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Locked up naked on a soiled mattress: Venezuela’s mental health nightmare - Years of failed socialist policies, economic mismanagement and corruption have exacted a heavy toll across Venezuelan society. For the mentally ill, the lack of medicine, treatment and safe facilities has had devastating effects. By Rachelle Krygier and Anthony Faiola ● Read more »

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The rising price for mental illness, drug abuse care - Eleven years after Congress passed a law mandating that insurers provide equal access for mental and physical health care, Americans are actually finding it harder to obtain affordable treatment for mental illness and substance abuse. Continue reading »

— No single agency keeps tabs on the number of deaths at psychiatric facilities in California, or elsewhere in the nation.

A Times review identified nearly 100 preventable deaths over the last decade at California psychiatric facilities.

Modern Healthcare: Blue Cross of Idaho Unveils Souped-Up Short-Term Health Plans - Blue Cross of Idaho will soon begin selling a beefed-up version of a short-term health plan that the company promises will offer comprehensive benefits to thousands of middle-class Idahoans who can’t afford Affordable Care Act plan premiums. But because the plans still skirt some popular ACA consumer protections, critics say they’re only likely benefit healthy individuals at the expense of those who buy coverage through the exchanges. (Livingston, 12/27)

NPR: Black Mothers Get Less Treatment For Their Postpartum Depression - Portia Smith’s most vivid memories of her daughter’s first year are of tears. Not the baby’s. Her own. "I would just hold her and cry all day," Smith recalls. At 18, Smith was caring for two children, 4-year-old Kelaiah and newborn Nelly, with little help from her abusive relationship. The circumstances were difficult, but she knew the tears were more than that. (Feldman and Pattani, 11/29)
The Washington Post: After Miscarriage, I Was Rocked By Depression. Like Many Other Women, I Didn’t Get Follow-Up Care For This Loss. The memory of our motionless baby boy on the ultrasound screen awakened me in the middle of the night. I squeezed my eyes shut repeatedly, but I couldn’t escape the image. My body ached, my heart raced and tears streamed down my face until they led to uncontrollable sobs, eventually waking my husband. I cried until morning. That was the first night after I miscarried at 12 weeks pregnant. Those early morning flashbacks lasted for weeks. (Reilly, 11/30)

NPR/ProPublica: Why TeamHealth, Owned By Blackstone Group, Stopped Suing Poor Patients - After nine visits to the emergency room at Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., in 2016 and 2017, Jennifer Brooks began receiving bills from an entity she’d never heard of, Southeastern Emergency Physicians. Unsure what the bills were for, Brooks, a stay-at-home mother, said she ignored them until they were sent to collections. She made payment arrangements, but when she was late, she said the collection agency demanded $500, which she didn't have. (Thomas, Miller, Raghavendran and Burke, 11/27)

The New York Times: A Change In Medicare Has Therapists Alarmed - In late September, a woman in her 70s arrived at a skilled nursing facility in suburban Houston after several weeks in the hospital. Her leg had been amputated after a long-ago knee replacement became infected; she also suffered from diabetes, depression, anxiety and general muscular weakness. An occupational therapist named Susan Nielson began working with her an hour a day, five days a week. Gradually, the patient became more mobile. With assistance and encouragement, she could transfer from her bed to a wheelchair, get herself to the bathroom for personal grooming and lift light weights to build her endurance. (Span, 11/29)

Los Angeles Times: Their Kids Died On The Psych Ward. They Were Far From Alone, A Times Investigation Found - Mia St. John’s cellphone lit up with a message from the psychiatrist treating her son. The voicemail shimmered with hope, the first she had felt in months. The doctor said Julian, admitted to a psychiatric facility with schizophrenia, seemed more cheerful, was talking more with other patients and would soon begin a new art project. (Karlamangla, 12/1)

