



Friday's Features

Issue 010217

Happy Groundhog Day +1,

Did you know that the average hotel rates in Punxsutawney for Groundhog Day are more expensive than those in Houston for the Super Bowl (according to Trivago)? Who would have guessed?!?!? Just how accurate is Phil? Not very, according to StormFax.com...the groundhog has been accurate only 39% of the time since the first Groundhog's Day in 1887. And since 1988, he's gotten a little more accurate... about 46% of the time. Before Groundhog Day...the shadows of candles were observed for signs of warmer skies...Candlemas Day (just reporting what I read ☺).

- **News, Announcements, Celebrations**

- Mental Health Colorado wants to know how the parity law is working in Colorado. If you wish, you can complete this brief, confidential [survey](#) to let MHC know if you, a family member, or a patient has been denied reimbursement or care since the passing of this law. For questions about private insurance coverage, contact the [Division of Insurance](#) and for questions about Medicaid, contact the [Department of Health Care Policy & Financing](#).
- [TCHF Funding Opportunities](#) - click here for a listing of open funding opportunities through the Colorado Health Foundation.

- **Community Prevention**

- [Taking medications correctly requires clear communication](#) is an article in *Harvard Health Publications* by David Scales about how, among other things, doctors and patients aren't always on the same page when it comes to which medications are important.
- [Opioid epidemic leads to changes in prescription for pain](#) is a story in *CU Anschutz Today* by Michael Davidson about how the CU School of Dental Medicine is among several schools and colleges on the Anschutz campus studying and fighting this public health crisis. Dentists want to find non-addicting pain relievers as they are writing about 12% of all prescriptions for immediate-release opioids.

- **Policy Efforts**

- [Attention shoppers: Be wary of health claims on food packaging](#) is a posting on *Harvard Health Publications* by Beverly Merz, Executive Editor, *Harvard Women's Health Watch* about revised nutrition facts labeling that reflect recent dietary recommendations. By July 2018, most packages will display an updated nutrition facts box that will include the

amount of added sugars, realistic serving sizes, and will no longer single out calories from fat.

- [Paul Ryan's claim that 'more and more doctors just won't take Medicaid'](#) in *The Washington Post* by Michelle Ye Hee Lee is a story about how Paul Ryan claimed that "more and more doctors just won't take Medicaid because they lose money on Medicaid" and also said that because Medicaid is so over-regulated and so bureaucratic, physicians just won't take Medicaid patients. According to Stephen Zuckerman, senior fellow and co-director of the Health Policy Center at the Urban Institute, the data does not support Ryan's claim.
- [Cutting Medicaid would disproportionately affect children](#) is a posting on *The Hill* by Dr. Steve Allen, chief executive office of Nationwide Children's Hospital Association about how children's healthcare should not be a partisan issue.
- [Sales of Short-term Insurance Plans Could Surge if Health Law Is Relaxed](#) is an NPR story by Michelle Andrews about how sales of short-term health insurance policies could take off as Republicans look for ways to loosen the ACA's coverage requirements. According to Marcy Buckner, vice president of government affairs at the National Association of Health Underwriters, "in most areas, a short-term plan is cheaper and it's some consumers' way of saying I don't know all those things."
- [Montana Lawmakers Work on Suicide Prevention Legislation](#) is an Montana Public Radio story by Michael Siebert about how Montana leads the nation in youth suicide and how through the first several weeks of the 65TH Montana Legislature, lawmakers from both sides of the aisle have introduced bills that seek to institute suicide prevention measures and overhaul crisis prevention efforts.
- [State hopes '25 percent off sale' will draw health plan shoppers](#) is a story by Christopher Snowbeck of *StarTribune* that reports how Minnesota officials are hoping that new rebates for health insurance shoppers will build enrollment in the state's troubled market for people who buy health plans on their own.
- [Health Savings Accounts Are Back in the Policy Spotlight](#) is an NPR story by Julie Appleby about how Republicans' plans usually require consumers be more responsible for their health spending, but skeptics note such a tax break benefits wealthy people more than those who earn much less. And older and sicker people could blow through their entire fund every year preventing them from being able to accumulate any savings.
- [Millennials, We Need Your Help to Fix Health Care](#) is an article in *Fast Company* by Dave Chase who reiterates that the American health care system is broken...but not beyond repair. And he believes that millennials can play a big part in making it work for everyone given that the major societal problems have been found through grassroots movements; whether civil rights, high-quality food, climate change, or energy independence.
- [U.S. Health Care Reform Will Require Politicians to Change their Attitude](#) is an article in *Harvard Business Review* by Eric J. McNulty says, "The next steps in health care reform will require courageous, disciplined leadership. People on all sides must demonstrate the maturity to see the big picture and continually return to the larger objective of having a healthier population with access to appropriate care at a reasonable price."
- [Indiana's Model for Medicaid Could Spread – But it's Not Working for Everyone](#) is a story on WBAA NPR by Jake Harper discusses Indiana's Medicaid model designed by policy consultant, Seema Verma, Trumps pick to lead the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. She designed Indiana's unique Medicaid expansion under then-Governor Mike Pence. Verma added a conservative twist: a requirement to pay into the system.

- **Research, Data, Evaluation**

- [Study: To keep pounds off, consider walking the dog](#) is a story in *CU Anschutz Today* by Chris Casey about a study done by CU researchers looking at weight loss maintenance and patterns of light exercise and sedentary behavior.
- [Moving Upstream – Health Extension and Primary Care](#) is an article in *JABFM* by Lyle Fagnan about how health extension programs represent an opportunity for practice-based research networks and primary care practices to develop collaborations that reach beyond the clinic walls to address the upstream social determinants of health and to engage in community-based research.
- [Who pays hospital costs of gun violence? Depends on state’s Medicaid coverage](#) is a story in the *Miami Herald* by Daniel Chang who reported on a study by the Urban Institute that indicated that “who pays” for the hospital costs of gun violence can depend on the state where the victim is hospitalized. In states that offer Medicaid coverage for single adults, a larger share of the costs were paid by the public health insurance program for low-income and disabled persons.
- [Pregnant Women Turn to Marijuana, Perhaps Harming Infants](#) is a story by Catherine Saint Louis in *The New York Times* of another example where marijuana acceptance has “outstripped” scientific understanding of its effects on human health.
- [Study links low socioeconomic status to ill health and early death](#) is an article in *The Lancet* that discusses a study using data from the UK, France, Switzerland, Portugal, Italy, the USA, and Australia that compares the impact of low socioeconomic status with other major risk factors on health on 1.7 million people.

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