

Insurance & HealthCare Tidings- 3rd February, 2012

Auto insurance claim satisfaction continues positively*

The fourth quarter of 2011 witnessed a steady amount of customer satisfaction for auto insurance companies, even though there was a larger amount of claims during the period, according to a report from J.D. Power and Associates. It took repair shops 8.5 days to fix vehicles on average during the fourth quarter. This is higher than the third quarter's figure of 7.8 days, according to the report. However, customer satisfaction was almost identical in both quarters. In the fourth quarter, the rating was 855 on a scale totaling 1,000 points. During the third quarter, the statistic was 854 points.

*Source: <http://www.claimspages.com/news/auto-insurance-claim-satisfaction-continues-positively/>

Super (Insurance) Coverage for the Super Bowl*

They say it's a game, but it's really a lot more than that. For football fans, the Super Bowl is every holiday rolled into one, especially when their teams have made the big game. Non-fans have the commercials to look forward to. And for the people living in the host city, it's even more — a combination of blessing and curse. A staggering capital influx that is only made possible by the horrors that come with it including traffic jams, crowded restaurants and everything else associated with a heavily burdened infrastructure.

*Source: <http://www.claimspages.com/news/super-%28insurance%29-coverage-for-the-super-bowl/>

Auto Insurance Claims Satisfaction Remains Steady*

Overall customer satisfaction with the auto claims experience remained stable during the fourth quarter of 2011, despite an increase in the number of auto insurance claims and the amount of time needed to repair vehicles, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2012 Auto Claims Satisfaction Study(SM).

*Source: <http://www.claimspages.com/news/auto-insurance-claims-satisfaction-remains-steady-despite-an-increase-in-claims-filing-and-repair-times/>

Insurance claims dispute resolution efforts set record in 2011*

The number of claims resolved through an inter-insurance dispute resolution organization's services set a record in 2011, with nearly 520,000 claims resolved. The value of those claims resolved by Arbitration Forums, a Florida-based company and the nation's largest provider of inter-insurance dispute resolution services, was more than \$2.4 billion.

*Source: <http://www.claimspages.com/news/insurance-claims-dispute-resolution-efforts-set-record-in-2011/>

Kansas Farmers Rack Up \$1B in Insurance Claims After Drought*

Kansas farmers have claimed nearly \$1 billion in insurance to offset crop losses caused by the lingering drought. The federal government says that breaks a Kansas record of \$446.8 million for drought claims set in 2002, and more claims are expected. The U.S. Department of Agriculture said that it had paid \$987.3 million to Kansas farmers so far for withered wheat and fall crops. Rebecca Davis, director of the USDA's Topeka office, says she expects the payout amount to reach \$1 billion.

*Source: [http://www.claimspages.com/news/kansas-farmers-rack-up-\\$1b-in-insurance-claims-after-drought/](http://www.claimspages.com/news/kansas-farmers-rack-up-$1b-in-insurance-claims-after-drought/)

Crop Insurance Payouts at a Record \$9.1 Billion*

Crop insurers paid out a record \$9.1 billion in indemnities on 2011 U.S. crops, and the total could top \$10 billion when all claims are settled, due to damage from drought, flooding, and freezing weather, a trade group said. The previous record was \$8.7 billion in 2008, said National Crop Insurance Services, based in Overland Park, Kansas. Crop insurance, which is subsidized by the government, is expected to be a key point in the pending overhaul of U.S. farm law. The cost of the program has more than doubled in a decade.

*Source: [http://www.claimspages.com/news/crop-insurance-payouts-at-a-record-\\$9.1-billion/](http://www.claimspages.com/news/crop-insurance-payouts-at-a-record-$9.1-billion/)

4 Insurers Make Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work For List*

FORTUNE magazine released its 2012 list of "100 Best Companies to Work For," which contained four insurers and a handful of vendors and consultants that play in the insurance space. The top-rated carrier on this year's list is USAA, which provides a full range of financial services to member of the U.S. military and their families. The insurer, ranked at number 20 (down from 17 last year) has a 7-percent job growth and 23,211 U.S. employees.

*Source: <http://www.claimspages.com/news/4-insurers-make-fortunes-100-best-companies-to-work-for-list/>

Three States to Require Insurers to Disclose Climate-Change Response Plans*

Insurance commissioners in California, New York and Washington State will require that companies disclose how they intend to respond to the risks their businesses and customers face from increasingly severe storms and wildfires, rising sea levels and other consequences of climate change, California's commissioner.

*Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/02/business/energy-environment/three-states-tell-insurers-to-disclose-responses-to-climate-change.html>

Nuclear Accidents Pose Little Risk to U.S. Health*

The risk to public health from a severe nuclear power plant accident in the United States is "very small" because reactor operators should have time to prevent core damage and reduce the release of radioactive materials, U.S. nuclear regulators said in a study.

*Source: <http://www.claimsjournal.com/news/national/2012/02/02/200134.htm>

Assurant Purchases \$130 Million Catastrophe Reinsurance Coverage*

Assurant, Inc., a provider of specialty insurance and insurance-related products and services, announced that certain of its subsidiaries have entered into reinsurance agreements providing for \$130 million in three-year, fully collateralized reinsurance from Ibis Re II Ltd., a special purpose reinsurance company domiciled in the Cayman Islands. Bonds issued by Ibis Re Ltd. in 2009, for \$150 million, will expire in May 2012.

*Source: <http://www.claimsjournal.com/news/national/2012/02/01/200015.htm>

Competition in U.S. Auto Insurance Market Has Driven Down Premium Costs*

A highly competitive auto insurance marketplace is making coverage more widely available and affordable for all drivers, according to the Insurance Information Institute (I.I.I.). The I.I.I. vigorously contested a Consumer Federation of America (CFA) study which asserted that insurance rating practices were driving up auto insurance prices for low- and moderate-income households.

*Source: <http://www.claimsjournal.com/news/national/2012/01/31/199968.htm>

Progressive Hiring 1100 People Across the U.S.*

Ohio-based Progressive Insurance Company is set to hire more than 1100 employees at five locations throughout the United States.

*Source: <http://www.claimsjournal.com/news/national/2012/01/25/199524.htm>

MJ Insurance Launches Golf Program*

MJ Insurance has created a product for the golf industry that includes both insurance coverage and risk management. The company's "Golf Program" offers a variety of coverages, which is important for the range of risks that golf courses face. These organizations can need coverage for everything from pollution/environmental to trees to daycare.

*Source: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2012/01/31/233463.htm>

IIABA and Swiss Re Launch E&O Web Resource*

The Independent Agents & Brokers of America (IIABA) Big "I" Professional Liability Program and Swiss Re Corporate Solutions have launched a new risk management website. The "E&O Happens" website was designed to offer risk management help for insurance agents. It is a key component of the organization's risk management efforts. It is available exclusively to agency errors and omissions (E&O) Swiss Re Corporate Solutions policyholders.

*Source: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2012/01/31/233407.htm>

Media Firms Could Face Insurance Hikes in 2012*

U.S. communications, media, and technology (CMT) companies can expect their insurance market conditions to further deteriorate in 2012, continuing a trend that began in the second half of 2011, according to a report published by broker Marsh. Large natural catastrophes in 2011 affect many CMT supply chains and property exposures. The most notable was the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

*Source: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2012/01/31/233405.htm>

Wellpoint Expands Offerings through Alliance with RLJ*

Wellpoint and RLJ Insurance Services have developed a strategic alliance that will enhance and expand Wellpoint's supplier diversity offerings. The two companies will work together to offer medical stop loss products and services to group customers that are looking to increase their Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) participation allocation. The coverage will provide protection against catastrophic or unpredictable costs.

*Source: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2012/01/30/233215.htm>

New AD&D Coverage Available for Riders and Grooms*

The Professional Riders Organization will start offering their members accident and disability insurance through a new policy designed with the assistance of Wells Fargo Insurance Services, AmWINS Group Benefits and underwriter Zurich Insurance. The policy will cover professional event riders and grooms at all event and equine-related activities in the United States and internationally. It provides coverage for accidental death, dismemberment, medical expense reimbursement and accident disability.

*Source: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2012/01/26/232871.htm>

Insurance Distribution Is Changing*

Insurance distribution is changing and agents and brokers—retailers and wholesalers—have to define the value they offer and what type of relationships they will have with carriers and customers in the years ahead, according to a leading wholesaler.

*Source: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2012/01/26/232787.htm>

Companies Partner on Smaller Earthquake Insurance Risks*

Insurance Company of the West (ICW) and WKFC Underwriting Managers have announced a continued expansion of the relationship between the firms for commercial earthquake insurance. The partnership between ICW Group and WKFC focuses on the smaller, transactional earthquake accounts.

