



# Health Care Recap

Report provided courtesy of: KSA Group

October 4 - 10, 2019

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### SESSION STATUS

At 12:59 p.m. on Wednesday, September 25, 2019 the Senate stands in recess until Monday, October 21, 2019 at 1:00 p.m., unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore.

At 4:02 p.m. on Wednesday, September 25, 2019 the House stands adjourned until Monday, October 21, 2019 at 1:00 p.m., unless sooner recalled by the Speaker.

### UPCOMING SESSION DAYS

#### House

Oct. 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30  
Nov. 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20  
Dec. 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18

#### Senate

Oct. 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30  
Nov. 18, 19, 20  
Dec. 16, 17, 18



## Around the Rotunda

### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH URGES CAUTION AND AWARENESS OF VAPING DANGERS

By Jeff Cox, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | October 4, 2019

Pennsylvania Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine today held a news conference to caution Pennsylvanians regarding the dangers of vaping and vaping associated lung disease. She also announced the department has reported one fatality along with nine confirmed cases of vaping associated lung disease and 12 probable cases to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta who is leading the national investigation.

Sec. Levine told reporters, "As this investigation continues, it has really become clear that we do not really know what is causing this serious life threatening and even fatal lung injury cases to occur." She continued, "I strongly urge anyone who is vaping illegally bought products, in particular illegally bought products with THC, to stop." Sec. Levine stated, "The fact that we have seen a death in addition to patients with very serious lung disease underscores the importance of being aware of the symptoms associated with this illness."

The signs and symptoms of a potential lung injury associated with vaping include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Fever
- Weight loss

Sec. Levine suggested, "Please see your health care provider immediately if you or a loved one are showing these signs or symptoms." She reported that in all of the cases so far, both nationally and statewide, the only common factor is people using vaping devices, particularly those devices associated with THC. Sec. Levine said, "The investigation into these cases, both in Pennsylvania and nationally, is very complex and is evolving and changing every day." She also said, "Generally, e-cigarettes are not safe for youth, young adults, pregnant women or adults who do not currently use tobacco products." Sec. Levine cautioned, "It is also important to remember that e-cigarette aerosol is not harmless "water vapor." It can contain harmful substances, including nicotine and ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs; flavoring such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease; volatile organic compounds; cancer-causing chemicals and heavy metals such as nickel, tin and lead." She also expressed support for legislation raising the legal age for the purchase of tobacco products to 21 as well as legislation allowing the Governor to declare a public health emergency.

"Many medications carry risk and vaping medical marijuana products sold in our dispensaries carries risk in the same way that other medications do," Sec. Levine said. "If you are vaping, whether as part of the medical marijuana program or not, it is essential that you have an honest conversation with your physician about the potential risk for serious illness. For those who are part of the medical marijuana program and have concerns, we encourage you to talk to your physician or the pharmacist at the dispensary."



Sec. Levine responded to questions from the news media.

**You said you support legislation to declare health emergencies. Is this something that has the potential to be as serious as the opioid epidemic?**

I would not say at this time that this is as serious as the opioid epidemic. We have had one death in Pennsylvania. In 2017, we had 5,400 overdose deaths. Even with an 18 percent decrease in 2018, we had approximately 4,400 deaths. So I would not say it would rise to that level but I think it is important for the secretary or the Governor on the advice of the secretary had the ability to declare a public health emergency to be able to address serious public health concerns that can occur in our state.

**When was the first case reported in Pennsylvania?**

Dr. Sharon Watkins, director, Bureau of Epidemiology: At this time, in our records, the first case occurred in June of this year.

**Vaping has been around for nearly a decade. Is there any evidence of why suddenly in 2019 all of these cases are coming up?**

That is a very good question and I have to say the CDC does not have an answer to that question. Some of it might be a combination of factors. That it might have been some cases beforehand but were not recognized as they are now as being associated with vaping. Certainly, the proliferation of illegal vaping cartridges, especially those containing THC, has been one of the main triggers and we have seen in the news about arrests of people who have thousands of these illegally produced cartridges mixing many different chemicals in them. So it seems likely that has caused this surge, but we don't know why we did not see or if we really didn't see cases beforehand. We do not know definitively yet.

**What would be the benefit of calling a public health emergency?**

Associated with a public health emergency, it would give the Governor and the secretary the ability to do certain things. We might be able to change some regulations or taken an action that we might not be able to take without that such as the Governor did with the disaster declaration. The disaster declaration was originally designed for things such as a hurricane or flooding and things like that. We adapted that and the Governor was extremely progressive and innovative in adapting that to the opioid crisis. A public health emergency would be more targeted, so we support legislation. I am not really saying whether we would declare it for this or not but that type of legislation is important and has been discussed.

**Is there any ongoing investigation of the death that has been reported and is there any demographical information you can provide?**

I don't think we can really provide any information because it is just one patient and we don't like to identify patients so we cannot give you any specific features. I can tell you that our investigation under Dr. Watkins' leadership is extremely intense and they are exhaustive. We are continuing to investigate all of those cases but because it is one patient it would break patient confidentiality to identify him.

**Why should people using medical marijuana should not necessarily be concerned with this?**

We want to highlight this, but we have an excellent medical marijuana program. We have approved and certified grower-processors. All of that product is laboratory tested twice by laboratories which we also certify. We actually do know what is in those cartridges so we have a lot of confidence in our medical marijuana program. The issue raised by the CDC is vaping itself safe and I think that question is still being investigated.

**Have the reported cases come from certain geographical areas in Pennsylvania or has it been literally statewide?**

It has been statewide. For a while, most of the cases were in the southwest. We now have had more cases in the southeast. But it really does span the state. Of course, in the southwest we have Pittsburgh and in the southeast we have Philadelphia so there are more people there but there is not just one specific geographical area.

**When did the patient die in Pennsylvania?**

In September.



**Right now, there is a push for recreational marijuana in Pennsylvania. Are we learning anything about vaping itself that might cause you some concern towards legalizing marijuana?**

Potential recreational marijuana is kind of over there. We are concentrating on the risk of vaping and, particularly, the risk of these illegal cartridges. You have to understand we have drug dealers and some of them are actually a couple of people in a basement throwing together various chemicals and solvents to dissolve medical marijuana and then slapping a label on it and selling it in the market. The biggest concern with these illegally produced cartridges is the type of chemicals that might be in there. What we do know about the vaping and lung disease is there is no evidence it is infectious. At first, some people thought this was some sort of infection. There are no infectious agents that are known. It seems to be a chemical injury and the biggest risk is from these chemicals people are throwing into these illegal cartridges.

**What is the actual injury to the lungs?**

It looks primarily like an inflammation in the lungs. It is a chemical injury to the lungs and it has a certain appearance on x-rays. I want to emphasize that we have, tragically, had a death. All of these patients are almost all hospitalized and some are in intensive care are very, very ill patients.

###

**ACLU ANNOUNCES CHALLENGE TO LEBANON COUNTY POLICY PROHIBITING ACCESS TO MEDICAL MARIJUANA FOR THOSE ON SUPERVISED RELEASE**

By Sheri Melnick, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | October 8, 2019

Representatives from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) were joined by clients and medical marijuana patients this afternoon to announce the filing of a [lawsuit](#) against Lebanon County courts, challenging a policy prohibiting people on supervised release from taking their medication.

Witold Walczak, legal director, ACLU of Pennsylvania (ACLU-PA), spoke about how those on supervised release, including parole, probation, and accelerated rehabilitative disposition (ARD), who are registered medical marijuana patients have been denied access to their medication. He explained that as of September 1, 2019, the Lebanon County Probation Office initiated a policy preventing those on supervised release from using medical marijuana, even if they have obtained a physician's certification allowing them to use it.

Walczak noted that the ACLU filed a lawsuit against the Lebanon County 52nd Judicial District today, challenging the September 1 policy that prevents those on supervised release from lawful use of medical marijuana. Walczak said, "The medical marijuana law makes no exceptions for people on probation who have a right to use medical marijuana." He asserted that judges may not agree with the medical marijuana law, but they must follow it. He remarked that there are three plaintiffs in the class action suit, Melissa Gass, Ashley Bennett, and Andrew Koch, and noted that the case will apply to everyone in Lebanon County who is on supervised release and has a medical marijuana card.

Walczak acknowledged that other Pennsylvania counties have enacted prohibitions similar to the one in Lebanon County, including Lycoming, Indiana, Forest, Potter, Elk, Northampton, and Jefferson Counties. He noted that Philadelphia and Allegheny Counties "respect" the medical marijuana laws and do not prohibit those on supervised release from using medical marijuana if they have an approved medical marijuana card.

Plaintiff Melissa Gass, ACLU-PA client and registered medical marijuana patient, explained that she has suffered from drop seizures since she was 10 years old. After being sentenced to probation following a simple assault conviction, Walczak indicated that Gass was initially able to use medical marijuana for her seizures until the probation office in Lebanon County informed her that she would be violating her probation if she tested positive for marijuana. Gass asserted that without medical marijuana, she has suffered 20 drop seizures in the last two weeks and that other medications do not allow her "to function."

Plaintiff Ashley Bennett, an ACLU-PA client and registered medical marijuana patient, explained that she suffers from anxiety



and digestive issues and asserted that she stopped her medical marijuana on September 4 in response to the September 1 Lebanon County policy. Bennett noted that she lost 18 pounds since September 4 when she stopped taking her medical marijuana. She asserted that she lost employment because she has been sick and unable to work.

Walczak took questions from the press.

**Ashley, what would you explain to the judge about this decision to disallow you to take your medication?**

Bennett responded that the judge should “look more into” medical marijuana and try to understand how it helps.

**What are your choices if you continue to medicate?**

Bennett explained that if she continues to medicate, she could receive a probation violation and subsequent jail time.

Walczak noted that medical marijuana has been recognized in 32 states and the District of Columbia as well as Pennsylvania. He explained that the ACLU will file a motion for a preliminary injunction this afternoon to “speed up the process.”

**Has Lebanon County been reviewing this policy?**

Walczak responded that the ACLU sent a letter to President Judge John Tylwalk on September 16 and had been in discussions with attorneys at the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC). He noted that the only confirmation they received through negotiations is that the courts would not immediately detain someone if they tested positive for tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Walczak clarified that the county could still start violation proceedings, which would follow with a hearing.

**When was the policy enacted?**

Walczak explained that the policy was enacted on September 1 because the THC stays in the system for at least a month and noted that the supervisees had to be “clean” by October 1.