Los Angeles Times: How To Reduce Suicides On The Psychiatric Ward - Over the last decade, more than 50 people have died by suicide while admitted to psychiatric facilities in California. The figure paints a bleak picture of the options available for people in the midst of a mental health crisis. So for families whose loved ones are suffering from suicidal thoughts, is there hope? Can hospitals actually stop people from dying by suicide? The short answer, experts say, is yes. (Karlamangla, 12/1)

The Wall Street Journal: As Suicides Rise, More Attention Turns To The People Left Behind - On the day before his 25th birthday, Jeannine Pembroke’s son killed himself. Soon the calls from family and friends dwindled, and Ms. Pembroke was alone with her grief. One afternoon, she sat at her computer in the house where her son had grown up and sent her first message to an online support group. “We are devastated, numb, angry, and so very sad,” she wrote. As suicides rise in the U.S., more attention is turning to the struggles of the people left behind. New research shows just how severe the aftermath is—and that it is different from other kinds of loss. People who lose a loved one to suicide are at a greater risk for post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide themselves. The grief can be longer-lasting and more debilitating. (Petersen, 12/2)

KCUR: Why It’s Hard To Help Children Through Mental Health Challenges In Rural Communities - It’s hard to look past the challenges families in agriculture have faced this year. Between floods, late planting, and trade turmoil, many families are operating under an extra layer of stress. But addressing the culture of mental health in rural schools and communities is proving more complicated than increasing resources. ...Regional behavioral health agencies this year have increased their outreach to agricultural areas where families are struggling to recover from the flooding. And organizations like the Rural Response Hotline in Nebraska are finding some success connecting families to free counseling during financial advisor appointments. (Stella, 12/2)
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**The Oregonian: Portland Police Develop Mental Health And Wellness Program For Officers, Civilian Staff** - The bureau started training all officers - as well as non-sworn civilian bureau employees - during annual refresher training classes this fall, bringing in physical therapists to share tips on how best to stretch muscles or control breathing to reduce stress. As the bureau struggles to retain veteran officers while being unable to fill more than 100 vacancies fast enough, Training Sgt. Todd Tackett and Harris are tasked with developing a program that will help police get through their law enforcement careers intact, both physically and mentally. (Bernstein, 11/30)

**The New York Times: Swimmers Beware Of Deep Brain Stimulation** - A lifelong swimmer leapt into deep water near his lakeside home, and was horrified to find himself completely unable to swim. Had his wife not rescued him, he might have drowned. He had recently received an electronic brain implant to control tremors and other symptoms of Parkinson's disease, and somehow the signals from the device had knocked out his ability to coordinate his arms and legs for swimming. (Grady, 11/27)

**The Associated Press: Records: Arkansas Youth Treatment Center Broke Federal Rules** - State records indicate an Arkansas youth mental health treatment center broke federal rules by using chemical injections to restrain young people held in seclusion. Inspection records obtained by the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette say the Piney Ridge Treatment Center was cited for at least 13 violations of Medicaid rules prohibiting simultaneous restraint and seclusion in 30 days. (12/1)

**Stat: Medicaid Covers Sick Or Dying Children, But It Takes 'Going To Battle' To Get It** - One of the first things that happens when you find out your child has a life-limiting illness, before the exhausting hours of treatments and the Make-A-Wish vacation, is that you learn you need to enroll in Medicaid. Hours after being told that my daughter, Calliope, had metachromatic leukodystrophy (MLD), a disease that destroys nerves throughout the body, a social worker at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia kindly told my husband and me, “You can't leave this hospital until we start this paperwork.” As a sociologist who has written books about poverty in America, that surprised me. I assumed that Medicaid is for low-income families.“ Oh, you are going to need this, honey,” she said with a smile. (Maria Kefalas, 12/2)