*Source: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2012/01/26/232770.htm>

Philadelphia Insurance Adds Coverage for Sleep Centers*

Philadelphia Insurance Cos. has started offering coverage for sleep centers and laboratories, a growing industry designed to help combat serious health problems that cost the economy millions of dollars.

*Source: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2012/01/24/232407.htm>

P/C Premiums to Grow 3-4% in 2012*

Property/casualty insurers are facing a difficult environment in 2012, according to a forecast from analysts at a Hartford insurance consulting firm. The difficult environment will include volatility in the economy, the underwriting cycle, and catastrophe management, combined with low investment yields, said the quarterly Property/Casualty Forecast & Analysis from Conning Research & Consulting.

*Source: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2012/01/23/232278.htm>

Allstate Doubles Q4 Profit*

Allstate Corp. reported that its profit more than doubled in the fourth quarter thanks to lower catastrophe losses and improved homeowners business. The big insurance company posted a fourth quarter net profit of \$724 million compared to a fourth quarter profit of \$296 million a year earlier.

*Source: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2012/02/02/233893.htm>

BB&T to Acquire P/C, Life Insurance Units of Wholesaler Crump Group*

North Carolina-based BB&T Corp. is buying the property/casualty and life insurance units of Roseland, N.J. - based insurance wholesaler Crump Group. Under the terms of the agreement, BB&T said it will pay \$570 million in cash for Crump Property/Casualty Insurance Services and Crump Life Insurance Services, along with the rights to the Crump name. John Howard, CEO of Crump Group, will also join BB&T insurance operations in a senior leadership position reporting to Wade Reece, CEO of BB&T's insurance division.

*Source: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2012/02/03/234069.htm>

Insurance Fund Would Aid Farmers*

U.S. farmers and ranchers who had accounts with failed broker MF Global have got back the bulk of their money but are still owed about \$100 million, the Chicago Mercantile Exchange indicated on after announcing a fund to help them. The \$100 million is believed to be part of MF Global customers' \$1.2 billion in funds that remain missing after the chaotic flameout of the broker and marks the first time the amount still owed to farmers and ranchers has been quantified.

*Source: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2012/02/03/234045.htm>

LIC launched `Jeevan Ankur`*

Life Insurance Corporation of India launched a new Plan, LIC's Jeevan Ankur on January 23. The product is designed to meet the educational and other needs of the child. A conventional, with profits plan, 'Jeevan Ankur', covers the risk on the life of the parent and the named child shall be the nominee under the plan. If the parent survives till the end of the policy term, an assured maturity benefit equal to basic sum assured along with loyalty additions, depending on Corporation's experience, shall be payable.

*Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article2823142.ece>

IRDA to make health cover for HIV patients mandatory*

HIV/AIDS patients, doctors and nurses who are vulnerable to the infection can look forward to health insurance cover soon. At present, health insurance cover is not being provided to these categories of customers.

*Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article2857823.ece>

IRDA asks IndiaFirst Life to adhere to ad norms*

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority have warned IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company Ltd on violation of norms related to advertisements. Referring to an advertisement, the IRDA said it contained a reference to rejection of 'many of the claims by other company on one pretext or other' which is considered as 'disparaging competitors'.

*Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article2856527.ece>

IRDA forms Health Insurance Forum for consultation*

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority have formed a Health Insurance Forum to act as a consultative body for all stakeholders.

*Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article2857981.ece>

Bharti AXA Life launches first online plan 'iProtect'*

Private insurer Bharti AXA Life Insurance launched its first online term insurance product, Bharti AXA Life iProtect.

*Source: <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/bharti-axa-life-launches-first-online-plan-iprotect/907545/>

Life insurance sale must be need based*

The sale of life insurance policies are set to become more scientific soon. The life insurers should ensure a need-based sale of life insurance products by their direct sales personnel, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority said in the draft guidelines on product matrix released.

*Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article2848252.ece>

AEGON expects new insurance product to boost online sale*

Life insurance firm AEGON Religare is looking to sell at least 15-20 per cent of its policies through online distribution within two years on the back of its new protection product. The company announced the launch its new online protection plan 'iTerm', also said that it has filed for approval to start a plan focusing on the health segment.

*Source: <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/aegon-expects-new-insurance-product-to-boost-online-sale/906145/>

SBI Life launches multi-lingual website*

Private insurer SBI Life Insurance launched multi-lingual website in nine Indian languages to facilitate communication with customers in the language they are comfortable with. The website will provide information in Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali, Kannada and Punjabi.

*Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article2845236.ece>

National Insurance to collect more than Rs 350-cr premium*

Non-life public sector National Insurance Company is all set to surpass the Rs 350-crore mark in premium collection in Kerala during the current fiscal. The Kochi regional office, started in 1989 with a premium base of Rs 10 crore, registered premium collection of Rs 275 crore in 2010-11.

*Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article2845068.ece>

No FIR, post-mortem report needed for insurance claims for injuries at home*

The Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum, Ahmadabad (Rural), has directed United India Insurance Company Ltd to pay Rs one lakh with nine per cent interest till the date of payment to a widow for causing mental agony and harassment. The forum held the insurance company, its Ahmedabad Regional Office, and its office at Palanpur, Banaskantha district, guilty of deficiency in service in a case filed by the Consumer Education and Research Society (CERS) and Mrs. Jyotsna Ambalal Patel.

*Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/government-and-policy/article2844954.ece>

IndiaFirst launches insurance plan for vehicle-buyers*

IndiaFirst Life Insurance has launched a life insurance cover for vehicle-buyers. The company, a joint venture of Bank of Baroda, Andhra Bank and the UK's Legal and General, tied up with Varun Motors in this regard. The product, called Autolife, will offer a life insurance cover up to Rs 20 lakh in four different options and a pure protection plan.

*Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article2836597.ece>

HDFC Life opens office in Dubai*

HDFC Life, a private life insurance company from India, has launched its first international operations with the opening of its representative office in Dubai. It is a joint venture between Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd (HDFC) and Standard Life plc, the leading provider of financial services in the UK.

*Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article2834050.ece>

I-Care Health Management, TPA Services merges with Good Health Plan*

I-Care Health Management and TPA Services Pvt Ltd has merged with Good Health Plan Ltd, an eight-year-old third party administrator company for health insurers.

*Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article2828998.ece>

PNB waiting for IRDA nod on Metlife stake*

Awaiting regulatory approval for its proposed acquisition of a 30 per cent stake in insurance company Metlife, Punjab National Bank (PNB) has said it will not disclose the rationale behind the move or the financial details until IRDA gives its nod.

*Source: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article2825632.ece>

ICICI Lombard aims at Rs 5,000 crore premiums*

ICICI Lombard expects to cross the Rs 5,000-crore mark in premium collection this fiscal on the back of good growth in health and motor insurance segments, a top executive of the leading private general insurer said.

*Source: <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/icici-lombard-aims-at-rs-5-000-cr-premium/903004/>

New York Life's Strategic Reorganization*

New York Life (New York) has reorganized into two major business units: the Insurance Group and the Investment Group. Executive VP Chris Blunt and Executive VP John Y. Kim, respectively, will run the new business units, which a company statement says will provide protection, wealth accumulation, and guaranteed income products and solutions. Executive VP Mark Pfaff will continue to run New York Life's Agency Department.

*Source: <http://www.insurancetech.com/management-strategies/232500199>

ACE Appoints Head of Analytics for EMEA*

London-based insurer ACE has appointed Craig Parfitt head of the analytics and management information team for its Accident and Health business in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Based in London, Parfitt reports to accident and health EMEA director of marketing Fraser Watson.

*Source: <http://www.insurancetech.com/business-intelligence/232600223>

Aetna Reports Lower Claims Costs*

Health insurer Aetna posted a sharply higher quarterly profit in line with Wall Street's target as its members' low use of health services kept claim costs down. The No. 3 U.S. health insurer also backed its 2012 profit forecast.

*Source: <http://www.insurancetech.com/claims/232600024>

Companion P&C Selects GlobalOptions as SIU*

Columbia, S.C.-based commercial insurer Companion Property and Casualty has selected Orlando, Fla.-based GlobalOptions as its special investigative unit.

*Source: <http://www.insurancetech.com/claims/232500708>

Insurers' Customer Advocates Glean Insights from Data*

With the insurance industry fully enamored with customer experience, more carriers are creating positions within their enterprises devoted entirely to the concept. These include Lincoln Financial (Radnor, Pa.) and Allianz Life (Minneapolis), who have both done so since the beginning of 2012.

*Source: <http://www.insurancetech.com/business-intelligence/232500691>

AIG Units Chartis, American General Merge Benefits Organizations*

New York-based AIG has merged the group benefits organizations of subsidiaries Chartis U.S. Accident and Health and American General Life Companies into a single entity, AIG Benefit Solutions.

