

Three Minute Read™

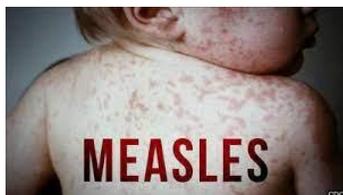
Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

December 2022-1



HEALING AMERICAN HEALTHCARE
COALITION

From the Editor: Three years ago this month, reports of cases of pneumonia of unknown origin were detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. To date, more than 6.6 million have perished from Covid-19, including over a million Americans. This issue includes updates from the World Health Organization and Dr. Fauci's farewell comments. To read the full article, just click on the headline.



[Measles now an imminent global threat due to pandemic say WHO and CDC](#), by Jennifer Rigby, Reuters, 11/23/22

TMR Topline – One of the most contagious human viruses, measles is almost entirely preventable through vaccination but needs 95% vaccine coverage to prevent outbreaks among populations. The WHO and CDC warned of an imminent threat of measles spreading in various regions globally, as Covid-19 led to a steady decline in vaccination coverage and weakened surveillance of the disease. Nearly 40 million children missed a measles vaccine dose in 2021, leading to nearly 30 large disruptive outbreaks by September, up from 19 in 2021.



[WHO lands on new name for monkeypox](#), by Nika Schoonover, Becker's Hospital Review, 11/22/22

TMR Topline – The WHO is renaming monkeypox as "MPOX" in an effort to reduce stigma and racism surrounding the virus. The US has had 30,000 cases of monkeypox, but with the availability of vaccinations, cases have fallen to 20/day from 400/day during the summer.



[Will Covid Boosters Prevent Another Wave? Scientists Aren't So Sure.](#)

by Apoorva Mandavilli, New York Times, 11/18/22

TMR Topline – As winter approaches and Americans gather indoors without masks or social distancing, new coronavirus variants are seeding a rise in cases and hospitalizations across the nation. The Biden administration's plan to combat this surge is based on persuading Americans to get booster shots of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines. John Moore, a virologist at New York's Weill Cornell Medicine has doubts about the strategy: *"If you're at medical risk, you should get boosted, or if you're at psychological risk and worrying yourself to death, go and get boosted. But don't believe that will give you some kind of amazing protection against infection, and then go out and party like there's no tomorrow."* Older adults, immunocompromised people and pregnant women should get the booster shots, because they offer extra protection against severe disease and death. It is less clear for healthy Americans who are younger. They are rarely at risk of severe illness or death from Covid, and at this point many have built immunity through multiple vaccine doses or infections.

[Pfizer-BioNTech](#) and [Moderna](#) reported that their bivalent shots yielded antibody levels in study participants that were four to [six](#) times higher than those produced by the original vaccine measured against BA.4 and BA.5 variants. However, the BQ.1 and BQ.1.1 variants are spreading quickly and are adept at evading immunity. To date, only about 12% of adults have opted for the bivalent booster shot. Some preliminary research suggests that the updated boosters, introduced in September, are only [marginally better](#) than the original vaccines at protecting against the newer variants — if at all. Gretchen Chapman, an expert in health behavior at Carnegie Mellon University said, *"We should not spend a lot of political capital trying to get people to get this bivalent booster, because the benefits are limited. It's more important to get folks who never got the initial vaccine series vaccinated than to get people like me to get their fifth shot."*

TMR's Take: Those over 65 or immunocompromised probably should opt for the bivalent booster as it reduces the probability of severe disease or death. Per Dr. Fauci, *"Immunity and protection wanes over time. You need to update the protection we know is good protection."*

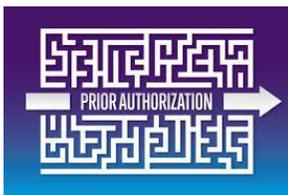


[Leapfrog Group data reveal years of safety gains prior to pandemic](#), by Mari Devereaux, Modern

Healthcare, 11/16/22

TMR Topline – Hospitals made substantial progress reducing adverse events and cultivating a culture of safety from 2012 to 2019. Central line-associated bloodstream infections decreased 43%, MRSA cases declined 22% and C. Diff cases went down 8%. Incidents of objects unintentionally left in patients' bodies after surgeries declined 28.9% and falls and trauma dropped 27.1%. In the new Leapfrog Group report, 30% of hospitals earned an "A," 28% a "B," 36% a "C," 6% a "D," and 1% an "F." New Jersey consistently ranks in the top ten – its legislators heed hospital safety rankings and scrutinize patient safety, and its health systems promote their safety ratings to their communities according to Leah Binder, Leapfrog's President and CEO, while neighboring New York, ranked 39th, lacks those characteristics.

TMR's Take: TMR's pleased that its home state has consistently ranked in Leapfrog's top ten for patient safety.



['Enough is enough': AMA pushes prior authorization fix](#), by Andrew Cass, Becker's Hospital Review, 11/17/22

TMR Topline – The AMA has said that the U.S. Senate [must take](#) the opportunity to fix prior authorization by passing the Improving Seniors Access to Care Act. It would establish an electronic prior authorization process and require MA plans to report to CMS the extent of their use of prior authorization (PA) and the rate of approvals or denials. The CBO estimates the bill could result in \$16 billion in increased spending over 10 years because physicians will have more time to spend with patients after reforms are enacted. AMA's data shows that the average physician now does 41 PAs a week. AMA President Jack Resneck Jr., MD, termed the CBO report *"maddeningly negative,"* given that patients who are not getting care because of PA will actually get the care they need, *"Enough is enough."*

TMR's Take: Other high-income countries don't have these problems – they rely on post-treatment review to identify abuses. MA plans use of this tactic to delay, defer and deny care second-guesses medical judgment and adds cost with little or no benefit.



[Mark Cuban in talks with hospitals to solve Drug shortages](#), by Molly Gamble, Becker's Hospital Review, 11/23/22

TMR Topline – Mark Cuban appeared on the [Motley Fool podcast](#) Nov. 23 to discuss Cost Plus Drugs continuing plans to disrupt healthcare. The company now offers nearly 1,000 generic drugs and is in talks with hospitals to identify generic drugs that often run-in short supply. The company is building a robotics-driven [manufacturing plant](#) in Dallas that will be nimble in manufacturing simple drugs *"that are supposed to be regularly available"* and turn around numerous injectables in a day to boost hospitals' supply. Its drugs are sold with a 15 percent markup for price, a \$3 pharmacy fee to pay the pharmacists it works with and a \$5 fee for shipping.



[Fauci bids farewell with a final plea: Get vaccinated](#), by Krista Mahr and Adam Cancryn, Politico, 11/22/22

TMR Topline – In what is likely his final White House briefing, Dr. Anthony Fauci encouraged vigilance against a disease that still is killing about 300 Americans a day: *"Please, for your own safety, for that of your family, get your updated Covid-19 shot as soon as you're eligible to protect yourself, your family and your community."* Dr. Fauci has led the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for 38 years and is retiring at year end. Asked by reporters about the attacks that could come in a Republican-controlled House, he stated *"I have no problem testifying,"* adding *"We can defend and explain and stand by everything that we said."*

TMR's Take: The grandson of Italian immigrants, Dr. Fauci was first in his medical school graduating class and chose a career in public service, joining the National Institutes of Health in 1968. Reflecting on his career at the briefing, Dr. Fauci noted *"I've given it everything that I have, and I've never left anything on the field."* America should be grateful for his long and productive service.