**What does it mean when you say that someone would not be immediately detained, but that violation proceedings could start?**

Walczak noted that ordinarily, if someone was violated, they could be handcuffed and detained right away. He asserted that attorneys for the AOPC stated that while these persons would not be arrested immediately, the violation proceedings would start, which would result in a hearing where the violator would be able to inform the judge at the hearing that they have a medical marijuana card.

**Is there some lack of clarity in the law?**

Walczak explained that the primary argument the judges are using in Lebanon County is that they are following federal law, which still makes it a crime to use marijuana. He noted that the complaint and injunction address those arguments. Walczak asserted that there are recent federal court decisions from Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, which hold that even those on federal probation cannot be violated when they are lawfully using medical marijuana.

**Can you talk about the Lycoming County case?**

Walczak explained that in Lycoming County, the plaintiff was revoked for the use of medical marijuana, and the court decided that they would apply the policy of disallowing supervisees to use medical marijuana. He noted that the ACLU will be taking over the appeal, which will be filed soon, but added that it could be up to a year to get a decision on the case.

**Are you hoping that the decision in the case filed today will have state-wide implications?**

Walczak said yes.

**Have there been challenges in other states?**

Walczak explained that Arizona, Oregon, and Michigan have had similar legal challenges and that courts have ruled that “the states must respect medical marijuana law.” He noted that a Colorado decision came out differently because their “underlying law was different.”



**Of the other counties who have policies similar to Lebanon County's, how many are there where lawsuits have been filed?**

Walczak responded that Lebanon County is the first to file such a lawsuit and said, "We expect it to be the lead vehicle to have courts examine what probationers' rights are in Pennsylvania."

**What is your advice to people trying to decide as to whether they should continue to use medical marijuana if they have a medical marijuana card, knowing that they could be violating the conditions of their supervised release?**

Walczak noted that as a lawyer, he cannot guarantee the outcome of a lawsuit, and opined that this is a "very strong case." He asserted that if this is a "life or death" situation, people need to do "what they have to do." He noted that in Lebanon County, if supervisees there have problems, they should contact the ACLU.

**Is the law poorly written?**

Walczak stated that he does not think the law is poorly written and noted that if someone has a card to use medical marijuana, they have immunity from penalties.

**What do you say to people who argue that federal law supersedes state law?**

Walczak noted that that argument is wrong, especially when supreme courts in three other states and federal courts in Pennsylvania have rejected that argument.

**Since you are not sure how many counties in Pennsylvania are using the same policy as Lebanon County, is there any benefit for people in other counties to contact you and let you know whether their county is acting similarly?**

Walczak asked that people from other counties contact him if the supervised release policies are similar to those in Lebanon County.

**Are there plans to pursue legal action in other counties?**

Walczak stated that if the current lawsuit in Lebanon does not result in a quick victory, the ACLU would be interested in adding other counties to litigation. He noted that any success would apply to all counties since the lawsuit is being filed in commonwealth court, and its decision will impact the entire state.

**Is there any concern that this lawsuit could get unfairly politicized by the conversation around legalizing recreational marijuana?**

Walczak explained that if recreational marijuana were legal, a judge could determine that someone on supervision may not use marijuana. He noted that if someone has the right to use medical marijuana, then the judge cannot disallow them from doing that while on supervision, whether or not marijuana is legal for recreational use. He also asserted that if people want to politicize or be antagonistic about the legalization of recreational marijuana, the ACLU cannot control that, but can take the current legal action.

**If you get an injunction, who would be impacted?**

Walczak noted that it would only apply to those in Lebanon County and explained that if other counties do not follow the injunction, "it would be a quick and easy action" against them.

**What caused the negotiations to break down with the AOPC?**

Walczak explained that the ACLU asked that no one is violated while the negotiations were proceeding, and the AOPC only agreed to no immediate detention.

**How many people in Lebanon County are on supervised release and have medical marijuana cards?**

Walczak stated that there are currently 63 people.

**Who is the lawsuit being filed against?**

Walczak noted that the suit is being filed against the 52nd Judicial District, Lebanon County, which includes the Lebanon County Courts and Probation Department.



## Committee News

No Committee News this week.

## MAAC

MAAC did not meet this week.

## Bullet.in.Points

### [DOH: RENAL DISEASE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING](#)

The Department of Health's (DOH) Renal Disease Advisory Committee will hold its quarterly public meeting on Friday, October 18, 2019, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Health and Welfare Building, Harrisburg. Additional information can be found on the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

### [DOH: TITLE V MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES BLOCK GRANT: HEALTH NEED PRIORITIZATION EVENT](#)

The Department of Health's Bureau of Family Health will hold a public meeting on Friday, October 18, 2019, at 4 p.m. at the Dixon University Center, Administration Building, 2986 North Second Street, Harrisburg for providers and families to share input on the potential priorities that will guide the issues that Pennsylvania's Title V programs will address over the next five years. Additional information can be found on the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

### [DHS: OUTPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES AND PSYCHIATRIC OUTPATIENT CLINICS: FINAL FORM RULEMAKING](#)

The Department of Human Services (DHS) adopts this final-form rulemaking under the authority of sections 201(2) and 1021 of the Human Services Code. The purpose of this final-form rulemaking is to amend Chapters 1153 and 5200 (relating to outpatient behavioral health services; and psychiatric outpatient clinics). Additional information can be found on the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

### [PHC4: DATA SUBMISSION AND COLLECTION](#)

The Health Care Cost Containment Council is required to publish a list of diseases, procedures and medical conditions, not to exceed 35, for which data under subsections 6(c)(21) and (d) of the Health Care Cost Containment Act shall be required. Additional information can be found on the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

## Cosponsor Memos

- |         |                            |  |
|---------|----------------------------|--|
| HCO2679 | Gregory, James (F)(R)      | Increases monthly pension amounts for the Blind Veterans Pension Program and the Amputee and Paralyzed Veterans Pension Program.                               |
| HCO2680 | Klunk, Kate(R)             | Creates the Workers with Job Success category under Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities.  |
| HCO2688 | Fiedler, Elizabeth (F)(D)  | Ensures medical institutions and schools receive patient consent for all procedures performed under anesthesia for training purposes.                          |
| SCO1204 | Williams, Anthony(D)       | Prohibits supervised injection sites from operating in Pennsylvania.   |
| SCO1205 | Collett, Maria (F)(D)      | Requires Pennsylvania's public agencies that serve those who are young, low-income, homeless, or incarcerated to make menstrual products available at no cost. |
| SCO1215 | Santarsiero, Steven (F)(D) | Allows a young adult to stay on his or her parents' health insurance plan until the age of 26.   |



## Bill Actions

HB 1662 DiGirolamo, Gene(R) (PN 2207) Amends the Methadone Death and Incident Review Act, incorporating Buprenorphine-related deaths into the act, including in the title, short title, definitions, the Methadone Death and Incident Reveiw Team, team duties, review procedures and confidentiality. The legislation also removes the term narcotic treatment and replaces it with opioids-assisted treatment throughout the act. Effective in 60 days.

**Bill History:** 09-23-19 H Reported as committed from House Appropriations  
09-23-19 Laid out for discussion 2:58pm  
09-23-19 Third consideration 2:58pm  
09-23-19 H Final Passage (Vote: Y:199/N: 0)  
10-08-19 S Received in the Senate and referred to Senate Health and Human Services

HB 1920 Readshaw, Harry(D) Act providing for involuntary treatment requirements and procedures for individuals suffering from alcohol & other drug abuse; and imposing duties on the Department of Health and the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs.

**Bill History:** 10-04-19 H Filed

HB 1922 Readshaw, Harry(D) Amends the Medical Practice Act, further providing for reasons for refusal, revocation, suspension or other corrective actions against a licensee or certificate holder.

**Bill History:** 10-04-19 H Filed

HB 1923 Readshaw, Harry(D) Amends The Professional Nursing Law, further providing for refusal, suspension or revocation of licenses.

**Bill History:** 10-04-19 H Filed

HB 1924 Readshaw, Harry(D) Amends the Practical Nurse Law, further providing for refusal, suspension or revocation of license and grounds.

**Bill History:** 10-04-19 H Filed

HB 1926 Readshaw, Harry(D) Amends the Osteopathic Medical Practice Act, further providing for reasons for refusal, revocation or suspension of license.

**Bill History:** 10-04-19 H Filed

HB 1930 Hennessey, Tim(R) Amends the Older Adults Protective Services Act, making extensive amendments and adding provisions relating to administration, criminal history for employees, reporting suspected abuse by employees and misc. provisions.

**Bill History:** 10-07-19 H Filed

HB 1937 Topper, Jesse(R) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in general provisions, relating to preliminary provisions, further providing for defs.; and, in licensing of drivers, further providing for issuance and content of driver's license.

**Bill History:** 10-09-19 H Filed



- SB 876 Yaw, Gene(R) (PN 1234) Amends the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act further providing for drug overdose response immunity by stipulating that persons experiencing drug overdose events may not be charged and shall be immune from prosecution if, in addition to current requirements, within 30 days of experiencing the drug overdose event, the person participates in a drug treatment program ordered by the parole board or the court with jurisdiction over the potential criminal charges. Effective in 60 days.
- Bill History:** 10-07-19 S Filed  
10-07-19 S Introduced and referred to committee on Senate Judiciary
- SB 886 Leach, Daylin(D) (PN 1241) Amends the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act by amending the definition of "drug paraphernalia" providing the term does not include fentanyl strips for personal use. Effective in 60 days.
- Bill History:** 10-07-19 S Filed  
10-07-19 S Introduced and referred to committee on Senate Judiciary
- SB 889 Stefano, Patrick(R) (PN 1243) Amends Title 75 (Vehicles), in licensing of drivers, establishing that an individual who is deaf or has a hearing impairment may request to have a deafness or hearing impairment identifier symbol placed on the individual's driver's license or identification card so long as a sworn statement provided by a qualified medical professional is provided. Effective in 60 days.
- Bill History:** 10-07-19 S Filed  
10-07-19 S Introduced and referred to committee on Senate Transportation
- SB 890 Mensch, Bob(R) (PN 1246) Amends the Tobacco Settlement Act, in medical assistance for workers with disabilities, establishing the category worker with job success (WJS) under Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD). A worker with a disability or a worker with a medically improved disability seeking to purchase medical assistance benefits shall pay five percent of the worker's monthly income; a WJS seeking to purchase medical assistance benefits shall pay 7.5 percent of the worker's monthly income; a worker with job success with income at or above \$75,000 shall pay 100 percent of the commonwealth's cost of Medical Assistance benefits for workers with disabilities program. Income and assets of a spouse or dependent of a worker with MAWD shall not be included in the determination of eligibility for the purchase of Medical Assistance benefits. Effective in 60 days.
- Bill History:** 10-08-19 S Filed  
10-08-19 S Introduced and referred to committee on Senate Health and Human Services





