



Kentucky Hospital Research & Education Foundation Emergency Preparedness Update for August 26, 2019

Struggling Kentucky ambulance services could double Medicaid money under new proposal

(Herald Leader) Financially strapped ambulance services in Kentucky are throwing their support behind a proposed bill that could double how much they're paid to transport Medicaid patients.

"Our EMS services are struggling to get by, and we're trying to come up with different ways of developing more revenue streams," bill co-sponsor Rep. Rob Rothenburger, R-Shelbyville, told the General Assembly's interim Joint Committee on Health, Welfare, and Family Services on Monday.

The [pre-filed bill](#) for the 2020 legislative session would allow ground ambulance services across the state to seek more in federal [Medicaid reimbursements](#) by instituting a payment method similar to one used by hospitals and many other Medicaid providers.

Full story: <https://www.kentucky.com/news/health-and-medicine/article234221672.html>

Related: To Cut Sky-High Bills, Wyoming Calls For More Regulation of Private Air Ambulances

Wyoming, which is among the reddest of Republican states and a bastion of free enterprise, thinks it may have found a way to end crippling air ambulance bills that sometimes top \$100,000 per flight.

The state's unexpected solution: Undercut the free market, by using Medicaid to treat air ambulances like a public utility. Costs for such emergency transports have been soaring, with some patients facing massive, unexpected bills as the free-flying air ambulance industry expands with cash from profit-seeking private-equity investors. The issue has come to a head in Wyoming, where rugged terrain and long distances between hospitals forces reliance on these ambulance flights.

Other states have tried to rein in the industry, but have continually run up against the Airline Deregulation Act, a federal law that preempts states from regulating any part of the air industry.

So, Wyoming officials are instead seeking federal approval to funnel all medical air transportation in the state through Medicaid, a joint federal-state program for residents with lower incomes.

Read more: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/08/23/753570669/wyoming-hopes-to-use-medicare-to-reduce-air-ambulance-bills-for-all-patients>

**After Closure Announcement,
Jewish Hospital Heart Transplant Program Will Stay Open**

(WFPL) Jewish Hospital will keep its heart transplant program, KentuckyOne Health and the University of Louisville Hospital announced Friday afternoon. Jewish Hospital announced in late July that it was suspending the program that had 32 patients on the heart transplant waiting list. The move to keep it comes about a week after the University of Louisville said it is [buying the financially failing downtown hospital with state help](#).

Read more: <https://wfpl.org/after-closure-announcement-jewish-hospital-heart-transplant-program-will-stay-open/>

Related: Experts Say Jewish Hospital Purchase Will Likely Face Challenges

(WFPL) University of Louisville trustees [have approved a plan](#) under which U of L would take over the Louisville-area assets of KentuckyOne Health, including the financially-struggling Jewish Hospital. Experts say Louisville and its university need health care and medical teaching facilities, but questions of whether the University of Louisville can make Jewish Hospital profitable might make it hard for legislators to support U of L's purchase of the hospital. The discussion was part of WFPL's In Conversation, in which we talked about U of L's planned purchase of Jewish Hospital and other properties, and how it could affect the city and state.

Read more or listen to the podcast: <https://wfpl.org/experts-say-jewish-hospital-purchase-will-likely-face-challenges/>

Fighting Robocalls: Telecom Companies, States Reach Deal To Target Spoofing

Learn more: <https://www.npr.org/2019/08/22/753524482/phone-companies-ink-deal-with-all-50-states-and-d-c-to-combat-robocalls>

Ky. Attorney General believes agreement with major phone carriers will decrease scam calls

More about the KY angle: https://www.wdrb.com/news/ky-attorney-general-believes-agreement-with-major-phone-carriers-will/article_e224f698-c6c6-11e9-bbb0-1fc2829b17db.html

'Red flag laws' offer tool for preventing some gun violence

(Newser) Family members and police routinely face agonizing decisions when otherwise lawful gun owners reveal an impulse to harm themselves or others, and more states are enacting laws that let authorities take away their weapons. With bipartisan support in many cases, 17 states and Washington D.C. have now passed "red flag laws" that allow the court-ordered removal of guns from people who are considered to be dangerous. The back-to-back shootings that killed 31 people this month in Texas and Ohio have given new momentum to proposals pending in several other states and to a plan in Congress to provide grant money to states that adopt such measures. In a rare victory for gun control advocates, the laws have spread since the February 2018 shooting that killed 17 students and staff members at a high school in Parkland, Florida.

