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**Subject:** Insurers Make Plans For ACA Coverage Next Year Amid Uncertain Political Climate, Funding Concerns  
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Good morning Ms Cathy Thompson

Thursday, June 22, 2017

## Leading The News

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### **Insurers Make Plans For ACA Coverage Next Year Amid Uncertain Political Climate, Funding Concerns.**

[USA Today](#) (6/21, O'Donnell, Fletcher, Gluck) reports insurers are making decisions about their plans for ACA coverage in 2018, even as the Trump Administration and Republicans in Congress make it difficult to discern the fate of the cost-sharing subsidies on which insurers rely and the healthcare law more broadly. Some insurers, such as Oscar Health, Centene, and BlueCross BlueShield Tennessee, have announced plans to expand their coverage in 2018, though most insurers remaining on

the exchanges are "publicly [reserving] their right to change their minds" should conditions with the healthcare law change.

The [New York Times](#) (6/21, Abelson, Subscription Publication) reports insurers choosing to offer ACA plans next year are nevertheless seeking significant premium increases to account for all of the uncertainty concerning the future of the healthcare law, most notably the Trump Administration's refusal "to commit to critical funding for subsidies worth billions of dollars to low-income individuals. Insurers are also concerned that the administration will stop enforcing the penalties people face when they choose to go without coverage, which they say would also drive up prices."

***ACA Exchanges Expected To Remain Viable In 2018 As Enough Insurers Decide To Stay.*** The [AP](#) (6/21, Murphy) reports, "Enough insurers are planning to sell coverage on the Affordable Care Act's insurance exchanges next year to keep them working – if only barely – in most parts of the country." Wednesday was the deadline for insurers to decide whether they planned to sell coverage next year on exchanges in most states. The AP says that the "early picture for 2018 looks much like it did for previous years: Insurers are retreating from some markets or charging a lot more to stay in others."

Psychiatric News Alert



[Clonazepam May Reduce Risk of Relapse in Patients With Panic Disorder](#)

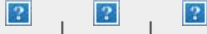
[APA Members Urged to Voice Opposition to Senate Health Bill Today](#)

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## Psychiatric Treatment/Disorders

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### **Mindfulness Meditation May Improve Mental Resilience Of Student Athletes, Study Suggests.**

In "Well," the [New York Times](#) (6/21, Reynolds, Subscription Publication) reports mindfulness meditation may improve the mental resilience of student athletes, according to a [study](#) published online April 6 in the Journal of Cognitive Enhancement. Researchers "compared different types of mental training for stress resilience," and found that those who were taught mindfulness meditation "showed considerable mental resilience."

### **Ketamine Appears To Block NMDA Receptor, Setting Off Antidepressant Effects, Laboratory Study Reveals.**

[TIME](#) (6/21, Oaklander) reports that in new [research](#) published online June 31 in the journal Nature, investigators "have more proof of how ketamine works in the brain to trigger fast-acting antidepressant effects." For the laboratory study, researchers examined "what happens when a metabolite of ketamine is applied to a certain part of the brain called the NMDA receptor, which plays a role in many brain functions." The study authors found that ketamine blocks "the receptor, which sets off a cascade of effects, including antidepressant ones." What's more, "ketamine appears to block the NMDA receptor by sitting on a very particular region of it."

### **Suicide Rate Among US Farmers Remains Much Higher Than Among Other Workers, Research Suggests.**

[HealthDay](#) (6/21, Preidt) reports that about 20 years "after the US farm crisis, the suicide rate among American farmers remains much higher than among other workers," researchers found. The study revealed that between 1992 and 2010, "230 US farmers died by suicide." Farmers "in the West had the highest rate, accounting for 43 percent of all farmer suicides, followed by those in the Midwest (37 percent), the South (13 percent), and the Northeast (6 percent)." The [findings](#) were published online May 2 in the Journal of Rural Health.

### **Probiotics May Be Effective In Reducing Core Depressive Symptoms In Treatment-Naive Patients With Mild To Moderate Depression, Small Study Suggests.**

[Medscape](#) (6/21, Davenport) reports, "Probiotics may be effective in reducing core depressive symptoms in treatment-naive patients with a mild to moderate form of the disorder," researchers concluded after conducting an eight-week, 10-patient "pilot study using Probio'Stick, a probiotic supplement that combines two different strains known to act on the gut-brain axis – Lactobacillus helveticus R0052 and Bifidobacterium longum R0175." The study revealed that "symptoms of mood, anhedonia, and sleep disturbance were significantly reduced with probiotic therapy after just four weeks, with results maintained at eight weeks." The findings were presented as a poster at the 13th World Congress of Biological Psychiatry.