## Upcoming Events

### **State Board of Podiatry**

*October 16, 2019 - 9:30 a.m., 2601 North Third Street, Harrisburg*  
Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 783-4858

### **Press Conference**

*October 16, 2019 - 11:00 a.m., Main Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg*  
Don't Punish Pain Rally

### **PA Advisory Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse (DDAP)**

*October 17, 2019 - 1:00 p.m., Dept. of Drug & Alcohol Programs, One Penn Center, 5th Floor, 2601 N 3rd St., Harrisburg*  
Council Meeting. For additional information: (717) 214-1937

### **House Democratic Policy Committee**

*October 17, 2019 - 2:00 p.m., Thomas Jefferson University, Foerderer Auditorium 1025 Walnut Street, Philadelphia*  
Public Hearing with Rep. Brian Sims on Comprehensive Sex Education

### **Department of Health**

*October 18, 2019 - 10:00 a.m., Health and Welfare Building, 625 Forster Street, Harrisburg*  
Renal Disease Advisory Committee Meeting. For additional information: (717) 772-2762

### **House Democratic Policy Committee**

*October 18, 2019 - 10:00 a.m., Lionville YMCA, 100 Devon Drive, Exton*  
Public Hearing with Rep. Danielle Friel on Youth Mental Health

### **House Health and House Human Services**

*October 21, 2019 - 11:00 a.m., Room 140, Room 140 Main Capitol*  
Joint public hearing on the closure of White Haven and Polk State Centers

### **Press Conference**

*October 21, 2019 - 11:00 a.m., Main Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg*  
Domestic Violence Awareness Month Ceremony (unconfirmed)

### **House Finance**

*October 21, 2019 - 12:00 p.m., Room 205, Ryan Office Building*  
To consider: [HB 1189](#) Knowles, Jerry Amends Title 35 re first responder tax credit

### **Press Conference**

*October 21, 2019 - 12:00 p.m., Main Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg*  
Peyton's Law & Sudden Cardiac Arrest Month (unconfirmed)

### **State Board of Pharmacy**

*October 22, 2019 - 9:00 a.m., 2601 North Third Street, Board Room B, Harrisburg*  
Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 783-7156

### **State Bd of Social Wkrs, Marriage & Fam. Therapists & Prof. Coun.**

*October 22, 2019 - 9:30 a.m., 2601 North Third Street, Harrisburg*  
Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 783-1389

**Department of Health**

*October 22, 2019 - 9:30 a.m., Finance Building, Room 500, 613 North St., Harrisburg*

Achieving Better Care by Monitoring All Prescription Program (ABC-MAP) Meeting. For additional information: (717) 547-3144

**Press Conference**

*October 22, 2019 - 10:30 a.m., Main Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg*

Brain Injury Awareness Rally (unconfirmed)

**Press Conference**

*October 22, 2019 - 1:00 p.m., Main Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg*

Lilly's Bill Press Conference (unconfirmed)

**Press Conference**

*October 22, 2019 - 2:00 p.m., Main Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg*

PA Lyme Resource Network (unconfirmed)

**State Board of Osteopathic Medicine**

*October 23, 2019 - 9:30 a.m., 2601 North Third Street, Harrisburg*

Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 783-4858

**Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council**

*October 23, 2019 - 9:30 a.m., Harrisburg Hilton and Towers, 1 N. 2nd St., Harrisburg*

Council Meeting. For additional information: (717) 975-2004

**Press Conference**

*October 23, 2019 - 11:00 a.m., Main Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg*

ABA for All Introducing HB 1900 (unconfirmed)

**Department of Human Services**

*October 23, 2019 - 1:00 p.m., Health & Welfare Building, Room 129, 333 Market St., Harrisburg*

Consumer Subcommittee of the Medical Assistance Advisory Committee. For additional information: (717) 783-9916

**Press Conference**

*October 23, 2019 - 2:30 p.m., Main Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg*

Conversion Therapy Ban Presser (unconfirmed)

**State Board of Nursing**

*October 24, 2019 - 9:00 a.m., One Penn Center, 2601 North Third Street, Harrisburg*

Monthly Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 783-7142

**Department of Aging**

*October 24, 2019 - 10:00 a.m., Farm Show Complex, Keystone Conference Center, 2300 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg*

Long-term Care Council Meeting. For additional information: (717) 705-7296

**Department of Health**

*October 24, 2019 - 10:00 a.m., Radisson Hotel Harrisburg, 1150 Camp Hill Bypass, Camp Hill*

Statewide Pharmaceutical Benefits Program Advisory Council Meeting. For additional information: (800) 922-9384



### **Department of Human Services**

October 24, 2019 - 10:00 a.m., PA Dept. of Education, 3rd Floor, E-Center, 333 Market St., Harrisburg  
Children's Trust Fund Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 772-2098

October 24, 2019 - 10:00 a.m., Temple University Harrisburg, 234 Strawberry Square, Harrisburg  
Medical Assistance Advisory Committee (MAAC) Meeting. For additional information: (717) 772-6341

### **Press Conference**

October 28, 2019 - 11:00 a.m., Main Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg  
End Healthcare Insurers' Excessive Prior Authorization Practices Press Conference

### **State Board of Medicine**

October 29, 2019 - 9:00 a.m., 2601 North Third Street, Harrisburg  
Board Meeting. For additional information: (717) 783-1400

October 29, 2019 - 1:00 p.m., 2601 North Third Street, Harrisburg  
Committee on Licensure Qualifications for the State Board of Medicine Meeting. For additional information: (717) 783-1400

### **Department of Human Services**

November 1, 2019 - 10:00 a.m., 625 Forster St., Rm. 129, Harrisburg  
PA eHealth Partnership Program Advisory Board Quarterly Meeting. For additional information: (717) 772-2098

## **In the News**

- 10-10-2019 **[Pennsylvania says changes to Medicaid program will yield \\$85 million in savings](#)**  
Pennsylvania regulators have big change planned for the state's Medicaid program, which provides health and other benefits for 2.8 million people. Starting Jan. 1, the Department of Human Services will require the eight companies that manage pharmacy benefits under Medicaid in the state to use... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 10-10-2019 **[Mental illness requiring hospitalization most common among early- to mid-career Pennsylvanians](#)**  
Pennsylvanian's between 18 and 44 are most likely to be hospitalized because of mental illness. They accounted for about half of such hospitalizations in 2018, according to data from the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council. People between 45 and 64 accounted for 27 percent, people under 18... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 10-10-2019 **[A bill expanding healthcare access for working disabled people may see Senate action](#)**  
(Harrisburg) — A bill that aims to let more disabled people access a program that gives them medical services appears primed to move quickly through the state Senate. It may be a rare area where Democrats and Republicans can agree on healthcare. The bill concerns the state's Medical Assistance for Workers with... - [WITF](#)
- 10-10-2019 **[Irwin takes stance against vaping, bans from parks and playgrounds](#)**  
Amid the growing concern over the health impact of electronic cigarettes, Irwin Borough is just saying no to people who want to use those kind of cigarettes in the borough's parks and playgrounds. Borough council on Wednesday directed Zachary Kansler, the borough's... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)



- 10-10-2019 **Feds: Western Pennsylvanians duped into buying 'smart drugs' illegally imported from China, Russia**  
A Mercer County man pleaded guilty to plotting to sell to Western Pennsylvanians untested drugs from China and Russia that he claimed could make people smarter, federal prosecutors said. Emil Koledin, who also goes by "Butch," of Hermitage and the corporation he ran, Koledin Enterprises Inc., each entered guilty counts of... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 10-10-2019 **Health Department works on infant deaths**  
HARRISBURG — Epidemiologists from the state Department of Health were at Geisinger Medical Center for a second day on Tuesday to try to help hospital officials pinpoint the cause of a bacterial outbreak blamed for the deaths of three infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)
- 10-10-2019 **BucksMont families think PFAS chemicals may have made them sick. Researchers will try and find out.**  
The potential human impact of firefighting chemical contamination along the county line was made apparent at a Tuesday meeting, where officials detailed an upcoming health study. In many ways, the gathering of local and elected officials at Temple University's Ambler Campus in Upper Dublin Tuesday mirrored dozens of... - [Levittown Bucks County Courier Times](#)
- 10-10-2019 **A dubious distinction: Pa.'s got the 9th highest youth obesity rate in the nation**  
Pennsylvania's youth obesity rate ranks as the ninth highest in the country. That's according to a first-of-its-kind report -- titled State of Childhood Obesity: Helping All Children Grow Up Healthy -- issued by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation on Thursday.... - [Easton Express-Times](#)
- 10-10-2019 **GHP adds Penn State Health to provider network**  
DANVILLE — Penn State Health, a multi-hospital health system serving patients across Central Pennsylvania, has joined the Geisinger Health Plan (GHP) provider network. The new agreement, which went into effect Sept. 18, makes Penn State Health an in-network, preferred provider for GHP members. Penn State Health joins... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)
- 10-10-2019 **York County Area Agency on Aging offers free Medicare counseling**  
The York County Area Agency on Aging is offering free personalized counseling during Medicare's annual open enrollment period, which runs through Dec. 7. The open enrollment period is when Medicare beneficiaries can review their coverage and make changes if needed.... - [York Dispatch](#)
- 10-10-2019 **Rep. Otten invites community to health and wellness fair Saturday**  
EXTON — State Rep. Danielle Friel Otten, D-155th Dist., will hold her first community wellness fair from noon to 5 p.m. this Saturday, Oct. 12, at Marsh Creek Community Church, 101 Crump Road, Exton. Otten said more than 30 local businesses, service providers and community... - [Phoenixville News](#)
- 10-10-2019 **Lawmakers announced \$1M grant for PFAS health study**  
UPPER DUBLIN — Residents across Montgomery County who believe they have been affected by PFAS groundwater contamination from local military bases received some good news this week. Area members of Congress announced roughly \$1 million in federal funding for a health study examining the effects of those contaminants on the local... - [Norristown Times Herald](#)



