This Week in Health Policy...

• Medicaid – A Lifeline!
• Better Coordination for Dual Eligibles
• Listeria Outbreak
• Screening for Prostate Cancer
Protecting Medicaid: Program a Lifeline for African Americans

This week, Families USA, the National Medical Association, and others, co-released ‘Medicaid: A Lifeline for Blacks and Latinos With Serious Health Care Needs’. This report outlines the potential impact of Medicaid cuts on about 8 million vulnerable African Americans and Latinos who depend on Medicaid for doctors’ visits, prescription drugs, and long term care. Full report available here.

Report Highlights:

• 1 in 5 Black patients with cancer are on Medicaid
• 1 in 4 Black patients with diabetes are on Medicaid
• 2 in 5 Latino patients with chronic lung disease are on Medicaid
• 1.4 million Latinos with stroke or heart disease are on Medicaid
This week, the Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office announced that 37 states plus the District of Columbia have expressed interest in a project to improve the coordination of care for patients who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, also known as ‘dual eligibles’. More details are available here.

Key Points:

- Dual eligibles are mostly poor elderly
- Their care is disproportionately costly
- Their care should be better coordinated
- Private insurers think they could do a better job of coordinating their care

Policy Beat archive:
[Click here](image_credit: NCSL)
Outbreak Update: Listeriosis Still a Threat to Public Health

Public health authorities including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health departments continue to investigate the sometimes deadly bacterial infection caused by eating food contaminated by Listeria. According to the CDC, these bacteria can grow in cantaloupe stored at room and refrigerator temperatures.

As of this week, more than a hundred cases have been reported nationwide, and the CDC urges all Americans to take necessary precautions. The disease is treatable if reported in a timely fashion. Details available here.

Photo credit: Institute of Medicine
This week, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force issued new guidelines about the value of prostate specific antigen (PSA) testing for preventing prostate cancer. The Task Force now recommends that providers not use the PSA test to routinely screen healthy men for prostate cancer. Crucially, the Task Force has concluded that routine PSA screening has not significantly reduced mortality, and therefore the risks outweigh the benefits.

More details are available here.

Photo credit: CDC
What You Can Do

• Please **call your Members of Congress RIGHT NOW**, and urge them to **preserve Medicaid and Medicare funding**. Contact info [here](#).

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