reports are an important step as HHS continues to*

accelerate research and programmatic support to address the consequences of the pandemic and work across sectors to ensure no one is left behind as we continue to build a healthier future.”



[Some long Covid patients still have symptoms 2 years later, new N.J. study shows](#), by Spencer Kent, Star-Ledger, 7/28/22

TMR Topline – Recently published in the journal [Clinical Microbiology and Infection](#), research from doctors at St. Joseph's Health in Paterson found that 23% of patients with cases ranging from mild to severe *“still experience persistent symptoms two years after infection with Covid-19.”* Women suffered more persistent long-term symptoms than men. The study found even mild Covid-19 cases can result in chronic, long-term health issues.

TMR's Take: TMR first covered Long Covid in [August 2020](#). Two years later, the US government is recognizing the enduring consequences of Covid-19 infections.



[Number of uninsured Americans drops to record low](#), by Amanda Seitz, Associated Press, 8/2/22

TMR Topline – HHS has announced that the number of Americans without health insurance coverage has hit an all-time low of 8% (26 million). The drop in uninsured began with passage of the American Rescue Plan Act last year that lowered pre-miums and out-of-pocket costs for customers purchasing plans through the ACA's private health insurance markets. Just under 2% of children are uninsured. HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said, *“We know that access to quality, affordable health care is key to healthier lives, economic security, and peace of mind.”*

TMR's Take: The uninsured rate peaked at 16% (48.3 million) in 2010 before passage of the Affordable Care Act. Sadly, America is the only country in the developed world that doesn't have universal healthcare for all. The Eichhorn-Hutchinson Allcare plan described in *“Healing American Healthcare: A Plan to Provide Quality Care For All While Saving \$1 Trillion a Year”* details a practical approach that reduces costs, improves outcomes, fosters competition and lets doctors be doctors. Click [Here](#) to order it at the summer sale price.