- 10-10-2019 **Local doctor spreads awareness on value of depression screenings**  
LEWISTOWN — Depression Screening Day is today and Dr. Shahida Fareed, Geisinger behavior medicine psychologist, is spreading awareness about why getting a depression screening is important to someone's everyday life. A depression screening is a questionnaire given to a patient by their... - [Lewistown Sentinel](#)
- 10-10-2019 **Senate passes bill to allow patients to learn hospital costs in advance**  
Ohioans would be able to learn the bottom-line cost of their scheduled hospital care — and their out-of-pocket share of the bill — in advance under a bill passed unanimously by the Ohio Senate on Wednesday. SB97, sponsored by Sen. Steve Huffman, R-Tipp City, would require... - [Columbus Dispatch](#)
- 10-10-2019 **Trump Wants States to Experiment With Medicaid — Up to a Point**  
After a series of zigzags, Utah is about to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. At least 10 red states have done the same, but Utah's experience may be a bellwether showing how far the Trump administration will let states go in customizing Medicaid, the joint... - [Stateline.org](#)
- 10-10-2019 **Lyme disease support group meeting slated**  
The Tioga County Lyme Disease Support Group will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 17 in the Native Bagel at 1 Central Avenue in Wellsboro. This meeting is free and open to anyone who lives in Tioga County or a surrounding county who wants to learn more about Lyme and other tick-borne... - [Wellsboro Tioga Publishing](#)
- 10-10-2019 **For the sake of students and taxpayers, the state has to increase its share of special education funding**  
THE ISSUE Lancaster County school and health officials expressed concerns Monday over the increasingly unsustainable costs of special education. They aired those concerns at the third public hearing of Pennsylvania's recently reconstituted Special Education Funding Commission; the hearing was held at... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)
- 10-10-2019 **Analysis | The Health 202: Trump is bringing back the mandate to buy health coverage - but just for immigrants**  
President Trump repealed Obamacare's penalty for lacking health coverage. Now he's reinstating a coverage requirement for immigrants seeking to enter the United States . yet refusing to let them access Obamacare's benefits. Under the president's latest tightening of immigration rules, people... - [Washington Post](#)
- 10-10-2019 **Philly's \$100 million battle to get rid of asbestos and make schools safe**  
Both schools proposed as alternates for the 1,000 students being relocated by the School District of Philadelphia because of asbestos have also been found to contain asbestos in the last five years. Benjamin Franklin High School and Science Leadership Academy students were... - [Philadelphia Billy Penn](#)
- 10-10-2019 **Get your flu shot | Editorial**  
Our iPhones, social media, and laptops give us a sense of connection, but there's nothing like an infectious disease, like the flu, to understand what "going viral" really means. Our connection also means we share a responsibility to one another to not put others in harm's way only to... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)



- 10-10-2019 **5 questions: How doctors' empathy improves patient care**  
The doctor enters the exam room. You talk about why you're there. The doctor responds. And then what? According to researchers, how the physician responds can make a difference in your progress. If you feel understood and cared about, your condition is likely to improve faster than if you felt alienated or ignored.... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 10-10-2019 **Pennsylvania ranked No. 9 among states for childhood obesity**  
New data shows a slight increase in childhood obesity in Pennsylvania in 2017-18 that pushed the state into the top 10 nationally, with a rate higher than the national average. The ongoing problem — which is still an “epidemic” according to one researcher who worked on the data — has regional pediatricians and... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 10-10-2019 **Pennsylvania ranks 9th for childhood obesity, says first ever report from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**  
Pennsylvania children are among the most obese in the nation, according to the first-ever report on childhood obesity released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Thursday. The disparities in obesity rates cut across racial, socioeconomic and state lines, with more black and Hispanic children ages 10-17 suffering from... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 10-10-2019 **At harm reduction hearing, advocates urge reform of "poor" drug policies**  
Rep. Sara Innamorato (D-Allegheny) thinks of her father often. She attributes to him her love of public transit. He took her on her first rollercoaster ride, Innamorato recalled. And he died from a drug overdose after years of battling addiction. With those memories in mind and the opioid crisis raging on, this week... - [Pennsylvania Legislative Services](#)
- 10-09-2019 **ACLU files suit over Lebanon County medical marijuana restrictions, hopes for statewide impact in ruling**  
The state chapter of the ACLU filed suit against the Lebanon County court system Tuesday over a policy barring those on probation or parole from using medical marijuana, even if they would otherwise be legally allowed to do so. Filed in Commonwealth Court, the ACLU is seeking an injunction against the... - [Pennsylvania Legislative Services](#)
- 10-09-2019 **ACLU sues Lebanon County courts over medical marijuana ban for people on probation**  
The ACLU of Pennsylvania filed a class action lawsuit against Lebanon County Courts Tuesday, claiming a policy banning people on probation from using medical marijuana is illegal. A ruling on the matter from the Commonwealth Court would apply to all counties in Pennsylvania. Currently, each county can independently decide... - [Lebanon Daily News](#)
- 10-09-2019 **Penn State Health becomes part of network for Geisinger health insurance**  
Penn State Health will be a network provider for Geisinger Health Plan, whose members have historically been concentrated in an area north of the Harrisburg region. It means people covered by Geisinger Health Plan will be able to use Penn State Health hospitals and doctors at network prices, rather than having to... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 10-09-2019 **Philadelphia's landmark supervised-injection site ruling has boosted such efforts in other cities**  
The federal court ruling in favor of Philadelphia's proposed supervised-injection site doesn't apply to the handful of other cities that have floated the idea over the last few years. But backers of the harm-reduction concept around the country say they've been galvanized... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)



- 10-09-2019 **Philly jury hands Johnson & Johnson \$8 billion verdict in Risperdal case over male breast growth**  
Johnson & Johnson must pay \$8 billion in punitive damages to a man who claimed the company failed to warn that boys using its antipsychotic drug Risperdal could grow breasts, a Philadelphia jury said Tuesday. In handing down an unusually large punitive damages award, the Philadelphia... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 10-09-2019 **In Ben Franklin/SLA asbestos crisis, the whole system is guilty | Editorial**  
In a district where the average age of school buildings is 70 years old and three-quarters of those buildings are in disrepair, too many Philadelphia schools are environmental ticking time bombs. Last month, one of those bombs exploded. The Science Leadership Academy and Benjamin Franklin High School shut down... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 10-09-2019 **Pennsylvania county sued over ban on probationers using medical pot**  
Three medical marijuana patients on Tuesday challenged a Pennsylvania county's policy that people on probation and other forms of court supervision may not use the drug, even if they are in the state registry... - [AP](#)
- 10-09-2019 **Bob Casey says health coverage for 20 million Americans is in jeopardy**  
U.S. Sen. Bob Casey Jr. wanted to make sure his point was clear. He reached into the breast pocket of his dress shirt and pulled out a well-worn piece of paper, folded several times. He carefully opened it, revealing a menagerie of ink and highlighter. It was a chart — compiled by the Center on Budget and Policy... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 10-09-2019 **DEP sprays for mosquito-borne virus**  
STONEBORO — Testing is still underway by state officials in the Stoneboro area to make sure spraying has killed mosquitos that could be carrying a potentially life-threatening disease. The Department of Environmental Protection sprayed Thursday in the area of... - [Sharon Herald](#)
- 10-09-2019 **Geisinger to divert premature births to other facilities**  
Mothers expected to deliver babies prior to 32 weeks gestation at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville could be diverted to local facilities, said Geisinger spokesman Matthew Van Stone. The diversion comes after three infants died from a bacterial infection... - [Scranton Times](#)
- 10-09-2019 **ACLU suing to end bans on medical marijuana use in probation systems**  
HARRISBURG — The American Civil Liberties Union on Tuesday filed a lawsuit seeking to force county courts statewide to allow people to use medical marijuana while under probation. The lawsuit, filed in Commonwealth Court, targets the probation system in Lebanon County, where there are at least 60 people on probation who are... - [Meadville Tribune](#)
- 10-09-2019 **Kraynak seeks 8th continuance in federal drug case**  
A suspended doctor in Northumberland County petitioned federal court for the eighth continuance of a trial date for his drug-death case. Thomas A. Thornton, assistant federal public defender, filed a motion Monday on behalf of Raymond Kraynak, of Mount Carmel, asking U.S. Judge... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)



- 10-09-2019 **3 infants die from possible infection at Geisinger; Hospital officials searching for answers**  
DANVILLE — Three premature infants hospitalized in Geisinger Medical Center's neonatal intensive care unit died since August, possibly due to an increase in a waterborne bacteria that has infected eight infants in the unit, hospital officials said Monday. Geisinger officials said at a news conference on Monday afternoon that they... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)
- 10-09-2019 **Batterers Intervention Program could be introduced in Fayette County**  
Washington County is months into a new Batterers Intervention Program (BIP) , which has so far served 17 domestic violence offenders. Deputy District Attorney Leslie Ridge, who oversees the special victim's unit, anticipates the BIP will offer potential changed... - [Uniontown Herald-Standard](#)
- 10-09-2019 **Montco Senior Services to offer free programs on opioid addiction**  
The Montgomery County Office of Senior Services is sponsoring three free programs that will focus on one senior's story of opioid addiction, recovery, and hope. The keynote speaker for these events is Don Tollefson, a former Philadelphia sportscaster. It is a fact that opioid use disorders can affect people of all ages. Older... - [Norristown Times Herald](#)
- 10-09-2019 **County backs project in Seneca**  
Venango County commissioners voted unanimously Tuesday to approve the Salina Meadows project, a senior apartment development near UPMC Northwest in Seneca. Commissioners Tim Brooks, Vince Witherup and Albert Abramovic did not talk about the project as they cast their votes.... - [Oil City Derrick](#)
- 10-09-2019 **ACLU says a Lebanon County medical marijuana policy violates state law**  
(Harrisburg) — The state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union is suing Lebanon County's court system and probation department over a decision to bar people on parole from using medical marijuana. Lebanon isn't not the only county that does this. The Pennsylvania ALCU... - [WITF](#)
- 10-09-2019 **Pregnant Women Should Get Flu and Whooping Cough Shots, C.D.C. Says**  
Millions of pregnant women in the United States are not getting two vital vaccines that protect not only their health, but their babies, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday. The vaccines . against flu and whooping cough . are strongly recommended... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-09-2019 **School systems sue Juul, saying e-cigarette firm spurred vaping epidemic in students**  
Schools across the country are grappling with an epidemic of vaping among their students, with adolescents concealing vapes in their sweatshirt sleeves, sneaking puffs in school bathrooms and even selling vapes . illegal for minors . in the hallways of high schools.... - [Washington Post](#)
- 10-09-2019 **He said an antipsychotic drug caused him to grow breasts. Now, Johnson & Johnson owes him \$8 billion, jury rules.**  
At age 9, Nicholas Murray was prescribed the drug Risperdal for off-label treatment . to address the sleeping troubles associated with his autism. But once Murray realized his breasts were growing after he started taking the antipsychotic drug, he sued its manufacturer, Johnson & Johnson,... - [WAHS](#)





