

Three Minute Read™

Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

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From the Editor: This issue's article summaries cover coming clinician shortages, increases in the uninsured population and Amazon and MA updates. Click on the headline to read the full article. If you are enjoying this curated newsletter, please subscribe [here](#).



[Overworked and Under-valued: Unmasking Primary Care Physicians' Dissatisfaction in 10 High-Income Countries](#), The

Commonwealth Fund, 8/16/23

TMR Topline – America's primary care physicians are not alone. The Commonwealth Fund's 2022 international Health Policy of 10 other high-income countries (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK) found that the majority of PCPs in most surveyed countries were not satisfied with their work. Less than 1/3rd were satisfied with the amount of time they were able to spend with patients and more than 90% felt they spent too much time on administrative work. More than 80% of PCPs in nearly every country reported struggling with workload. A US [study](#) has shown that a 10% decrease in workload lowers the odds of burnout by 1/3rd.



[Where are all the med-surg nurses?](#) by Erica Carbajal, Becker's Hospital Review, 8/10/23

TMR Topline – When it comes to the national nursing shortage, many hospitals are feeling the effects hardest in med-surg, which typically accounts for most inpatient beds. It's often considered as

a stepping stone and thought of as more strenuous than other inpatient nursing specialties. An American Nurses Association leader calls for much more additional support so nurses can "just be nurses" and [practice](#) at the top of their license. St. Louis-based BJC HealthCare will roll out virtual nursing in med-surg areas systemwide in 2024, based on success it has seen piloting virtual nursing at four of its facilities. Virtual nurses support med-surg nurses by assisting with the admissions process, patient education and discharge. The system also [rolled out](#) a flexible scheduling app earlier this year for nurses to pick up as many or as few additional hours as they like. Bottom line, hospitals need more med-surg nurses. Getting them — and getting them to stay — requires a range of efforts to reduce workload burden and ensure the specialty remains just as attractive as others.



[HHS to invest \\$100M to train nurses, bolster clinician workforce](#), by Heather Landi, Fierce Healthcare, 8/10/23

TMR Topline – HHS will invest \$100 million toward increasing the number of nursing school faculty, supporting the career ladders for licensed practical nurses and vocational nurses to become registered nurses and training more nurses to become primary care providers to address mental health and substance use disorder issues and maternal health. During Covid-19, 100,000 nurses left the field citing burnout and feeling emotionally drained, and [800,000 are likely to follow them](#) out the door by 2027. The #1 issue that comes up is the shortage of faculty to teach the next generation of nursing students. To support more nurse faculty, \$26.5 million is being awarded to 88 schools, through the [Nurse Faculty Loan Program](#), to provide low-interest loans and loan cancellation after up to four years post-graduation of full-time nurse faculty employment.

TMR's Take: With Gen X's oldest hitting 60, who will care for them in retirement? Many of those leaving the work force are Gen X. The HHS investment is a good first step.



[Uninsured rate hits record low, just as millions start losing Medicaid coverage](#), by Nathaniel Weixel, The HILL, 8/3/23

TMR Topline – The CDC reported that the uninsured rate hit an all-time low of 7.7% during the first three months of 2023 (roughly 25 million Americans). That number is already climbing as states disenroll millions who gained Medicaid coverage during the pandemic public health emergency. Anyone enrolled in Medicaid in March 2020 or who became eligible at any point during the pandemic remained eligible the entire time, regardless of a change in eligibility status. Medicaid enrollment grew 30% to 90 million people. With the PHE ending, they are required to reestablish eligibility and provide information needed to verify income or residency. States were allowed to begin disenrolling those no longer eligible starting 4/1. Nearly 3/4ths have had their coverage terminated for “procedural reasons,” meaning missing or incorrect paperwork, or when the state has outdated contact information, even though they may still be eligible for Medicaid coverage.

TMR’s Take: Sadly, over 4.8 million Americans were disenrolled as of 8/17 according to [KFF](#), with Texas, Florida and Arkansas accounting for 25% of those disenrolled.



[Amazon to offer reproductive care through partnership with Maven Clinic](#), by Ian Thomas, CNBC News, 8/8/23

TMR Topline – Through a partnership with [two-time CNBC Disruptor 50](#) Maven Clinic, Amazon will now offer free fertility and family planning services to over 1 million eligible employees spread across 50 countries outside of the US and Canada. The services will include board-certified reproductive endocrinologists and OB-GYNs, as well as nutritionists and mental healthcare providers. Amazon will join [Microsoft](#), [AT&T](#), [Snap](#), [SoFi](#), and L’Oreal as companies that partner with Maven. The continued challenges around reproductive health care in the US highlights why there is strong corporate interest in partnering with Maven. It was the first female-focused health start-up valued at over \$1 billion. Maven currently has 15 million lives under management and has aimed to make reproductive healthcare more accessible citing that only [half](#) of US counties have access to an OB-GYN and

that the US has the [highest](#) maternal mortality rate among industrialized countries.



[Kaiser, United Healthcare Pocket Big Medicare Star Bonuses](#) by Nona Tepper, Modern Healthcare, 8/11/23

TMR Topline – CMS pays annual per member bonuses to carriers that meet its four-star threshold based on policy holder surveys of their performance. Kaiser Permanente will receive a \$523 per member bonus in 2023 for a total of \$966.8 million since 99% of its policyholders were enrolled in Medicare Advantage (MA) plans that scored at least four stars during the 2022 plan year. UnitedHealthcare earned the second highest bonus, \$439 per member since 89% of its MA policyholders were enrolled in high-performing plans. As the largest MA carrier, its bonus payment totals \$3.9 billion of the \$12.8 billion total that CMS awarded. Carriers rely on these funds to offer zero-premium plans and supplemental benefits. Next year, insurers will likely receive fewer bonuses because CMS [tightened its evaluations of MA insurers’](#) quality metrics for the 2023 plan year.



[Hospitals take aim at Medicare Advantage](#), by Jakob Emerson, Becker’s Hospital Review, 8/16/23

TMR Topline – Hospitals are [dropping](#) MA plans over high claim or prior authorization denial rates. Mayo Clinic [warned](#) Medicare-eligible patients in Florida and Arizona in October that it does not accept most MA plans. Vanderbilt University Medical Center was [preparing](#) to drop Humana and Centene MA plans before reaching contract agreements in March. Stillwater Medical Center (OK) [ended](#) all in-network contracts with MA plans after a 22% prior authorization denial rate by MA plans compared to 1% for traditional Medicare.

TMR’s Take: Caveat emptor! As the Urban Institute [report](#) pointed out, the MA program has not led to plan beneficiaries receiving better care than they would in traditional Medicare plans. If you are enjoying this twice-monthly curated newsletter on current healthcare issues and would like to continue receiving it, please upgrade to a paid subscription [here](#).