*Source: <http://www.insurancetech.com/distribution/232500380>

Sentry Insurance Upgrades Compensation Management Solution*

Sentry Insurance Group, one of the largest mutual insurance companies in the United States, has selected Varicent to manage its internal sales incentive compensation processes. In the first phase of this project, Varicent will be deployed for over 700 direct writers who are employees of the company.

*Source: <http://www.insurancenetworking.com/news/varicent-sentry-insurance-compensation-29853-1.html>

IT More Important than Ever in Insurance*

Insurers plan to invest in IT in the coming years and that spend will be on core systems, according to a new report from research and consulting firm Strategy Meets Action (SMA). The report, "Insurance Ecosystem: Positioning for Growth"—based on SMA's analysts' considerations, opinions and insights—indicates that the increase is steady and sticking around. SMA estimates that 57 percent of insurers plan to increase IT spend, compared to 40 percent in 2010. While on average, budgets will increase by 4 percent in 2012, 2013 and 2014, 10 percent of all insurers plan to increase budgets by more than 10 percent for the three-year period, according to SMA.

*Source: <http://www.insurancenetworking.com/news/Sma-cio-it-spending-insurance-projects-29843-1.html>

Top Mobile Auto Insurers Ranked*

On the heels of 2011 consumer research that cited mobile as a new, impactful hub of consumers for insurers, a new study from Key Lime Interactive (KLI) revealed State Farm to have the best website among mobile insurers. USAA was cited as having the best mobile application.

*Source: <http://www.insurancenetworking.com/news/mobile-auto-insurance-rankings-29824-1.html>

Inter-Insurance Claims Arbitration Sets New Record*

Arbitration Forums, Inc. (AF), a membership-driven, not-for-profit organization that provides inter-insurance dispute resolution services. AF processed nearly 520,000 claims disputes valued at more than \$2.4 billion in 2011. More than 85 percent of inter-company arbitration disputes involve auto collisions.

*Source: <http://www.insurancenetworking.com/news/Claims-insurance-arbitration-record-29812-1.html>

BPO Services Offered to Boost Health Exchanges*

Policy Studies Inc. (PSI) has a new business process outsourcing (BPO) service to help address the requirements—and deadlines—for implementing health insurance exchanges and marketplaces, the company reports.

*Source: <http://www.insurancenetworking.com/news/health-insurance-exchange-psi-oracle-29791-1.html>

9 Tech Innovations For Your Health*

Wondering if you're having a cardiac event or suffering from a concussion? There's an app for that: Check out some of the promising health-related apps, gadgets, and ideas from the Digital Health Summit.

*Source: <http://informationweek.com/news/galleries/healthcare/patient/232500827?pgno=2>

7 Tools To Tighten Healthcare Data Security*

Most of the largest healthcare data security and privacy breaches have involved lost or stolen mobile computing devices. Consider these tools and tips for protecting patient data and managing breaches.

*Source: <http://informationweek.com/news/galleries/healthcare/security-privacy/232500404?queryText=insurance>

IT Tools Help Patients Cut Prescription, Exam Costs*

It's the start of a new benefits year for most employers, and workers are only beginning to tap into their companies' offering of 2012 healthcare coverage. However, they can expect to face rising healthcare costs and be asked to pay larger co-pays and deductibles than ever in recent years are any indication.

*Source: <http://informationweek.com/news/healthcare/patient/232500393?queryText=insurance>

Health Insurance Deductibles Doubled in 7 Years*

If you've seen your health insurance premiums increase along with your deductible, you're not alone. A recent study by the Commonwealth Fund shows just how much more consumers are paying for employer-provided health insurance.

*Source: <http://bucks.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/26/family-health-insurance-costs-doubled-in-7-years-study-finds/?scp=7&sq=insurance&st=cse>

Aviva Sells Czech, Hungary, Romania Operations to U.S. MetLife*

U.K. insurer Aviva PLC said it has sold its life insurance operations in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania to MetLife Inc. as part of its strategy to focus on markets where it has strength and scale. The sale is part of a series of divestments after the company said in March last year that it was "de-emphasizing" its less profitable overseas operations and will instead focus on and invest in 12 key markets to boost overall group profitability.