- 10-09-2019 **[Analysis | The Health 202: Trump administration aims to ease anti-kickback rules for doctors and hospitals](#)**  
Sometimes well-intentioned laws have harmful consequences. Today, the Trump administration will move to ease rules designed three decades ago to prevent fraud and bribery by doctors, but which now can hinder their efforts to improve patient care. In a move long sought by doctors and hospitals, Health and Human Services... - *Washington Post*
- 10-09-2019 **[Pennsylvania says changes to Medicaid program will yield \\$85 million in savings](#)**  
Pennsylvania regulators have big change planned for the state's Medicaid program, which provides health and other benefits for 2.8 million people. Starting Jan. 1, the Department of Human Services will require the eight companies that manage pharmacy benefits under Medicaid in the state to use... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*
- 10-09-2019 **[Carnegie Mellon flu forecasting named CDC center of excellence](#)**  
The 2019-20 flu season has begun slowly, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, but forecasting the season is going big time. The CDC has designated Carnegie Mellon University as an Influenza Forecasting Center of Excellence, crediting the university's... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*
- 10-09-2019 **[Tech companies should not treat online drug sales like free speech | Opinion](#)**  
Every day, online retailers promote the sale of illegal drugs in the U.S. via social media platforms. Anyone with access to a computer or smartphone can be targeted by illicit postings advertising drugs, including opioids, fentanyl, MDMA (ecstasy), heroin, and allegedly authentic FDA-approved... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*
- 10-09-2019 **[Pennsylvania says changes to Medicaid program will yield \\$85 million in savings](#)**  
Pennsylvania regulators have big change planned for the state.s Medicaid program, which provides health and other benefits for 2.8 million people. Starting Jan. 1, the Department of Human Services will require the eight companies that manage pharmacy benefits under Medicaid in the state to use... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*
- 10-09-2019 **[AHN announces changes for top physician executives](#)**  
Two top Allegheny Health Network physician executives will have new jobs beginning Jan. 1. David Parada, who currently oversees the AHN Cancer Institute, has been named president of Allegheny General Hospital, succeeding Jeff Cohen, who will take on the new position of chief physician executive for community... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*
- 10-09-2019 **[Mental illness requiring hospitalization most common among early- to mid-career Pennsylvanians](#)**  
Pennsylvanian.s between 18 and 44 are most likely to be hospitalized because of mental illness. They accounted for about half of such hospitalizations in 2018, according to data from the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council. People between 45 and 64 accounted for 27 percent, people under 18... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*
- 10-09-2019 **[CarePartners Plus exploring joint venture for software built to prevent suicide in veterans](#)**  
CarePartners Plus, a health-care software firm based in Horsham, wants to get its product into consumers. hands as soon as possible. After years of waiting on the Veterans Administration, CarePartners Plus is now in discussions with bankers and financial advisers to sign a joint... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*



- 10-09-2019 **[Allegheny Health Network names new president of Allegheny General Hospital](#)**  
Allegheny Health Network named Dr. David Parda president of Allegheny General Hospital on Pittsburgh's North Side, the network announced in a statement Wednesday. Parda will succeed Dr. Jeffrey Cohen, who will move to a new role as Chief Physician Executive for Community Health and Innovation, the statement... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 10-09-2019 **[Hempfield micro-hospital slated to open next month](#)**  
Almost two years and \$30 million since breaking ground, a new Allegheny Health Network hospital is set to open its doors in Hempfield. Known as a micro-hospital, AHN Hempfield Neighborhood Hospital will start admitting patients Nov. 12, said Dan Laurent, vice president of internal... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 10-09-2019 **[CDC awards Carnegie Mellon University \\$3 million for flu forecasting](#)**  
Researchers at Carnegie Mellon University said this flu season has the potential to be severe. They should know. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this week named CMU as an Influenza Forecasting Center of Excellence, a five-year designation that includes \$3 million in research funding.... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[Meeting on EMS service in Sharpsburg draws large crowd](#)**  
It was standing room only at the Sharpsburg council meeting last Thursday night and most of those on their feet and in the seats were there to show their support of Seneca Area Emergency Services. Located on Main Street, the EMS and its many supporters were upset because... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[Is pollution causing childhood cancers in Canon-McMillan?](#)**  
Environmental organizations on Monday called for studies to determine whether environmental exposures may have caused multiple cases of Ewing sarcoma and other cancers among children and young adults in the Canon-McMillan School District in Washington County.... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[Health officials' claim of no cancer cluster angers Canon-McMillan crowd](#)**  
During a community meeting Monday, state Department of Health officials and a UPMC Ewing sarcoma expert provided a statistical analysis as to why a Ewing sarcoma cluster does not exist in the Canon-McMillan School District. Many people in the audience weren't having any of it, given that the... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[With their asbestos-tainted Philadelphia school building closed indefinitely, where will 1,000 students learn?](#)**  
Classes will not resume Thursday for 1,000 Benjamin Franklin High School and Science Leadership Academy students displaced by construction woes and damaged asbestos found inside their North Broad Street building, superintendent William R. Hite Jr. announced Monday.... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[Department of Health explains cancer cluster results; parents, concerned groups call on Gov. Wolf, DOH to investigate cancers](#)**  
Families who have been affected by Ewing sarcoma in Washington County and Canon-McMillan School District, along with residents concerned by the number of cancer cases in Southwestern Pennsylvania, expressed frustration Monday at the results of a Department of Health study that determined there... - [Washington Observer-Reporter](#)



- 10-08-2019 **[Geisinger releases statement on Danville infant deaths](#)**  
DANVILLE — Geisinger Medical Center in Danville says it is transferring some infants following a bacterial infection in its neonatal intensive care unit that affected eight newborns, three of whom have died. Geisinger Medical Center in Danville said Monday that four of the babies... - [Wilkes-Barre Times Leader](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[Lawmakers push for delay on Polk State Center closure](#)**  
Pennsylvania State Senator Scott Hutchinson (R-21) announced Friday that legislation aimed at delaying the closure of the Polk State Center will soon be introduced in the Pennsylvania Senate. Hutchinson, who is a co-sponsor of the bill, said the document would place... - [Titusville Herald](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[Editorial: Tobacco 21 is right choice for Pennsylvania](#)**  
The Issue: The state Senate passed a measure to raise the age at which cigarettes and the like can be purchased. Our Opinion: The House should pass this boon to public health, and the governor should sign it into law. When members of the state House return to session this month, after nearly... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[Workplace environments in AEC firms must change to accommodate a multigenerational workforce \[Column\]](#)**  
The AEC (Architecture, Engineering & Construction) industry is witnessing the multigenerational workforce expanding with the Z Generation preparing to move into the workplace and the millennials increasing their presence to become the largest segment of the total workforce in the United States.... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[Gaudenzia abandons plan to open women's recovery house in South Strabane Township and East Washington](#)**  
Gaudenzia Inc. has abandoned plans to open a women's recovery house in a Wilmont Avenue home in South Strabane Township and East Washington Borough. The nonprofit organization withdrew an application for a text amendment to a South Strabane Township ordinance that would have permitted the proposed... - [Washington Observer-Reporter](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[Navy responds to PFAS report](#)**  
The Navy has responded to our September report on why the DOD isn't performing robust cleanup of firefighting chemicals at NAS-JRB Willow Grove. The U.S. Navy responded last week to questions initially sent in August, in advance of a report on why firefighting chemicals continue to pollute Bucks... - [Levittown Bucks County Courier Times](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[UPDATE 3 infants die from possible infection at Geisinger; Hospital officials searching for answers](#)**  
DANVILLE — Three premature infants hospitalized in Geisinger Medical Center's neonatal intensive care unit died since August, possibly due to an increase in a waterborne bacteria that has infected eight infants in the unit, hospital officials said Monday. Geisinger officials said at a news conference on Monday afternoon that they... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[Variety Club and Happy Days Preschool join forces for the first time](#)**  
WORCESTER — Axel is happily enjoying his new bike while two organizations geared to helping kids are thriving in their new partnership. The seven-year-old received his adaptive trike through the mutual benevolence of Variety Club Camp and Development Center and Happy Days... - [Norristown Times Herald](#)



- 10-08-2019 **State Health Dept. advises against vaping**  
Officials with the Pennsylvania Department of Health are advising people not to vape. Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine recently announced that the Pennsylvania Department of Health has confirmed one death and multiple cases attributed to lung injuries associated with vaping in Pennsylvania... - [Warren Times Observer](#)
- 10-08-2019 **Health insurance costs to rise for N.J. residents who buy their own plans**  
New Jerseyans who buy their own health insurance policies will pay higher premiums next year. The rates will rise on average from 6.5 percent to 19 percent, depending on which of the four carriers they select, according the state Department of Banking and Insurance, which announced the changes Monday.... - [Trenton Times](#)
- 10-08-2019 **Cannabis Banking Challenges Go Beyond Pot**  
FRANKLIN, Tenn. — Kat Merryfield was ready to share her farm-to-home oils, chocolates and creams with the rest of the country. But banks and credit card processors weren't ready to work with her small business. "We started out our website with PayPal, and it took about six months... - [Stateline.org](#)
- 10-08-2019 **3 Babies Die at Pennsylvania Hospital After Bacterial Infection**  
Three premature babies have died after being infected by bacteria while in a neonatal intensive care unit at a hospital in central Pennsylvania, where five other babies were also sickened, hospital officials said on Monday. Officials with the Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pa., said they did... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-08-2019 **Juul Is Sued by School Districts That Say Vaping Is a Dangerous Drain on Their Resources**  
With school districts across the United States scrambling to reverse the rise of vaping among teenagers, three of them on Monday filed suit against Juul, the e-cigarette manufacturer, accusing it of endangering students and forcing educators to divert time and money to fight an epidemic of nicotine... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-08-2019 **The Huge Waste in the U.S. Health System**  
Even a divided America can agree on this goal: a health system that is cheaper but doesn't sacrifice quality. In other words, just get rid of the waste. A new study, published Monday in JAMA, finds that roughly 20 percent to 25 percent of American health care spending is wasteful. It's a startling... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-08-2019 **Analysis | The Health 202: Here are all the ways a court could stymie Obamacare**  
Any day now, a federal appeals court could rule on a lawsuit seeking to strike down Obamacare . a decision sure to inject even more drama into the fraught 2020 election. Legally, the Trump administration wants the Affordable Care Act wiped out. But politically, it's a different story.... - [Washington Post](#)
- 10-08-2019 **Public Hearing Held In Canonsburg To Ask Officials About Spike Of Cancer Cases**  
CANONSBURG (KDKA) — Residents want answers after several people in Washington County have been diagnosed with Ewing Sarcoma. Four people within the Canon-McMillan School District have been diagnosed, and health experts have not classified the cases as a cancer cluster.... - [KDKA](#)