**The Washington Post: More Americans Are Dying In The Prime Of Life. A Better Approach Is Needed.** - They call the years between ages 25 and 65 the prime of life because it is supposed to be the period during which an adult enjoys his or her best health and maximum productivity. Yet to a disturbing degree, that description no longer fits Americans' experience. Between 2010 and 2017, the mortality rate for 25-to-64-year-olds increased from 328.5 deaths per 100,000 to 348.2 per 100,000 — or about 6 percent — according to a new study in the Journal of the American Medical Association. This contributed to a reversal of what had been decades of progress (albeit slower since the 1980s) in life expectancy, which stood at 78.6 years in 2017, down from the all-time high of 78.9 years in 2014. This simply should not be occurring in a rich country whose peer nations have maintained or improved life expectancy figures in recent years. (11/30)

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**KCUR: Mental Health Care Dominates Growing Missouri Telemedicine Field** - More people in Missouri are consulting doctors via telephone or video services — and mental health care is most in demand. Patient visits using telephones or video conferencing systems have increased tenfold since 2010 among Missouri Medicaid users, according to the Missouri Telehealth Network at the University of Missouri. The vast majority of those visits were for behavioral or mental health services, said Rachel Mutrux, senior program director at the network. (12/2)

**The New York Times: The Crisis In Youth Suicide** - The death of a child is most parents’ worst nightmare, one made even worse when it is self-inflicted. This very tragedy has become increasingly common among young people in recent years. And adults — parents, teachers, clinicians and politicians — should be asking why and what they can do to prevent it. In October, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that after a stable period from 2000 to 2007, the rate of suicide among those aged 10 to 24 increased dramatically — by 56 percent — between 2007 and 2017, making suicide the second leading cause of death in this age group, following accidents like car crashes. (Brody, 12/2)
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: Winnebago Mental Health Institute Faces Dozens Of Staff Vacancies - Two years after a patient death brought a flood of attention, state inspectors have left Winnebago Mental Health Institute in Oshkosh, but staff shortages have gotten worse. At the state's only facility required to accept anyone having a mental health crisis, the staff has been forced to work significant overtime while officials address safety hazards and gaps in care. The facility draws patients from every county in Wisconsin. (Linnane, 12/2)

Feds Unleash $130 Million For Disability Housing - Millions of dollars are headed to communities across the country to provide affordable housing to people with disabilities, federal officials say. Read More >

Google Seeks Help From People With Down Syndrome - From Siri to Alexa, voice assistants are everywhere, but the technology tends to miss every third word that people with Down syndrome say. Now a new effort is underway to change that. Read More >

How An 'Interabled' Couple Became An Internet Sensation - He has a disability. She doesn't. To change how the world sees them as a couple, they launched a vlog and became a YouTube sensation. Read More >

Rights of Special Ed Students Over 18 Ignored, Lawsuit Claims - Special education groups contend that one state is violating federal law by refusing to allow guardians to look out for certain students with disabilities after they become legal adults. Read More >

The New York Times: Rikers Guards Stood By For 7 Minutes As Inmate Tried To Hang Himself - At least four New York City correction officers failed to act for seven minutes as an 18-year-old detainee tried to hang himself at the Rikers Island jail complex, with some of them watching the suicide attempt before intervening, according to four people with knowledge of the matter. The officers have been suspended while the city’s Department of Investigation conducts an inquiry, officials said. The inmate was hospitalized and put into a medically induced coma on Tuesday, the people said. (Shanahan and Rashbaum, 12/3)

Modern Healthcare: Fewer Rural Students Are Enrolling In Medical School - The number of students enrolled in medical school from rural areas of the U.S. dropped by 28% over a 15-year period, with students from those communities representing less than 5% of total incoming medical students in 2017, according to a new study in Health Affairs. The findings, published Tuesday from staff at the Association of American Medical Colleges, come as the nation faces a physician shortage in rural communities. A frequently cited 2010 study from the University of Washington School of Medicine found only 11.4% of physicians practice in rural settings although 19.2% of the population lives in those areas. (Castellucci, 12/3)