### **Treating Depression, COPD In Patients With Both Conditions May Reduce ED Use, Hospitalizations, Study Indicates.**

[MedPage Today](#) (6/21, Boyles) reports, "Treating depression and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in patients with both conditions reduced hospital emergency department (ED) use "and hospitalizations," researchers found in an analysis of Medicare data including some 16,075 beneficiaries. The [findings](#) were published in the August issue of Respiratory Medicine.

## Government And Psychiatry

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### **Mental Healthcare Professionals, Patients, Families Oppose Plan To Turn Control Of Michigan's Mental Health Budget Over To Privately Owned Insurance Companies.**

The [Detroit News](#) (6/20, Bouffard) reports that mental healthcare professionals, families and patients in Michigan are opposing "a plan to turn control of Michigan's \$2.6 billion mental health budget over to privately owned insurance companies." That plan is now "embedded in two provisions of the state budget for the Department of Health and Human Services" and is "part of the Omnibus Budget bill approved by the state House on Tuesday expected to be approved by the state Senate on Thursday."

## Psychiatry And Public Health

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### **Patients With Low Back Pain Who Are Depressed May Be More Likely To Be Prescribed Opioids, Study Indicates.**

[HealthDay](#) (6/21, Preidt) reports, "Patients with low back pain who are depressed are more likely to be prescribed opioids, and to be prescribed higher doses," researchers found after analyzing "nationwide data on nearly 5,400 people from 2004 to 2009." The findings were published online June 20 in PAIN Reports.

## APA In The News

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### **APA, Other Healthcare Groups Unhappy With Senate's Lack Of Transparency Regarding ACA Repeal Bill.**

[TIME](#) (6/21, Park) reports that 52 senators must decide the fate of the American Health Care Act which the House passed last month. In order to pass the measure in Senate, GOP leaders "decided to bypass the normal legislative process of hearings, testimony from experts and debate." The article says this "isn't sitting well with many Republican senators, who have been frustrated over the closed and secretive process that's being handled by a tight group of 13 of their colleagues." Several medical groups have also criticized Senate Republicans for their lack of transparency. For instance, Doug Walter, assistant executive director of government relations for practice organization with the American Psychological Association, said, "We have had almost no reach-out to us at all." Similarly, Dr. Saul Levin, CEO and medical director at the American Psychiatric Association, stated in an email, "No one has requested our feedback on the AHCA, either prior to its release or after. ... Any proposed legislation that affects so many Americans needs to be worked in public, not behind closed doors."

Meanwhile, the [AP](#) (6/21, Fram) reports that on Wednesday, Senate GOP lawmakers "complained about their party's secretive health care bill," just a day before top senators were due to unveil the measure which seeks to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. One of the measure's critics is Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI), "who expressed doubts that there'd be enough time to study the bill's impacts in time for a vote late next week." He stated, "I've made leadership well aware of the fact that I need information to make the final decision. And if I don't have the information to justify a yes vote, I won't be voting yes." The article says Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) is expected to schedule a vote on the bill next week.

[Reuters](#) (6/21, Cornwell, Cowan) reports that a group of GOP senators has "been working for weeks behind closed doors on legislation aimed at repealing and replacing major portions of" the ACA. But their work "has been plagued from the start by tensions between moderates and conservatives, which surfaced again on Tuesday." The article says Democrats have also been critical of "the behind-the-scenes meetings, staging a protest on the Senate floor on Monday."

On its website, [CBS News](#) (6/21, Shabad) reports Senate lawmakers will probably have only "seven days to review draft language of a Republican bill to repeal and replace Obamacare

before they cast a vote that could affect millions of Americans." McConnell expects to unveil the measure on Thursday.

## Other News

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### Opioid-Related Hospitalizations Increasing Faster Among Women, Study Suggests.

[HealthDay](#) (6/21, Preidt) reports, "Opioid-related hospitalizations among women in the United States increased far faster than among men between 2005 and 2014," according to the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Data indicate "hospitalizations involving opioid painkillers or heroin rose 75 percent" among women versus 55 percent among men.

## Wednesday's Lead Stories

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- [Lawmakers Warn ACA Repeal Bill Would Harm People Receiving Addiction Treatment Through Medicaid.](#)

- [Therapies That Target The Gut Microbiome Could Effectively Treat ASD, Review Suggests.](#)

- [McConnell Says GOP Will Unveil ACA Repeal Bill On Thursday.](#)
- [Op-Ed: Changes Needed To Reduce Police Shootings Of People With Mental Illnesses.](#)
- [FDA Approves Long-Acting Therapy For AD/HD.](#)
- [Opioid Addiction Is "Swamping" Hospitals, Federal Data Show.](#)

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