- 10-08-2019 **Washington County Family Members Tell State To ‘Fix’ Their Cancer Study**  
The families of several people diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer in one Washington County School District told state health officials to update their data at a public hearing Monday night. They were angered by the state’s report that there was no cancer... - [WESA 90.5](#)
- 10-08-2019 **East Liberty Primary Care Doc Pulls The Plug On Insurance**  
Kim Stanley shook out a white pill from a prescription bottle and poured herself a glass of water, at the kitchen sink of her North Huntingdon Township home. The antibiotic was to treat an infected cut on her leg. Stanley lost her insurance after she quit her accounting job earlier this... - [WESA 90.5](#)
- 10-08-2019 **Paul Muschick: Fewer than half of Lehigh County veterans use VA health care, lowest rate in Pennsylvania**  
It’s rarely good to be in last place. That’s where Lehigh County stands compared to all of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties in the rate of veterans enrolled in VA health care. That means veterans are missing out on free or low-cost care. Maybe they don’t trust the government. Maybe they consider clinic... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 10-08-2019 **Cancer patients often need this one basic thing to participate in clinical trials**  
When Paul Bagga was diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer that soon spread to his brain, the nonsmoker was devastated and terrified. More than five years later, the Flourtown retiree, 67, is going strong, thanks to participating in clinical testing of a targeted drug developed by... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 10-08-2019 **Don’t let the bedbugs bite: Vigilance, awareness needed when taking on pests**  
An understanding of how best to fight these menaces will give us a fighting chance Having plagued humanity for millennia, the infamous bedbug has proved to be a kind of superman in the world of pests. The bedbug is virtually indestructible, able to survive for months in... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 10-08-2019 **Not just academic: Study finds researchers aren’t immune from misrepresenting their work**  
Trisha Phillips of West Virginia University set out with her colleagues to answer an uncomfortable question that is relevant to the workplace in general and her field in particular. The question: How often do faculty researchers misstate fact? The study didn’t focus on common measures of scientific integrity, such... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 10-08-2019 **Safehouse will face more legal hurdles, but those objections won’t hold up | Opinion**  
U.S. District Judge Gerald McHugh ruled last week that the proposal from “Safehouse” . a nonprofit planning to open a privately-funded safe injection facility supported by citizens including former Gov. Ed Rendell . does not violate federal law. This means a public health measure proven for... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 10-08-2019 **Most pregnant women don’t get recommended flu and whooping cough vaccines**  
Pregnancy increases the chance of being hospitalized with influenza. Both flu and whooping cough can be deadly to infants. Yet only about a third of pregnant women reported getting both a flu and whooping cough (Tdap) vaccination last year, according to the latest... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)



- 10-08-2019 **[Philadelphia's landmark supervised-injection site ruling has boosted such efforts in other cities](#)**  
The federal court ruling in favor of Philadelphia's proposed supervised-injection site doesn't apply to the handful of other cities that have floated the idea over the last few years. But backers of the harm-reduction concept around the country say they've been galvanized by... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
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The state chapter of the ACLU filed suit against the Lebanon County court system Tuesday over a policy barring those on probation or parole from using medical marijuana, even if they would otherwise be legally allowed to do so. Filed in Commonwealth Court, the ACLU is seeking an injunction against the... - [Pennsylvania Legislative Services](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[Penn State Health becomes part of network for Geisinger health insurance](#)**  
Penn State Health will be a network provider for Geisinger Health Plan, whose members have historically been concentrated in an area north of the Harrisburg region. It means people covered by Geisinger Health Plan will be able to use Penn State Health hospitals and doctors at network prices, rather than having to... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[Sexually transmitted diseases hit record high nationally; Philly is even worse](#)**  
The combined total of syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia cases reached a record high in the United States for 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday. The number of syphilis cases exceeded 115,000, and the number of primary and secondary syphilis cases . the most infectious stages of the disease .... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 10-08-2019 **[School district has broken our trust, say students displaced by asbestos | Opinion](#)**  
We are two students . one at Ben Franklin High School and one at Science Leadership Academy. Last week, Superintendent William Hite said that our schools would be closed to students indefinitely while asbestos abatement and construction continue. The School District has broken our trust and someone needs to be held... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 10-07-2019 **[Decriminalization of pot makes sense, but we should slow down the push to make it fully legal | Opinion](#)**  
This week, Governor Tom Wolf and Lt. Gov. John Fetterman joined forces to present their case for legalizing recreational marijuana. They also released the findings of Fetterman's "listening tour" that gathered input on the subject from every County in the state. While there... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 10-07-2019 **[Proposed laws would require counselor-to-student ratios in schools](#)**  
The Pennsylvania School Counselors Association is backing companion bills in the Pennsylvania House and Senate that would increase student access to school counselors, psychologists and social workers. The bills, HB1500, referred to committee on May 23, and Senate... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)
- 10-07-2019 **[Vaping illness linked to first death in state](#)**  
HARRISBURG — Vaping-related lung illness has claimed its first life in Pennsylvania, Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine said Friday. Levine declined to provide any information about the victim or where in the state he or she lived while speaking to reporters at the state Capitol.... - [Meadville Tribune](#)



- 10-07-2019 **Immunotherapy a 'breakthrough' in breast cancer treatment**  
LOUISVILLE — The call came on April 30. That's when Lindsey Witten learned something that would alter the course of her life. "It was my right breast that made me go in for a mammogram," she said. "I had a pretty decent lump. The doctor there that day said he would just feel... - [New Castle News](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Pulmonologist explains the dangers of vaping**  
RADNOR — Dr. Clarke Piatt, a pulmonologist at Bryn Mawr Hospital, is sounding the alarm about the sudden emergence of vaping-related illness that is hitting young patients. As of Oct. 1, there were 18 vaping-related deaths in 48 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands and 1,080 cases of vaping related lung disease, according to... - [Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Dunmore Cemetery Tour packs a few pointed messages**  
DUNMORE — Death and the tragic way it comes was always part of the Dunmore Cemetery Tour. The Dearly Departed Players, a faithful troupe who for two decades have portrayed local, notable characters buried there, are trying something new to bring history to life this year.... - [Scranton Times](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Hope on display at annual walk to benefit women's shelter**  
WILKES-BARRE — The 12th annual Walk for Hope to benefit Ruth's Place women's shelter included teams of walkers, social service professionals looking to help, food, music and costumed characters playing with the many children on hand. A steady drizzle did not keep many people away from the event, which... - [Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Police making record number of pot possession arrests**  
HARRISBURG — While Gov. Tom Wolf and other Democrats have embraced the idea of legalizing marijuana for adult recreational use, police continue to arrest people for possessing the drug in records numbers. While the number of arrests for pot possession plummeted in Philadelphia... - [Meadville Tribune](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Berks County businessman admits defrauding seniors in hearing aid scams**  
READING — A Berks County businessman has pleaded guilty to scamming dozens of senior citizens through fraudulent hearing aid sales. Edward D. Grabarek Jr., 52, of the 3500 block of Stoner Avenue, St. Lawrence, pleaded guilty in Berks County Court to committing unlawful and... - [Pottstown Mercury](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Commissioners' proclamation honors Pa. Pink Connection**  
LEWISTOWN — Noting that breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among American women, the Mifflin County Commissioners on Thursday adopted a proclamation designating October as "National Breast Cancer Awareness Month" and noting Oct. 18 is "National Mammography... - [Lewistown Sentinel](#)
- 10-07-2019 **More needs to be done to keep e-cigs out of hands of children**  
It has been suggested by some that the current scare over e-cigarettes is overblown. Though hundreds of Americans have been hospitalized with respiratory ailments linked to "vaping" and a few have died, calls to ban the products are not realistic, critics say.... - [Lewistown Sentinel](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Recreational marijuana bill proposed**  
This past Monday, state Rep. David Delloso proposed a bill that would legalize the sale of marijuana in the state's liquor stores. HBX - [Huntingdon Daily News](#)



- 10-07-2019 **DEA'S response to opioids plague**  
“We found that DEA was slow to respond to the significant increase in the use and diversion of opioids since 2000.” This past week the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice released a summary of its look at the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration’s pathetic response to the beginnings of a plague that... - [Williamsport Sun-Gazette](#)
- 10-07-2019 **While adult vaping debate rages, let’s protect children**  
It has been suggested by some that the current scare over e-cigarettes is overblown. Though hundreds of Americans have been hospitalized with respiratory ailments linked to “vaping” and a few have died, calls to ban the products are not realistic, critics say.... - [Williamsport Sun-Gazette](#)
- 10-07-2019 **As Trump calls for more 'institutions,' GOP lawmakers nationwide shift their focus to mental health**  
Now Tittl has joined the ranks of Republican lawmakers nationwide pushing to expand mental health treatment, a remarkable turnaround for a party that a few years ago was staking its reputation on cutting taxes and starving government budgets. The renewed GOP focus comes as the party, which lost... - [Washington Post](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Opinion | Virginians have a chance to improve abortion rights in November**  
TO HAVE an abortion in Virginia, a woman by law must undergo an ultrasound and listen to state-mandated information designed to shame her. She must then wait 24 hours before having the abortion. There is no medical reason . absolutely none . for this requirement. It just makes it harder and more... - [Washington Post](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Hospitals are serving better food thanks to Pa. health department program**  
PHILADELPHIA (KYW Newsradio) — A program at the Pennsylvania Department of Health is changing the way we think of hospital food. Hospital food should taste good, be healthy and nutritious, and the Good Food, Healthy Hospitals initiative is trying to make that the norm,... - [KYW News Radio 1060](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Emergency response team cruising streets to save lives among Kensington heroin users**  
PHILADELPHIA (KYW Newsradio) — City officials say an emergency response unit that launched last April in response to the opioid crisis is showing promising results. They're saving lives and getting more people addicted to opioids into treatment. As a member of the Alternative Response Unit — or AR-2 — Tiesha... - [KYW News Radio 1060](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Philly-area vape users unfazed by FDA warning about THC**  
PHILADELPHIA (KYW Newsradio) — The recent spike in illnesses and deaths related to vaping has led The Food and Drug Administration to issue a warning to smokers to stop using vaping products that contain THC. At least 18 people across the country have died from vaping-related lung... - [KYW News Radio 1060](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Wolf announces new free process for forgiving marijuana convictions statewide**  
PHILADELPHIA (KYW Newsradio) — Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf announced last week a new expedited process for forgiving marijuana convictions. The new program run by the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons will allow individuals with minor marijuana convictions, such as possession of small... - [KYW News Radio 1060](#)