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The Associated Press: 668,000 Will Lose Food Stamp Benefits Under New Work Rules - Hundreds of thousands of Americans who rely on the federal food stamp program will lose their benefits under a new Trump administration rule that will tighten work requirements for recipients. The move by the administration is the latest in its attempt to scale back the social safety net for low-income Americans. It is the first of three proposed rules targeting the Supplemental Nutrition Program, known as SNAP, to be finalized. The program feeds more than 36 million people. (Linderman, 12/4)

NPR: Nearly 700,000 SNAP Recipients Could Lose Benefits Under New Trump Rule - SNAP statutes already limit adults to three months of benefits in a three-year period unless they meet the 20 hours per week requirement, but many states currently waive that requirement in high unemployment areas. This change would make those waivers harder to get. "The rule restores the system to what Congress intended: assistance through difficult times, not a way of life," Perdue said. As NPR reported last year, though, Congress passed the farm bill without changes like these to SNAP. (Fessler and Treisman, 12/4)
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**NBC News: Nearly 700,000 Will Lose Food Stamps With USDA Work Requirement Change** - Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, said this rule would do little to help anyone find work. All the rule change does is strip people from accessing the benefit, she said. "This Administration is out of touch with families who are struggling to make ends meet by working seasonal jobs or part time jobs with unreliable hours," Stabenow said. "Seasonal holiday workers, workers in Northern Michigan’s tourism industry, and workers with unreliable hours like waiters and waitresses are the kinds of workers hurt by this proposal." The senator also noted that an attempt to add work requirements to SNAP had failed in Congress when they had considered the Farm Bill last year. The House rejected it in a bipartisan vote of 330-83, and the Senate voted down a similar amendment 68-30. (McCausland, 12/4)

**Los Angeles Times: He Wanted To Ban Feeding Homeless People. Now He’s About To Lead A Federal Homeless Agency** - A consultant known for urging cities to stop “enabling” homeless people, in part by blocking charities from handing out food, has been tapped to lead the agency that coordinates the federal government’s response to homelessness. Robert Marbut, who has worked with several cities, including Fresno and several other California cities and counties, would succeed Matthew Doherty as executive director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (Oreskes, 12/4)

**Los Angeles Times: Fearing CTE, A Former USC Star's Family Donates His Brain** - The brains arrive at all hours in white cardboard boxes stamped “RUSH!” Inside each package is an inch-and-a-half-thick foam liner and a red bag protecting an ordinary white plastic bucket. When a courier service delivered Kevin Ellison’s brain to the Bedford VA Medical Center near Boston just after 2 p.m. on Jan. 22, Dr. Victor Alvarez performed the routine he has done so many times that he's stopped counting. (Fenno, 12/3)

**Kaiser Health News: As His Wife’s Caregiver, A Doctor Discovers What’s Missing At Health Care’s Core** - Caring for someone with a serious illness stretches people spiritually and emotionally, often beyond what they might have thought possible. Dr. Arthur Kleinman, a professor of psychiatry and anthropology at Harvard University, calls this “enduring the unendurable” in his recently published book, “The Soul of Care: The Moral Education of a Husband and a Doctor.” (Graham, 12/5)

**The New York Times: He Waited 6 Hours For Medical Help. Then He Tried To Hang Himself.** - The guards brought the 18-year-old detainee with a gashed lip into a special holding cell on Friday night. He had been injured after a fight with seven other inmates and was being transferred to an urgent care facility on Rikers Island. What happened over the next six hours would plunge the jail and the city’s correction department into a crisis on Wednesday over the supervision of inmates, especially those at risk of suicide, at a time when the city is seeking to close Rikers. (Ransom, 12/4)

**The Associated Press: At Notorious Jail, Guards Feel Heat For Teen’s Near Suicide** - Mayor Bill de Blasio tweeted the allegations that officers failed to immediately intervene in Feliciano’s suicide attempt are “deeply troubling.” “The people in our jails are human beings,” de Blasio wrote. “Their well-being is our responsibility.” Correction Commissioner Cynthia Brann said in a statement the allegations were “extremely troubling and we are taking them seriously.” (12/4)