Full story: <https://www.newser.com/article/0e36f631dbb44be29c4af3f0845bff46/red-flag-laws-offer-tool-for-preventing-some-gun-violence.html>

In case you missed it: 'Red Flag' law proposed in Kentucky to take guns from people perceived as a threat

Read story: https://www.wdrb.com/news/red-flag-law-proposed-in-kentucky-to-take-guns-from/article_f5358828-b9ed-11e9-845b-3bcf1e93e142.html

2 Women Plead Guilty to Terror Plot Both US citizens - teaching how to do it!

(Newser) Two New York women who went crazy for al-Qaeda—one of whom had an Osama bin Laden screensaver on her phone—pleaded guilty Friday to bomb-making charges in federal court, the [New York Post](#) reports.. After pleading not guilty in 2015, the pair admitted to "teaching and distributing information pertaining to the making and use of an explosive, destructive device, and weapon of mass destruction, intending that it be used to commit a federal crime of violence," says the US Attorney's Office of the Eastern District of New York. Read more: <http://newser.com/s279580>

Sex assaults in KY highlight 'crazy loophole' freeing mentally ill defendants

(WDRB) A recent case has placed a new spotlight on a decades-old problem in Kentucky: mentally ill defendants who aren't competent to stand trial but can't by law remain hospitalized. The result is a dangerous person walking free. The problem is that a different set of laws determine whether some is competent to stand trial versus whether that person can be involuntarily hospitalized.

In the legal process, judges in Kentucky must decide, based on psychiatric evaluations, whether a defendant can understand the charges against him and participate in his defense. Meanwhile, there are four separate criteria determining whether a patient can be involuntarily hospitalized:

- The person must be mentally ill
- The person must be deemed a danger to himself or others
- The person is expected to benefit from treatment
- Hospitalization is the least restrictive treatment available

If any one of those criteria is not met, at any time during treatment, the hospital is required by law to release the person. Read more: https://www.wdrb.com/in-depth/sunday-edition-sex-assaults-highlight-crazy-loophole-freeing-mentally-ill/article_a4a498f2-c5bb-11e9-9284-ffe7e1349599.html

2 pipelines damaged in Lincoln County explosion could be up and running by end of August



(WDRB) -- Texas Eastern plans to have two pipelines that were damaged in the explosion earlier this month in Lincoln County up and running by the beginning of next month.

The company said, depending on when it gets regulatory approval, one of its lines could be back in service by this weekend. Construction on the other line could wrap up by the end of the month or the beginning of September.

Read more: https://www.wdrb.com/news/pipelines-damaged-in-lincoln-county-explosion-could-be-up-and/article_6e9cf2c0-c540-11e9-8383-2f8bdf0fd34e.html

Youths using e-cigarettes more likely to try marijuana; connection increased with refillable e-cig pods

(KY Forward/KY Health News) Young people who use electronic cigarettes are more likely to use marijuana, and the odds are even greater for those who start using e-cigarettes early, according to newly published research. The analysis of 21 separate studies, published in JAMA Pediatrics, found that the odds of marijuana

use were 3½ times higher among youth who used electronic cigarettes, than among those who didn't; that risk was higher among those between the ages of 12 to 17, compared to young adults aged 18 to 25. The



researchers are concerned about the link between e-cigarette use and marijuana.

Teen use of e-cigarettes in Kentucky doubled from 2016 to 2018, according to a state survey. It found that 26.7 percent of high-school seniors reported using e-cigs in the month before they were surveyed, up from 12.2 percent in 2016. Among 10th graders, use increased to 23.2 percent from 11.3 percent. Among eighth graders, it rose to 14.2 percent from 7.3 percent. Sixth-graders' use went to 4.2 percent from 2.3 percent.

A national study found that use of e-cigarettes increased nearly 80 percent among high schoolers and 50 percent among middle schoolers from 2017 to 2018. Read more: <https://www.kyforward.com/youths-using-e-cigarettes-more-likely-to-try-marijuana-connection-increased-with-refillable-e-cig-pods/>

Illinois patient's death may be first in US tied to vaping

(AP) - Health officials said Friday that an Illinois patient who contracted a serious lung disease after vaping has died and that they consider it the first death in the United States linked to the smoking alternative that has become popular with teens and young adults. The Illinois Department of Public Health said the adult patient was hospitalized after falling ill following vaping, though it didn't give other information about the person, including the patient's name, age, hometown or date of death.

Officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday that 193 people in 22 states have contracted severe respiratory illnesses after vaping. However, they said a clear-cut common cause of the illnesses hasn't been identified and that they are being called "potential cases" that are still under investigation.

Read more: <https://apnews.com/b05de1dd26a54ae88de4d77eb7b41e6f>

Related: Fewer U.S. teens participating in substance abuse prevention programs

(Reuters) While 48% of adolescents attended prevention programs in 2002-2003, only 40% did so in 2015-2016, the researchers report in the Journal of Adolescent Health. That's a 16.5% decline, Christopher Salas-Wright of the Boston University School of Social Work and his colleagues note. In particular, participation dropped among Latino youth and youth from rural areas and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The findings are drawn from the long-standing National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

Full story: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-youth-substance-abuse/fewer-u-s-teens-participating-in-substance-abuse-prevention-programs-idUSKCN1VC1Q9>

WHO - Plastic particles in drinking water present 'low' risk

(Reuters) Microplastics contained in drinking water pose a "low" risk to human health at current levels, but more research is needed to reassure consumers, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Thursday.

Studies over the past year on plastic particles detected in tap and bottled water have sparked public concerns but the limited data appears reassuring, the U.N. agency said its first report on potential health risks associated with ingestion.

