



CMS Snapshot

December 22, 2022- January 5, 2023

Delivered to you by the Partner Relations Group in the Office of Communications

All releases below are from 2pm Thursday, December 22, 2022 through 2pm Thursday, January 5, 2023

News Releases

*December 27- [HealthCare.gov Sign Ups Outpace Previous Years At Key Milestone](#). The Biden-Harris Administration announced today that Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace enrollment continues to outpace previous years, with nearly 11.5 million people selecting a health plan nationwide as of December 15, 2022 – a key milestone marking the deadline for coverage starting January 1, 2023. About 1.8 million more people have signed up for health insurance, or an 18% increase, from this time last year.

*December 29- [Statement from HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra on the Bipartisan Funding Bill](#). Today, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra released the following statement after President Biden [signed](#) the bipartisan funding bill.

*December 29- [HHS Issues New Strengthened Conscience and Religious Nondiscrimination Proposed Rule](#). *Proposed changes would increase access to care and prevent discrimination.* Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) announced a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), entitled *Safeguarding the Rights of Conscience as Protected by Federal Statutes*, which proposes to restore the longstanding process for the handling of conscience complaints and provide additional safeguards to protect against conscience and religious discrimination.

*December 30- [HHS Provides Support to New Mexico Children’s Hospital](#). Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), deployed a National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) team to the University of New Mexico (UNM) Children’s Hospital – providing much needed support to an overwhelmed emergency department.

*January 3, 2023- [Lab Pays \\$16,500 Settlement to HHS, Resolving Potential HIPAA Violation over Medical Records Request](#). Today, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced a settlement with Life Hope Labs, LLC (“Life Hope Labs”), a full-service diagnostic laboratory in Sandy Springs, Georgia, concerning a potential

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violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule's right of access provision. The rule requires that patients be able to access their health information in a timely manner. This investigation marks the 43rd case to be resolved under OCR's HIPAA Right of Access Initiative, designed to improve compliance by regulated entities with the law. Life Hope Labs agreed to implement a corrective action plan and pay \$16,500 to resolve this investigation.

*January 4- [HHS Offers States Flexibility to Better Address Medicaid Enrollees' Needs](#). *As part of Biden-Harris Administration efforts to strengthen Medicaid, new guidance will help states expand access to health care services and tackle unmet social needs.* Today, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), is releasing guidance on an innovative opportunity for states to address health-related social needs for people with Medicaid coverage through the use of "in lieu of services and settings" in Medicaid managed care.

*January 4- [SAMHSA Announces National Survey on Drug Use and Health \(NSDUH\) Results Detailing Mental Illness and Substance Use Levels in 2021](#). *2021 NSDUH report includes selected estimates by race, ethnicity, and age and is the most comprehensive key findings report to date.* Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released the results of its annual National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), which shows how people living in America reported about their experience with mental health conditions, substance use, and pursuit of treatment in 2021. The [2021 NSDUH national report](#) includes selected estimates by race, ethnicity, and age group. It is the most comprehensive report on substance use and mental health indicators that SAMHSA has released to date.

*January 5- [HHS Expands Access to Essential Specialty Care for Millions of Medicaid and CHIP Beneficiaries](#). *For the first time, states will be able to expand beneficiary access to specialty consultations, which can improve quality of care and outcomes for physical and behavioral health.* The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), today issued guidance that creates an easier path to specialty care for Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) beneficiaries. For the first time ever, state Medicaid and CHIP programs will be able to pay specialists directly when a beneficiary's primary health care provider asks for advice.

Blogs

*January 5- [Don't miss out! Sign up for 2023 Marketplace coverage](#). Your last chance to enroll in, renew, or change your Marketplace health coverage for 2023 is almost here. The deadline is January 15.

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