**Modern Healthcare: Mental Health-Related ED Visits Among Kids On The Rise In Colorado** - One-quarter of Colorado's mental health-related emergency department visits were for children in 2018, a new report has found. The share of children's emergency department visits where mental health was the primary diagnosis grew from 21% in 2016 to 25% in 2018, according to an analysis performed by the Center for Improving Value in Health Care using claims data for commercially insured, Medicaid and Medicare Advantage patients. Those visits for adults dropped from 79% to 75% in that time. (Bannow, 12/4)

**New Hampshire Public Radio: Study: Fewer Medical Students Are Coming From Rural Areas, Tied To Rural Workforce Shortages** - The number of medical students coming from rural areas has fallen by almost 30% since 2002, according to a new report. Researchers say the trend is partly to blame for healthcare workforce shortages in rural states like New Hampshire. The research, which appears in Health Affairs, was led by Dartmouth professor Scott Shipman. It examined medical school enrollment across the country from 2002 to 2017. (Moon, 12/4)
San Francisco Chronicle: ‘We Don’t Want To Be Outside’: Homeless Say Few Beds Offered During Tenderloin Sweep - San Francisco cleared a Civic Center alley of tents Wednesday, one of its largest homeless sweeps of the year, causing dozens of people to fold up their makeshift homes, throw out their belongings and scatter elsewhere. City officials say outreach workers spent the past six weeks visiting Willow Street and tried connecting as many people as possible to services. (Thadani, 12/4)

American Academy Of Pediatrics: Early-Life Predictors Of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders - Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) comprise the continuum of disabilities associated with prenatal alcohol exposure. Although infancy remains the most effective time for initiation of intervention services, current diagnostic schemes demonstrate the greatest confidence, accuracy, and reliability in school-aged children. Our aims for the current study were to identify growth, dysmorphology, and neurodevelopmental features in infants that were most predictive of FASD at age 5, thereby improving the timeliness of diagnoses. (Kalberg et al, 12/1)

Health Affairs: The Decline In Rural Medical Students: A Growing Gap In Geographic Diversity Threatens The Rural Physician Workforce - Growing up in a rural setting is a strong predictor of future rural practice for physicians. This study reports on the fifteen-year decline in the number of rural medical students, culminating in rural students’ representing less than 5 percent of all incoming medical students in 2017. Furthermore, students from underrepresented racial/ethnic minority groups in medicine (URM) with rural backgrounds made up less than 0.5 percent of new medical students in 2017. Both URM and non-URM students with rural backgrounds are substantially and increasingly underrepresented in medical school. (Shipman, 12/1)

The Wall Street Journal: Food Stamps In Good Times - Judging by the rhetoric, you’d think President Trump was shutting down Great Depression bread lines. “The Trump administration,” Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said, “is driving the vulnerable into hunger just as the Christmas season approaches.” Humbug. Two incongruous facts: With the U.S. unemployment rate now at 50-year lows, there are seven million job openings for only six million job seekers. Yet as of last year 2.1 million potential hires—specifically, adults age 18 to 49, able-bodied, without dependents—were receiving food stamps despite not working. (12/4)

The Washington Post: The Reactions That Followed The Shootings Of Two Young Brothers Are Not ‘All Right’ - When a 13-year-old boy found out earlier this year that a bullet lodged in his spine was going to leave him paralyzed from his belly button down, he didn’t scream. He didn’t cry. He didn’t even sulk in the way other children his age do when they lose their video games or cellphones for a day. “Am I going to live?” he asked. (Theresa Vargas, 12/4)

Investigation Finds Significant Barriers To Pursuing IDEA Disputes - IDEA provides parents certain options if they’re unsatisfied with the education their children are receiving, but government investigators say only some families are able to take advantage. Read More >