- 10-07-2019 **South Side Company Developing Non-Opioid Pain Relief**  
In a matter of years, people with chronic conditions may not have to choose between pain relief and risking addiction. Experts agree that over-prescription of medications like oxycodone has been one of the main drivers of the current opioid epidemic. The South Side's Knopp Bioscience said over the next half decade, it... - [WESA 90.5](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Opioid Treatment Scam May Be Coming to Your State**  
FREDERICK, Md. – Donna Johnson, a working mother of four who lives in a quiet upscale neighborhood in suburban Maryland, is determined to thwart an insidious addiction treatment scam that's spreading across the country. It ensnared her son, then 21, in Florida five years ago when he was... - [Stateline.org](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Vaping bans like Massachusetts' will not stop illness outbreak | Opinion**  
Vaping-related illnesses have captured the attention of public officials and news media alike, and the evidence is alarming. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as of last Thursday, over 1,000 cases of lung injury associated with vaping products have been reported in... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Mosquito-transmitted EEE virus confirmed in two new Pennsylvania counties**  
New cases of the rare mosquito-transmitted virus Eastern Equine Encephalitis have been confirmed in two more Pennsylvania counties, the state departments of agriculture and health reported. Horses in Luzerne and Mercer counties died from EEE, the state confirmed... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 10-07-2019 **There's no logic in legalizing recreational marijuana | PennLive letters**  
Legalization of marijuana for "recreation" means more self-inflicted deaths. It's common knowledge that illicit drugs kill, that smoking kills; smoking an illicit drug sounds doubly dangerous. Do we want these two major causes of death to have "legality" in common?... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Three babies die at central Pa. hospital, possibly victims of bacteria**  
Geisinger Medical Center in Danville is transferring some babies after an infection struck eight newborns in its neonatal intensive care unit, including three who died. Four of the babies have recovered and one continues to be treated with antibiotics, Geisinger said Monday.... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Philadelphia School District to keep asbestos-tainted school building closed until January**  
Classes may not resume Thursday for Ben Franklin High and Science Leadership Academy students displaced by construction woes and damaged asbestos found inside their North Broad Street building, Superintendent William R. Hite Jr. announced Monday. The news came at a crowded, contentious three-hour meeting where hundreds... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 10-07-2019 **Central Pa. hospital searches for source of infection that struck eight babies, including three who died**  
Doctors at Geisinger Medical Center said Monday the infection that struck eight babies is a common one found in water and liquids. The infection, called pseudomonas, may have contributed to the deaths of three of those babies, doctors said. All eight babies were born at less than 27 weeks and considered .very... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)



- 10-07-2019 **Midstate doctor, 75, avoids federal prison time in opioid prescription case involving nearly 20,000 pills**  
A 75-year-old midstate doctor who insisted he was showing compassion, not criminal intent, when he prescribed thousands of pills of opioid pain-killers to a patient as they sat in his van won't be going to federal prison. Instead, after an array of witnesses testified to his decades of... - [Penn Live](#), [Patriot-News](#)
- 10-06-2019 **After court ruling, Sen. Williams looks to ban 'safe injection' sites**  
Following Wednesday's court ruling that the proposed Safehouse supervised injection site in Philadelphia doesn't violate federal law, many leaders and legislators in the city have offered public reaction. Sen. Anthony Williams (D-Philadelphia) is circulating a co-sponsorship memo to prohibit... - [Pennsylvania Legislative Services](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Roll up your sleeve: Getting a flu vaccine means better health for all**  
We are barely into fall and, already, decorations for upcoming holidays are reminding us to get prepared. Likewise, placards are popping up, urging us to get our annual flu shots. Isn't it all too early for all of this? While the need for holiday reminders may be debatable, it is certainly not... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Health officials to discuss Canon-McMillan Ewing sarcoma cases**  
Three cases of Ewing sarcoma in the Canon-McMillan School District represent a rate higher than expected, so would six cases constitute a cluster? That's the question the State Department of Health and UPMC sarcoma experts will have a chance to answer at 6 p.m. Monday during a community meeting in... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Pitt public health school apologizes for data release**  
An administrator in the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health who was notifying seven students of balances due accidentally emailed them a spreadsheet attachment with balance information for them and 31 other students, officials said Friday.... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Clampdown on vaping could send users back toward cigarettes**  
Only two years ago, electronic cigarettes were viewed as a small industry with big potential to improve public health by offering a path to steer millions of smokers away from deadly cigarettes... - [AP](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Lowering prescription drug prices is complicated. Just look at insulin.**  
The price of a life-saving drug used by some 30 million Americans . including 1.3 million in Pennsylvania . has nearly tripled since 2002. Average medication costs for the most vulnerable have risen by 600% over the last two decades. It sounds like a setup for a bipartisan fix in a polarized Washington.... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Purdue opioid settlement plan criticized by Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware attorneys general**  
Attorneys general representing nearly half the states and lawyers for more than 500 local governments on Friday blasted the terms of Purdue Pharma's offer to settle thousands of lawsuits over the nation's opioid crisis in court filings that also said the company had funneled up to \$13 billion to... - [AP](#)



- 10-06-2019 **Asbestos-tainted Philly school building to be closed indefinitely; district seeks alternate sites for 1,000 students**  
With asbestos issues unresolved, Philadelphia School District officials said Friday that they will indefinitely close to students the building that houses Benjamin Franklin High School and Science Leadership Academy and seek other locations for students to resume their classes later next week.... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Pennsylvania reports vaping death, investigating injuries**  
The Pennsylvania Health Department says one person in the state has died from lung injuries associated with vaping and it.s investigating dozens of other suspected or confirmed cases... - [AP](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Gentlemen's Dash helps Pittston event exceed goal**  
The man in a hot pink spandex body suit and the man in a pastel pink fireman.s hat were neck-and-neck as they charged down Main Street in their high-heeled boots. The spandex seemed to work to Ray Capozucca.s advantage, as he edged out John Rebovich at the finish line of the 50-yard Gentlemen.s Dash . one of... - [Scranton Times](#)
- 10-06-2019 **100 Years Ago: On anniversary of flu epidemic, no reported cases in Scranton**  
A year ago . Oct. 6, 1918 . due to the reporting of The Scranton Times, Scranton.s Public Health Department realized that the city was being hit hard by the influenza epidemic. At the time, the Health Department hadn.t tracked any cases of influenza. But that month, 542 city residents died from the disease and more than... - [Scranton Times](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Letters to the Editor 10/6/2019**  
Editor: Having lived in Dunmore all my life, it.s profoundly sad when by the slimmest of margins the greater good has been cast aside twice for the aggrandizement of an extraordinarily small handful. First was a 4-3 vote by the Dunmore Planning Commission, followed two weeks... - [Scranton Times](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Pennsylvania's 1st fall cannabis festival opens in Kutztown**  
Pennsylvania.s first-ever fall cannabis festival gets underway Friday morning in Kutztown, Berks County. The Pennsylvania Cannabis Festival Fall Marketplace runs 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday at Renninger.s Farmers. Market, 740 Noble St. Over 100 vendors will be on hand at the festival, which will be outdoors... - [Easton Express-Times](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Paint Pittston Pink events raise more than \$100K for breast cancer research**  
The man in a hot-pink spandex body suit and the man in a pastel-pink fireman.s hat were neck-and-neck as they charged down Main Street in their high-heeled boots. The spandex seems to have worked to Ray Capozucca.s advantage, as he barely edged out John Rebovich at the finish line of the 50-yard Gentlemen.s Dash... - [Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Wolf takes executive action to combat climate change, carbon emissions**  
Gov. Tom Wolf last week took executive action instructing the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) . a market-based collaboration among nine Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states . to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and... - [Wilkes-Barre Times Leader](#)



- 10-06-2019 **Syphilis, which was almost eradicated, makes a major comeback in Allentown, Bethlehem**  
In a typical year, Allentown will see about six to eight cases of syphilis, the sexually transmitted disease that was nearly eradicated around the turn of the 21st century thanks to penicillin and safe sex education campaigns. In 2018, that number drastically shot up to 46 cases, said Vicky Kistler,... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Cannabis Festival comes to Berks**  
Talk about great timing. Only a handful of days after Gov. Tom Wolf announced his support for legalizing recreational marijuana use in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Cannabis Festival Fall Marketplace kicked off in Maxatawny Township. Needless to say, Wolf's announcement went over well with organizers,... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Report: Legalizing pot in PA would create jobs, raise revenue [Poll]**  
On the heels of Gov. Tom Wolf announcing his support for legalizing recreational marijuana, the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center released a report that the labor-linked think tank says serves as a roadmap to legalization that will grow the economy while reducing costs and... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 10-06-2019 **68% of Berks residents who attended marijuana forums approve legalizing the drug for recreational use**  
Berks County residents had the opportunity to make their voices heard about the possibility of legalizing recreational marijuana when the lieutenant governor brought his statewide listening tour to Reading this past spring. It was just one stop on the 67-county journey that John Fetterman embarked... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Hundreds walk to battle Alzheimer's at Penn State Berks**  
The annual Walk to End Alzheimer's was attended by about 800 on Saturday at Penn State Berks. The Alzheimer's Association Delaware Valley Chapter had nearly 100 Walk teams made up of families, friends or co-workers and raise about \$179,000 for Alzheimer's research, and care and support programs.... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Alzheimer's fundraising walk in Harrisburg brings purple-clad crowd: photos**  
The 2019 Walk to End Alzheimer's was held on City Island, Harrisburg, on Saturday, October 5. All funds raised through the walk are to further the care, support and research efforts of the Alzheimer's Association. The walk is held annually in more than 600 communities nationwide.... - [Penn Live, Patriot-News](#)
- 10-06-2019 **On selling pot in state stores, and the imperative to keep our kids from vaping [opinion]**  
When Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf recently announced his support for legalizing recreational marijuana in Pennsylvania, the GOP leaders of the Republican-controlled state Legislature indicated the idea was a nonstarter. Nevertheless, state Rep. David Dellosa, a Democrat from... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)
- 10-06-2019 **New Supreme Court term will decide on 'Dreamers,' LGBTQ workplace rights and abortion**  
The Supreme Court opens its new term on Monday facing decisions on the so-called Dreamers, LGBTQ rights, religion and abortion. The justices will decide whether President Trump may revoke the Obama-era protections for more than 700,000 young immigrants, known as the Dreamers,... - [Los Angeles Times](#)



