



Benefits WEEKLY DIGEST

January 8, 2020

Democratic AGs, House Ask Supreme Court for Expedited Review of Texas v. Azar

"Accepting the appeal now would stave off a multi-year delay -- prolonging confusion and uncertainty for health care stakeholders, state and federal officials, and patients -- that would occur if the case is remanded back to the district court. The request for review (and expedited review) by the Supreme Court is being made by the 21 intervenor states and the House because the Trump administration declined to defend the ACA in court, siding with the plaintiffs in asking the court to strike down much of the law." [Full Article](#)

Katie Keith, in Health Affairs

Drugmakers Hike U.S. Prices on Over 200 Drugs

"Drugmakers are planning to hike U.S. list prices on more than 200 drugs in the United States as of January 1. Nearly all of the price increases will be below 10%, and around half of them are in the range of 4 to 6%. The median price increase is around 5%." [Full Article](#)

Reuters

Several New Laws Affect ACA and Employer-Sponsored Health Plans in 2020

"The Further Consolidated Appropriations Act repeals the ACA-imposed annual fee on health insurance providers, which applied to insurance policies in the individual and small group markets. The Act finally repeals the highly unpopular excise tax on high-cost employer group health plans (the 'Cadillac' tax), but the Act extends the ACA's PCORI fee for 10 years, meaning that insurers and employers will have to continue to pay this fee until 2029 or 2030, depending on their plan year." [Full Article](#)

The Wagner Law Group

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Price Transparency: Agencies Issue Final Rule for Hospitals and Proposed Rule for Group Health Plans and Health Insurers

"While several states already have price transparency mandates in place, hospitals -- and soon, plans -- will be required to ensure their disclosures are consistent with the new federal requirements. The Proposed Rule solicits comments on: [1] Whether group health plans and health insurance issuers should be required to make available through a standards-based application programming interface the cost-sharing information. [2] How health care quality information can be incorporated into the price transparency proposals." [Full Article](#)

Foley & Lardner LLP



Text of 2020 IRS Publication 15-B: Employer's Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits

"The business mileage rate for 2020 is 57.5 cents per mile. The monthly exclusion for qualified parking is \$270 and the monthly exclusion for commuter highway vehicle transportation and transit passes is \$270. For plan years beginning in 2020, a cafeteria plan may not allow an employee to request salary reduction contributions for a health FSA in excess of \$2,750."

[Full Article](#)

Internal Revenue Service

IRS Deems Portion of Ancestry Genetic Testing Payable by Health FSA

"The stated goal of the genetic testing was to get individuals to provide genetic information to their healthcare providers. Individuals could not purchase the health-related services from the testing company without also purchasing the ancestry services. The IRS, in a Private Letter Ruling, ruled that portions of the testing, such as genotyping and ancestry reports, are not medical care, but other services offered by the service would be considered medical care." [Full Article](#)

Reuters



Brain Scientists Tap Into the Secrets of Living Well Longer: Extending 'Healthspan'

"'Healthspan,' a coinage now gaining traction, refers to the years that a person can expect to live in generally good health -- free of chronic illnesses and cognitive decline that can emerge near life's end. Although there's only so much a person can do to delay the onset of disease, there's plenty that scientists are learning to improve your chances of a better healthspan." [Full Article](#)

Kaiser Health News

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Readers should contact legal counsel for legal advice.

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