



At the intersection of business and health.

MAY 2024 NEWSLETTER

IN THE NEWS

It happened again. Another large health system was hacked. This one hit close to home - the Ascension system, (St. John hospitals), were the target. Although this affected our Oklahoma hospital network, it's actually far worse. Ascension operates 140 hospitals across 19 states and DC. It's one of the largest health systems in the country. As with the recent Change Healthcare hack...this is another mad scramble to regain access and control of their data and get back online, all while protecting patient health information. It's official...health system data makes a good hostage.

This article, "[Ransomware: 10 things hospital leaders should know](#)" was directed at the hospital C-Suite, however, it gives a great explanation of the 'what, who, how, and why' hospitals make such great targets for ransomware. Hacks cause danger to patient care and cost millions (maybe billions) to recover. Stay informed. At some point, these costs will likely be passed through and become the burden of health plans and employees.

[Ascension IT Update](#)

[Update on Change Healthcare Hack](#)

News You Can Use



Real-World Trends in GLP-1 Treatment Persistence and Prescribing for Weight Management

The introduction of GLP-1 agonist (GLP-1) drugs significantly disrupted traditional approaches to weight and obesity management. Since the U.S. Food

and Drug Association (FDA) approval of semaglutide (Wegovy®) for weight management in June 2021, net sales of all anti-obesity medications in the United States have increased, amounting to an estimated \$1.1 billion in the second quarter of 2023.

Blue Health Intelligence® (BHI®) conducted a study to explore whether patients prescribed GLP-1s for weight loss are dropping out of treatment too quickly to attain the health benefits of these drugs. For a better understanding of how these new weight management medications are prescribed and what issues may be impacting medication persistence, they sought to inform strategies around insuring the success of GLP-1 therapies for patients, while limiting ineffective care and unnecessary healthcare spending. Using a nationally representative, commercially insured data set they looked to answer the following questions:

1. Is there evidence that patients prescribed GLP-1s for weight management drop out of treatment too soon to see a clinically significant effect?
2. Is premature GLP-1 treatment discontinuation more likely for certain patients or if certain types of providers oversee the treatment?

SOME OF THE FINDINGS - More than 30% of patients dropped out of treatment after the first four weeks, when the dose was still being increased to reach the targeted dose; Individuals age 35 and older were more likely to stay on GLP-1 treatment for at least 12 weeks. ***Read the full report below.***

[BHI GLP-1 Report](#)

Medical Minute



Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades

The Leapfrog Group has published its spring 2024 Hospital Safety Grades. Leapfrog is a non-profit organization that promotes safety and transparency in hospitals and outpatient surgery centers. Hospital Safety Grades come out twice a year and allow employers and consumers an opportunity to review key safety metrics in these facilities.

We are NOT good healthcare consumers...we invest more time shopping for a hamburger than we do checking out our healthcare providers. **Look at Oklahoma hospital scores [HERE](#).** (Note: Leapfrog also conducts an annual hospital survey. Safety Grades can be impacted based on whether or not the hospital participates in the survey).

Medical errors are still recognized as the 3rd leading cause of death in the U.S. Hospital safety is not guaranteed. Hospitals are huge, complicated systems with many, many moving parts. There is no intent to do harm, but preventable errors still occur.

Employers - Hospital errors can cost your plan in higher claims and in employee downtime. Reporting problems about patient care takes diligence, and probably falls back on your employee. Knowledge is power. **There are things you can do to help your workforce.** [Find Out More.](#)

The Collective is a member of the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions

Celebrate Men's Health Month in June: [4 Action Steps to Better Health.](#)

Advocacy

Attorney General Drummond sues pharmaceutical manufacturers, PBMs for insulin pricing scheme

OKLAHOMA CITY (May 14, 2024) – Attorney General Gentner Drummond has filed a lawsuit against major diabetic drug manufacturers and pharmacy benefit managers (PBM) for an unfair and deceptive pricing scheme that has cost Americans billions of dollars.

Alleging violations of the Oklahoma Consumer Protection Act (OCPA), Drummond said manufacturers have significantly raised the prices of their diabetes drugs in lockstep during the last 15 years despite the fact that the costs of producing the critical drugs have diminished.

He said manufacturers and PBMs coordinated closely to control drug prices and drug purchasing behavior. The cost for the manufacturers named in the lawsuit to produce insulin today is less than \$2 per vial, according to the filing. The drugs, which sold for \$20 in the late 1990s, now range between \$300 and \$700. In the last decade, the manufacturer defendants have hiked the price of their insulin up to 1,000 %.

[AG's Action Brief](#)

[Read the Petition](#)



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