*Source: <http://blogs.wsj.com/dealjournalindia/2012/01/30/global-deal-aviva-sells-czech-hungary-romania-operations-to-u-s-metlife/?KEYWORDS=insurance>

Allianz Says Bond-Insurance Plan Will Help Euro*

The euro zone will take a significant step toward easing its debt crisis when a bond-insurance plan to help fiscally weaker countries attract investors is up and running in coming weeks, says an architect of the plan.

*Source: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204624204577181034115667646.html?KEYWORDS=insurance>

Health care reform saves Michigan Medicare recipients \$49M on prescriptions*

More than 84,000 Michigan residents receiving Medicare benefits saved nearly \$49 million on prescriptions in 2011 under health care reform, the U.S. Department of Health & Human service.

*Source: <http://www.medicarenews.net/health-care-reform-saves-michigan-medicare-recipients-49m-on-prescriptions-02-2012.htm>

CSS Software Boosts Medicare Star Ratings*

Medicare plans whose 2012 Star Ratings are lower than they would like, may be able to improve their scores with a new service from Clinical Support services.

*Source: <http://www.medicarenews.net/css-software-boosts-medicare-star-ratings-01-2012.htm>

Alaska Medicare clinics are seeing a patient shortage*

Medicare patients flooded two new clinics targeting the older population when they opened in Anchorage last year. Most other primary care doctors wouldn't take the federal insurance for seniors.

*Source: <http://www.medicarenews.net/alaska-medicare-clinics-are-seeing-a-patient-shortage-01-2012.htm>

Medicare makes changes for 2012*

Medicare, the federal insurance program for people 65 and older and people younger than 65 with certain disabilities, has undergone some changes for 2012.

*Source: <http://www.medicarenews.net/medicare-makes-changes-for-2012-01-2012.htm>

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation aims to cut health-care costs*

The Obama administration touts it as a key solution to the nation's runaway health-care spending: a new national center set up by the 2010 health-care law to test and implement groundbreaking ways to cut costs while improving patient care.

*Source: <http://www.medicarenews.net/center-for-medicare-and-medicare-innovation-aims-to-cut-health-care-costs-01-2012.htm>

Medicare for the disabled*

If you are under the age of 65 and are disabled, you may be eligible for Medicare benefits. In New Jersey, you must collect state disability for six months, and then you will get Social Security disability for two years. After the two years of collecting Social Security disability, you will automatically receive your Medicare card.

*Source: <http://www.medicarenews.net/medicare-for-the-disabled-01-2012.htm>

Medicare drug savings put at \$2.1 billion*

In the first full year of the new health care law, 3.6 million people in the government Medicare program saved \$2.1 billion on prescription drugs in 2011, the Obama administration announced. The savings are one of the first tangible benefits of the sweeping overhaul that President Obama signed in March 2010.

*Source: <http://www.medicarenews.net/medicare-drug-savings-put-at-2-1b-02-2012.htm>

Medicare Advantage enrollment climbs, premiums fall*

Medicare Advantage enrollments have risen a bigger-than-expected 10 percent since this time last year as average premiums have fallen 7 percent, the Department of Health and Human Services disclosed recently.

*Source: <http://www.medicarenews.net/medicare-advantage-enrollment-climbs-premiums-fall-02-2012.htm>

TigerText nabs \$8.2 million to secure health text messages*

TigerText, which offers secure mobile messaging to healthcare companies, announced an \$8.2 million round of funding led by Easton Capital and New Science Ventures. This second round of funding brings the company's total backing to more than \$10 million.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/>

IBM acquires mobile enterprise developer Worklight*

IBM has acquired Israel-based mobile platform developer Worklight for an undisclosed sum. Worklight offers mobile application management to companies in a number of sectors, including healthcare. According to the acquisition announcement, Worklight is set to become a key component of IBM's mobility strategy. IBM will leverage Worklight to help enterprise clients "speed the delivery of existing and new mobile applications to multiple devices" while ensuring "secure connections between Smartphone and tablet applications with enterprise IT systems," the announcement stated.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/>

For iPad to succeed in medicine, significant software innovation needed*

A recent survey of more than 100 physicians conducted by Spyglass Consulting Group concluded that 80 percent of physicians believe the iPad has a "promising future in healthcare," but they remain skeptical that the device is ready to transform patient care delivery. Gregg Malkary, Managing Director of Spyglass Consulting Group, noted that the iPad is just one component of the overall end-to-end clinical solution and that "significant software innovation" is needed to help the iPad and other tablets to realize their potential in healthcare.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/>

