

Three Minute Read™

Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

February 2023-3



HEALING AMERICAN HEALTHCARE
COALITION

From the Editor: TMR's third February issue continues to focus on issues highlighted in the Commonwealth Fund report, "U.S. Health Care from a Global Perspective, 2022: Accelerating Spending, Worsening Outcomes." The articles summarized cover nursing burnout, maternal mortality, food as medicine, teen mental health and vaccine updates. Click on the headline to read the full article.



[Nurses Are Burned Out. Can Hospitals Change in Time to Keep Them?](#) by Bradford Pearson, New York Times, 2/20/23

TMR Topline – Burnout has long been part of nursing, largely due to long working hours in difficult situations. The Covid pandemic made these factors worse adding new challenges such as understaffing, [a rise in violence and hostility](#) toward health care workers and increasing hospital deaths early in the pandemic. A survey of more than 12,000 nurses by the [American Nurses Foundation](#) found that 57% said they felt exhausted; 43% said they felt burned out. Only 20% said they felt valued and 43% said they were thinking about leaving their jobs. "Burnout and our current issues have been going on for decades," said Dr. Jennifer Mensik Kennedy, president of the ANA. "So, what did we learn from the last couple of years? That we need to make sure that we implement programs and processes to decrease burnout and improve the work environment. Because Covid is not the last pandemic, or the last major issue to happen." She noted that interest in entering the nursing field continues to be positive, but more than 60,000 qualified applicants were turned away from nursing schools last year due to a lack of clinical rotation slots to provide the hands-on training they need.

If these issues can be addressed, Dr. Mensik Kennedy believes the infrastructure can support the number of new graduates needed to fill the gap. She said the best way to start to reduce burnout is to regularly measure nurses' stress levels, and to take action when they begin to climb.



[Penn Medicine hospital cited over wrong-site surgery](#), by Mackenzie Bean, Becker's Hospital Review, 2/23/23

TMR Topline – The Pennsylvania Department of Health initiated "special monitoring" investigations into Penn Medicine's Lancaster General Hospital for several recent safety issues, including a wrong-site surgery. A surgical team performed reconstructive surgery on a patient's ankle after a tourniquet was put on the wrong leg. It also was also cited for failing to fill a diabetes patient's insulin pump and for not reporting the death of a woman from bleeding complications several weeks after a C-section.

TMR's Take: Wrong-site surgery is a "never" event – did nurse burnout play a role? Hospitals need to use the data on burnout and fatigue to develop needed staffing plans to reduce burnout in support of the nursing profession.



[Childbirth Is Deadlier for Black Families Even When They're Rich, Expansive Study Finds](#), by Claire Cain Miller, Sarah

Kliff and Larry Buchanan, New York Times, 2/19/23

TMR Topline – Black mothers and babies have the [worst childbirth outcomes](#) in the US and this [study](#) of two million births in California from 2007-16 found that wealth does not matter. The richest Black mothers and babies are twice as likely to die as the richest white mothers and babies. Rich and poor mothers were equally likely to have high-risk pregnancies, but the poor mothers were three times as likely to die — even within the same hospitals. Regardless of socio-economic status, black families are disproportionately affected.



[Biden Administration Allowing State Medicaid Funds to Cover Groceries, Nutritional Care](#), by

Caroline Downey, National Review, 2/13/23

TMR Topline – The Biden administration has started allowing state [Medicaid funds](#) to be used to pay for groceries and dietary advice, believing that utilizing medical funds for food programs may help improve overall health, lead to better nutritional habits and fewer medical visits. Critics argue that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) already helps disadvantaged people to buy groceries. Some [Republicans](#) also see the financial and philosophical appeal of promoting nutrition. Kansas Senator Roger Marshall, a doctor, said *“There needs to be a bigger emphasis on how do we start encouraging people to make good healthy choices. And that budget-wise is going to save us money in the long term.”*

TMR’s Take: Modern Healthcare’s Editor Emeritus Merrill Goozner [dives](#) into the CDC survey of eating habits and sets an [agenda](#) for ending food insecurity.



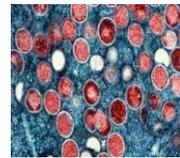
[CDC Report on Teen Mental Health Is a Red Alert](#), by Lisa Jarvis, Bloomberg, 2/16/23

TMR Topline – The

CDC’s biannual Youth Risk Behavior Survey’s findings are alarming, especially about the state of mental health among teenage girls. Nearly 60% of teenage girls surveyed said they’d experienced *“persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness”* in the previous year, while 30% had seriously considered suicide. Some 18% said they’d experienced sexual violence in the past year and 14% had been forced to have sex. Teens today are living with the very real fear of someone barging into their classroom with a gun, with intense body-image pressures exacerbated by Instagram scrolling, and worry about the fallout from a momentary lapse of judgment on social media. What can be done to mitigate the damage? First is improving teens’ sense of connectedness by forging healthy social relationships with peers. A large body of research shows that the more keyed in kids are to family and school, the better off they are. Schools can reinforce in-person interactions by declaring school a social media-free zone, and limiting recreational use of phones during the day. Parents should be aware of the signs of depression, which often shows up as irritability rather than sad-

ness in tweens and younger teens. While talk therapy can be very effective for adolescent girls, particularly those who are suicidal, there’s a capacity problem when it comes to mental health providers for kids.

TMR’s Take: The Biden administration has prioritized investment in mental health services. Parents need to set rules around devices and social media.



[CDC advisers vote in favor of using mpox vaccine in future outbreaks](#), by Jen Christensen, CNN,

2/22/23

TMR Topline – Remember monkeypox? Now mpox, the CDC’s vaccine advisors voted unanimously in favor of the two-dose Jynneos mpox vaccine for adults at risk of catching the disease during an outbreak. There are about two new cases a day versus 450/day last August. Nearly 1.2 million doses have been administered; mpox incidence among unvaccinated people was 7.4 times as high as in those who got one dose of Jynneos vaccine and 9.6 times as high as in those who’d gotten two doses. The CDC’s Dr. Melinda Wharton said that the response to the mpox outbreak demonstrates how infectious diseases can be addressed by a strong public health response and a vaccine to bring an outbreak under control.

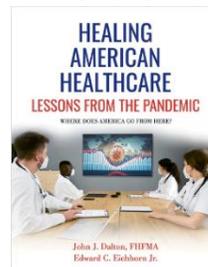


[Moderna won’t raise price on Covid vaccine after pressure](#), by David

Matthews, New York Daily News, 2/15/23

TMR Topline – Moderna had planned to raise the price of its Covid vaccine to the \$110-130/dose range. In response to a public outcry that included an invitation from Senator Bernie Sanders to testify about the price hike at a Senate hearing, the company reversed course and won’t raise the price. The government has been paying about \$26/dose for Moderna’s Covid vaccines and their development was publicly subsidized.

TMR’s Take: Vaccines work! **TMR’s** next issue will focus



on preventing the next pandemic. Get a head start by ordering *“Lessons from the Pandemic”* available in both soft-cover and eBook versions. Click [here](#) to buy it at a discounted price with coupon Printbook or ebook at checkout.