Microplastics enter drinking water sources mainly through run-off and wastewater effluent, the WHO said. Evidence shows that microplastics found in some bottled water seem to be at least partly due to the bottling process and/or packaging such as plastic caps, it said.

Read more: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-water/plastic-particles-in-drinking-water-present-low-risk-who-idUSKCN1VC003>

Battle Looms over administration's bid to ease safety rules for big rig trucks

(Ky Forward News) In Washington, D.C., a new Trump administration plan to relax safety rules for truck drivers has rekindled old heartaches for families across the country.

This week, the Trump administration formally proposed easing the rules over rest breaks truck drivers must take, and giving them more flexibility over their on- and off-duty time. The proposed changes to the "hours of service" rules by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration were published Aug. 20 in the [Federal Register](#), with a public comment period open for 45 days.

Proponents of the changes, including trucking companies and many commercial drivers, have long argued that existing rules for truckers are too burdensome and make no allowances for human needs and real-world business concerns. The same federal data also show that the rate of fatalities in large truck crashes based on vehicle miles traveled has declined steadily since 1975.

Full story: <https://www.kyforward.com/fairwarning-battle-looms-over-trump-administration-bid-to-ease-safety-rules-for-big-rig-trucks/>

Doctor pulls brown recluse spider from a woman's ear

Learn more: <https://www.newser.com/story/279586/doctor-pulls-brown-recluse-from-a-womans-ear.html>

Hemorrhagic disease confirmed in Graves County; Deer disease not transmittable to humans

(Ky Forward News) A white-tailed deer from Western Kentucky is the state's first confirmed case of hemorrhagic disease this year.

Murray State University's Breathitt Veterinary Center recently confirmed to the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources that a deceased female deer recovered from Graves County tested positive for hemorrhagic disease, sometimes referred to as "blue tongue" or EHD. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife is investigating other possible cases involving 22 deer in 11 counties and expects the number could grow in the coming weeks. Kentucky experiences localized hemorrhagic disease outbreaks each year. More regionally widespread and statewide outbreaks can occur in cycles of five years or longer.

"Hemorrhagic disease cannot be transmitted to people or pets," said Dr. Christine Casey, state wildlife veterinarian for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "It is caused by two different viruses: epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus (EHD) and bluetongue virus. These viruses are transmitted to deer by small biting flies, also called no-see-ums."

Find out more: <https://www.kyforward.com/hemorrhagic-disease-confirmed-in-graves-county-deer-disease-not-transmittable-to-humans/>

Hospitals treat patients without admitting them, to avoid penalties

(Reuters Health) - Hospitals appear to be treating Medicare patients in emergency departments (EDs) and observation areas to avoid readmissions and the financial penalties associated with them, according to a new U.S. study. In fiscal year 2019, 82% of hospitals received such penalties.

"We have noticed that patients who come back to the hospital shortly after discharge are increasingly being treated in the ER or as observation stays - many of our colleagues across the country have also conveyed that they are being nudged to provide care in these settings, to make hospitals' readmission rates look lower," said Dr. Rishi K. Wadhera from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School in Boston, who led the study.

Full story: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-hospital-readmissions/hospitals-treat-patients-without-admitting-them-to-avoid-penalties-idUSKCN1VC29X>

When Temperatures Rise, So Do Health Problems

(NPR) Heart attacks, strokes, respiratory problems — the heat appeared to make everything worse. In 1938, a statistician named Mary Gover found a surprising [association](#) between heat waves and increased mortality from all causes. Only about a quarter of deaths during these periods could be attributed to [heatstroke](#), a dangerous form of heat illness that occurs when temperatures outstrip the body's ability to shed heat.

Associations between heat and violent crime have been [noted](#) since official crime statistics became available around 1900. In 1997, researchers used modern statistics to [confirm](#) that violent crime occurs more often in warmer years. Scientists used FBI crime data in 2004 to [show](#) that crime rose 5% for every 10-degree increase in weekly average temperatures. And a 2013 study [found](#) that violent crime increased 1% for every degree above average monthly temperatures in St. Louis.

Field experiments have also supported an association between heat and aggression. In 1986, researchers [found](#) that drivers were more likely to use their horns when it was hot outside. And in 1994, police officers exposed to elevated temperatures during firearms training were found to exhibit [increased](#) aggression and were more likely to discharge their weapons.

These are worrying trends, especially with temperatures projected to rise ever higher in coming years.

Full story: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/08/24/753511276/when-temperatures-rise-so-do-health-problems>

Warning Issued For Windows 10, Windows 8.1 And Windows 7 Users

Learn more: <https://news360.com/article/505503449>

The Khref Emergency Preparedness Update is assembled several times a week. When events make it necessary, the Update may be sent out several times a day to keep our hospital and the healthcare community advised on preparedness news and information. Most of this information is compiled from open sources, and where possible reference links will be provided. There is an archive of [Emergency Preparedness Updates available here](#). If you would like to add or delete, or have something you would like to contribute to a future edition of the Emergency Preparedness Update, please contact rbartlett@kyha.com (include your current email address). The preparedness program for the Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA) and Khref are supported by US DHHS ASPR HPP funds through a contract with Kentucky Public Health.