3M patients monitored over cellular networks*

By 2016 the number of patients monitored over mobile networks will hit 3 million, according to Juniper Research. The firm believes that increasing Smartphone processing power along with new healthcare peripherals will cause an uptick in more patients using the Smartphone as a home health hub. That shift will also lower the cost of remote patient monitoring since it will reduce the need for costly dedicated health devices.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/page/2/>

Startup converts massive medical text to interactive iPad form*

San Francisco-based startup Inklings has introduced an interactive, custom-built iPad version of a popular medical school textbook that could not be properly rendered on a typical e-reader.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/page/2/>

Aetna's dentists get iPads to help patients stop smoking*

Aetna is set to begin a trial program that equips New York City-area dentists with iPads to help them better educate their patients about tobacco use in an effort to curb smoking. The trial program includes a clinical decision support system (CDSS) that is built on a medical knowledge base, patient data, and decision support technology that provides dentists with personally targeted advice for each patient.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/page/2/>

Health apps among big trends of 2012*

Dr. Farzad Mostashari, the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology at the US Department of Health and Human Services, penned a column on his top five health IT predictions for the year ahead. Not surprisingly, Mostashari expects consumers to use eHealth to get more involved in managing their own health.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/page/3/>

iPad EHR startup DrChrono raises \$2.8 million*

DrChrono, which offers one of the first electronic health records (EHR) apps built specifically for the iPad, raised \$2.8 million led by return-backer Yuri Milner, founder of DST Global, with participation from one of Google's search quality leaders, Matt Cutts. The investment builds on the \$650,000 Milner contributed to last summer. DrChrono announced its first funding, \$675,000, which came from a variety of venture firms as well as Google's Cutts.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/page/3/>

Utah hospital system taps Kony for mobile apps*

Utah-based Intermountain Healthcare, a system of 22 nonprofit hospitals, 185 clinics, a medical group, a health plans division called SelectHealth, and other health services, announced that it had inked a deal with Kony Solutions to enable it to make its mobile health apps available to patients, members, and providers regardless of which operating system their mobile devices run. As we reported, Kony struck a similar deal with Independence Blue Cross.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/page/4/>

Smartphone's becoming essential tool at nursing schools*

Massachusetts General Hospital had tapped Voalte to distribute iPhones to its nurses. The New York Times also published a feature on how Smartphone have become increasingly essential tools for students at nursing schools. The Times discussed the trend with a handful of professors and students at nursing schools across the country.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/page/4/>

Fitness device maker Fitbit raises \$12 million*

Fitbit, which offers the Fitbit Ultra activity monitor and the Aria WiFi Smart Scale, announced its third round of funding: \$12 million from existing investors. Foundry Group, True Ventures, SoftTech VC and Felicis Ventures all participated in the round.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/page/4/>

Kaiser Permanente offers patients Android app for EMR access*

Kaiser Permanente announced that its nearly 9 million patients can now securely access their electronic medical records (EMRs) from a new, free mobile app on their Android devices or from other mobile devices via a mobile-optimized site. KP expects to launch an iPhone version of the app in the coming months, but it is notable the KP departed from the common practice of launching an iPhone app first followed by Android.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/page/5/>

AT&T offers to secure tablets, messages for healthcare*

AT&T announced two new mobile security services for healthcare providers: security services for tablets and secure messaging services that enable providers to send encrypted information in HIPAA-compliant ways. Appointment reminders, lab results, and payment notices were among the type of messages that AT&T provided as examples. AT&T is working with Soprano to power its secure mobile messaging platform.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/page/5/>

Health plan to offer Telcare BGM to members*

A health plan that services self-funded employers in New York and New Jersey, MagnaCare, recently announced that it would offer Telcare's cellular-enabled blood glucose meter to its members. MagnaCare said the device and its corresponding apps will help its members be more proactive in managing their own health conditions, while also helping physicians stay better informed.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/page/5/>

Duofertility wireless sensor receives FDA clearance*

FDA cleared Duofertility, a computerized basal body temperature thermometer developed by Cambridge Temperature Concepts, with a 510(K). Cambridge Temperature Concepts developed the device, which is intended for use in measuring and recording basal body temperature as an aid in ovulation prediction to aid in conception, according to the summary document prepared for the FDA filing. The company wrote that the device is explicitly not intended for use as a contraception device.

*Source: <http://mobihealthnews.com/page/6/>