City Is Nation’s First To Be Autism Certified - A community-wide effort to train businesses and other entities to welcome people on the spectrum has led one city to become the country’s first designated as autism certified. Read More >

Death And Deals: Children With Special Needs Suffer, Private Equity Profits- At-home children’s nursing care is dominated by a company assembled through a series of corporate takeovers that has two goals — quality care and maximizing profit. Read More >

1. Black Mothers Get Less Treatment For Postpartum Depression Than Other Moms - Cultural barriers may keep some African American women from seeking treatment for postpartum depression as early as they need it, and the standard screening tools aren’t always relevant for some black women. (Nina Feldman, WHYY and Aneri Pattani, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 12/6)
Kaiser Health News: KHN’s ‘What The Health?’: We Spend HOW MUCH On Health Care? - Health spending in the U.S. grew to $3.6 trillion in 2018, according to a new report from the federal government. The rate of growth — 4.6% — was up slightly from 2017’s 4.2%, despite the fact that nearly a million more Americans lacked insurance. Meanwhile, Congress has less than two weeks to finish a year’s worth of work, including the spending bills required to keep the government running and promised legislation to address “surprise” medical bills and prescription drug prices. (12/5)

The Wall Street Journal: For Many Soldiers, Mental-Health Issues Start Before Enlistment - Combat experience is often blamed as the root cause of suicidal behavior among veterans. But ongoing Army studies show that many troops with mental-health problems can trace them back to trauma experienced before they joined the military. “There is a significant and growing proportion of soldiers who enter the military with psychiatric disorders, increasing the risk over time for suicide behaviors within the Army,” according to a paper released earlier this year from University of Washington researchers that used data from Army-funded studies. (Kesling, 12/5)

Kaiser Health News: Black Mothers Get Less Treatment For Postpartum Depression Than Other Moms - Portia Smith’s most vivid memories of her daughter’s first year are of tears. Not the baby’s. Her own. “I would just hold her and cry all day,” Smith said. At 18, Smith was caring for two children, 4-year-old Kelaiah and newborn Nelly, with little help from the partner in her abusive relationship. The circumstances were difficult, but she knew the tears were more than that. (Feldman and Pattani, 12/6)

Nashville Tennessean: Mental Health Care Gap Closes With Gov. Lee’s Step - Thousands of Tennesseans are in a mental health care gap – which means they have barriers, such as cost and coverage, to accessing services they want and need. I have dedicated thirty years to providing mental health services and alcohol and substance use treatment, and I have seen the negative impacts of that gap in care too often. (Ben Middleton, 12/3)

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2. ‘Warm’ Hotlines Deliver Help Before Mental Health Crisis Heats Up - “Warmlines” are phone lines or electronic chat options for people who are not having a full-blown mental health crisis but who could use support to stave off one. They are a growing trend in mental health outreach to supplement existing hotlines, with one successful warmline in the Bay Area recently expanding to cover all of California. (Stephanie Stephens, 12/9)

The New York Times: New Therapies Help Patients With Dementia Cope With Depression - Ms. Firmender, who has a history of mental health problems, was in therapy for depression. But she also has mild cognitive impairment and can have trouble remembering what day it is. So Dr. Kiosses was treating her with a novel approach called Problem Adaptation Therapy, or PATH. The therapy, developed at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City and White Plains, N.Y., focuses on solving tangible problems that fuel feelings of sadness and hopelessness. It incorporates tools, like checklists, calendars, signs and videos, to make it accessible for people with memory issues. A caregiver is often involved. The approach is one of several new psychotherapies to treat anxiety and depression in people with cognitive impairments, including early to moderate dementia. (Petersen, 12/8)