- 10-06-2019 **The L.A. vape shop scene was booming. Those days are over**  
The Ace Smoke Shop on a gentrifying strip of Lake Avenue in Altadena is a small business in every sense of the word . a tiny shack crammed with a variety of tobacco products that attracts a steady stream of customers in need of their nicotine fix. Local residents and workers stop in and grab a pack of Marlboros or a... - [Los Angeles Times](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Trump Will Deny Immigrant Visas to Those Who Can't Pay for Health Care**  
The Trump administration will deny visas to immigrants who cannot prove they will have health insurance or the ability to pay for medical costs once they become permanent residents of the United States, the White House announced Friday in the latest move by President Trump to undermine legal... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-06-2019 **F.D.A. Approves New H.I.V.-Prevention Drug, but Not for Women**  
The Food and Drug Administration on Thursday approved a new drug, Descovy, for prevention of infection with H.I.V., only the second drug approved for this purpose. The first, Truvada, has become a mainstay of government efforts to turn back the H.I.V. epidemic. But the F.D.A. approved Descovy for use only in... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Twin Births in the U.S. Are Dropping, and Experts Have a Theory**  
The twin birthrate has declined in the United States after rising for years, a new report said this week. One theory researchers have put forward to explain the change is that fertility therapies that previously involved transfers of multiple embryos are less common.... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Supreme Court to Hear Abortion Case From Louisiana**  
. The Supreme Court agreed on Friday to hear a challenge to a Louisiana law that its opponents say would leave the state with only one doctor in a single clinic authorized to provide abortions. The case is the court.s first on abortion since President Trump.s... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-06-2019 **Medicare Shopping Season Is Almost Here**  
If you.re enrolled in Medicare but worry about the cost of health care, your chance to do something about it is right around the corner. Most people enroll in Medicare when they become eligible at age 65. But every fall, they have the opportunity to change their coverage during an... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-06-2019 **The Sackler family is trying to shield billions in opioid profits through Purdue Pharma bankruptcy, states say**  
The vast wealth of the Sackler family was thrust into the spotlight Friday in Purdue Pharma.s bankruptcy case, as two dozen states and the District of Columbia sought to block the family from winning a nine-month reprieve against OxyContin lawsuits. Purdue Pharma last month asked the bankruptcy court to temporarily halt... - [Washington Post](#)
- 10-04-2019 **Pennsylvania bill would legalize pot, make state the only seller**  
Pennsylvania could be getting into the pot business. A bill under consideration in the state House of Representatives would legalize the recreational use of marijuana — and give the state a monopoly on its sale. The Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board would be responsible for establishing... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)



- 10-04-2019 **[Westmoreland County woman sues Juul in federal court, seeking damages](#)**  
A Westmoreland County woman who claims her use of a Juul electronic-cigarette triggered two seizures, the second one debilitating, has filed a civil suit in U.S. District Court here seeking monetary and punitive damages from the San Francisco-based company, Juul Labs Inc.... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 10-04-2019 **[Human trials in sight for Kanzius device owner](#)**  
NeoTherma Oncology has been in talks with UPMC about hosting human trials for a new version of the Kanzius device. After more than a year of radio silence, John Kanzius' cancer-fighting radio wave device is once again grabbing attention. A new version of the late Millcreek Township inventor's Noninvasive... - [Erie Times-News](#)
- 10-04-2019 **[Report finds 86% of Berks County residents approve of legalized recreational marijuana](#)**  
Berks County residents had the opportunity to make their voices heard about the possibility of legalizing recreational marijuana when the lieutenant governor brought his statewide listening tour to Reading this past spring. It was just one stop on the 67-county journey that John Fetterman embarked... - [Reading Eagle](#)
- 10-04-2019 **[Geisinger, U.S. Army forge recruitment partnership](#)**  
DANVILLE — Uncle Sam wanted them, now Geisinger does. Geisinger and the U.S. Army officially forged a partnership on Wednesday to provide opportunities for Army veterans in the health system. The Army and Geisinger signed a partnership agreement in a ceremony held in... - [Sunbury Daily Item](#)
- 10-04-2019 **[State Rep. Scott Conklin eyes run for Pennsylvania's chief fiscal officerV](#)**  
At last week's Democratic party state committee meeting, Conklin said he was preparing to run in the 2020 primary election for auditor general, Politics PA first reported. Conklin, who has served the state legislature since 2006, is a former Centre County commissioner with a background in... - [State College Centre Daily Times](#)
- 10-04-2019 **[Kensington neighbors dismayed by ruling on supervised injection site](#)**  
City officials have formally nixed a plan to locate Philadelphia's proposed supervised injection site on Hilton Street in Kensington. The decision to lease the building instead to the city's Department of Public Health for use as laboratory and office space was approved by City... - [Philadelphia Tribune](#)
- 10-04-2019 **[Supreme Court term to begin with blockbuster question: Is it legal to fire someone for being gay or transgender?](#)**  
Aimee Stephens never saw how her colleagues at work would react to her gender transition. The owner of the funeral home where she worked fired her first. Gerald Bostock claims everything was fine in his job as a social worker in Georgia until he joined a gay softball league. Then came the pink slip.... - [Washington Post](#)
- 10-04-2019 **[Vaping lung injuries top 1,000 cases as deaths rise to 18](#)**  
Hundreds more people in the U.S. have been sickened by a mysterious vaping-related lung disease, and the death toll has risen to 18, according to federal health data released Thursday. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said 1,080 cases have been... - [Washington Post](#)



- 10-04-2019 **National Recovery Month closes with awareness walk**  
September was National Recovery Month and it ended with a special event, the first-ever Greene County Recovery Walk, organized by Drug and Alcohol Program Director Melissa Kirk. The walk took place Saturday, Sept. 28, with a small but engaged group braving the rain to walk two miles along the... - [Waynesburg Greene County Messenger](#)
- 10-04-2019 **St. Luke's holds groundbreaking at Franklin site**  
Amid gloomy skies and precipitous weather, droves of guests flocked to the site of the future St. Luke's Carbon Campus Thursday afternoon for a groundbreaking ceremony. The event took place under a tent at the site of the future campus to be located off Harry Road, and was kicked off with remarks from John... - [Lehighon Times News](#)
- 10-04-2019 **St. Luke's breaks ground on new hospital off turnpike interchange**  
St. Luke's University Health Network broke ground Thursday on its new St. Luke's Carbon Campus outside Lehighon. The full-service, three-story, 155,000-square-foot hospital is planned on more than 100 acres at Fairyland and Harry roads in Franklin Township,... - [Easton Express-Times](#)
- 10-04-2019 **Salute to Veterans dinner will honor those from WWII**  
For the second time this year, Veteran Community Initiatives will pay special tribute to area veterans who served during World War II. VCI plans to hold its Salute to Veterans dinner at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown's Living-Learning Center on Oct. 14. All... - [Johnstown Tribune-Democrat](#)
- 10-04-2019 **Chester County Hospital to open expanded facility next year featuring 99-bed patient tower, 15 operating room suites**  
WEST CHESTER — In 2020, Chester County Hospital will open the largest expansion in its history, 250,000 square-feet of added space. The project will welcome a state-of-the-art procedural platform with 15 operating room suites, a 99-bed patient tower, a new main entrance and an expanded... - [Phoenixville News](#)
- 10-04-2019 **Medicare Shopping Season Is Almost Here**  
If you're enrolled in Medicare but worry about the cost of health care, your chance to do something about it is right around the corner. Most people enroll in Medicare when they become eligible at age 65. But every fall, they have the opportunity to change their coverage during an... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-04-2019 **Vaping Illnesses Top 1,000, C.D.C. Says**  
Illnesses and deaths linked to vaping continue to increase around the country, now totaling 1,080 cases and 19 deaths, health officials said on Thursday. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that cases had occurred in 48 states and the United States Virgin Islands. This week, Nebraska,... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-04-2019 **Brain Stimulation Shows Promise in Treating Severe Depression**  
For more than a decade, doctors have been using brain-stimulating implants to treat severe depression in people who do not benefit from medication, talk therapy or electroshock sessions. The treatment is controversial — any psychosurgery is, given its checkered history — and the results... - [New York Times](#)



- 10-04-2019 **Why Lifesaving Drugs May Be Missing on Your Next Flight**  
The flight was cruising over the Atlantic, bound for Tel Aviv, when Dr. Mikhail Varshavski heard the question over the intercom: “Is there a medical professional on board?” A young man seated a few rows behind the doctor was suffering a life-threatening allergic reaction. Dr. Varshavski located a vial of... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-04-2019 **High Medical Bills Set Up Major Legal Showdown in California**  
In a less than a week, Sutter Health, a sprawling system of 24 hospitals and 5,500 doctors, will face a court trial over accusations that it used its dominance in Northern California to stifle competition and force patients to pay higher medical bills. Sutter, the nonprofit hospital group in Sacramento, with operating revenues... - [New York Times](#)
- 10-04-2019 **Frozen tuna recalled after 4 poisonings. Products were sold in N.J., N.Y., Pa.**  
A Florida-based seafood company has recalled packages of frozen tuna after four confirmed poisonings from products sold in 11 states including New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The Mical Seafood recall includes wild-caught yellowfin tuna poke cubes,... - [Trenton Times](#)
- 10-04-2019 **No tin-foil hat needed for this conspiracy theory about Lyme disease: Author**  
Lyme Disease was first discovered in Connecticut in the 1970s – a mysterious little germ spat by ticks into the blood of people who had walked the woods around the town of Old Lyme, Connecticut. Right across Long Island Sound from Old Lyme stands Plum Island and its... - [Trenton Times](#)
- 10-04-2019 **Westmoreland woman’s suit links Juul use to seizures**  
A Westmoreland County woman is suing the makers of Juul electronic cigarettes, claiming she suffered two seizures and impairment after using the device earlier this year. The complaint, filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Pittsburgh, states that Kimberly Mays, a mother of two, suffered “catastrophic personal... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 10-04-2019 **Syphilis, which was almost eradicated, makes a major comeback in Allentown, Bethlehem**  
In a typical year, Allentown will see about six to eight cases of syphilis, the sexual transmitted disease that was nearly eradicated around the turn of the 21st century thanks to penicillin and safe sex education campaigns. In 2018, that number drastically shot up to 46 cases, said Vicky Kistler,... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)





Health Care Recap is a comprehensive daily report on legislative and executive actions in the Pennsylvania capitol and is compiled and edited by PLS.

For subscription information, questions or more information contact PLS at [mypls@mypls.com](mailto:mypls@mypls.com) or 717-236-6984. Thank you, Lynn, Jeff, Mike, Matt Hess, Matt Hykes, Deborah, Cheryl, Aaron, Becky, Amyra, Nick, Nicole, Robert, Emily, Andrew, Shaun, Justin, Sheri, Harrison, and Sarah.

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