Tampa Bay Times: Florida's Baker Act Often Cuts Parents Out Of The Process When Children Are Committed - Florida’s Baker Act directs police officers and some mental health professionals to hospitalize the mentally ill, but it was never intended to be used on children with autism or children who act out in class. The 48-year-old law even says those with developmental disabilities should not be committed unless they’re also mentally ill and a danger to themselves or others. But more and more kids who do not meet the criteria are being taken from schools to crisis centers for up to 72 hours and more. Across Florida, the number of children involuntarily transported each year to a mental health center has doubled in the last 15 years to about 36,000, or 100 a day, according to the Baker Act Reporting Center at the University of South Florida. (Anton and Pendygraft, 12/8)
The Star Tribune: Disabled Minnesota Residents Often Live In Costly Isolation - Rather than helping develop care plans that would allow them to live in their own homes or apartments, counties across the state continue to steer thousands of Minnesotans with disabilities into facilities that promote dependency and isolation. State spending on group homes, for Minnesotans with disabilities who receive a coveted form of assistance known as a Medicaid “waiver,” now totals about $1.5 billion a year. That represents about two-thirds of total spending on waivers for people with disabilities — and is more than the combined state spending on agriculture, higher education and pollution control. (Serres and Howatt, 12/8)

Kaiser Health News: ‘Warm’ Hotlines Deliver Help Before Mental Health Crisis Heats Up - A lonely and anxious Rebecca Massie first called the Mental Health Association of San Francisco “warmline” during the 2015 winter holidays. “It was a wonderful call,” said Massie, now 38 and a mental health advocate. “I was laughing by the end, and I got in the holiday spirit.” Massie, a San Francisco resident, later used the line multiple times when she needed additional support, then began to volunteer there. (Stephens, 12/9)

The CT Mirror: Colleges ‘Swamped’ By Students’ Mental Health Needs, But Services Vary Greatly - At Connecticut College, almost a third of students get mental health services in a given year and half of all students get that help at some point before they graduate. At Trinity College, close to half of the student body comes into the counseling center in a given year. By contrast, at Manchester Community College, very few mental health services are available. (Megan, 12/9)

Los Angeles Times: Trump Cuts Poverty Food Stipends Just Before Christmas - In a rare moment of bipartisanship, Congress rejected President Trump’s efforts on last year’s farm bill to impose new food stamp restrictions that would have cut benefits for more than a million needy people. So Trump decided to pursue the changes through executive action. On Wednesday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture finalized the first of three new regulatory changes to food stamps, formally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, just in time for the holidays. And boy, it is just as punitive and miserly as we feared. Bah, humbug! (12/9)

Stat: Cutting 700,000 Americans From SNAP Will Increase Health Costs - The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is our nation’s first line of defense against food insecurity. It’s a lifeline that can provide enough food for all household members to lead healthy and active lives. As a fundamental component of America’s public health and economic infrastructure, SNAP helps sustain people when the economy goes into recession, disasters happen, life takes unforeseen turns, wages are too low, or work is hard to find. The research is clear: food insecurity and hunger are linked to negative health outcomes across the lifespan, like anemia, developmental delays, and suicidal thoughts in children and adolescents, and depression, diabetes, and high blood pressure in adults. This is why SNAP is important medicine. (Stephanie Ettinger De Cuba, Diana B. Cutts and Allison Bovell-Ammond, 12/6)

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Stat: Brains-In-A-Dish Force A Radical Rethinking Of Huntington’s - The new understanding is surprising because Huntington’s has long seemed like a prototypical neurodegenerative disease, one in which the brain’s circuits, especially those that control movement and cognition, begin to fall apart in early to middle adulthood. Exactly when that happens depends on the severity of the genetic mutation, which is a sort of DNA stutter — repeats of the nucleotide sequence CAG in a gene named HTT, which makes a protein called huntingtin. (Begley, 12/10)

Undark: To Boost Mental Health, Spend Time In 'Blue' Spaces - Officials are increasingly recognizing that integrating nature into cities is an effective public health strategy to improve mental health. Doctors around the world now administer “green prescriptions” — where patients are encouraged to spend time in local nature spaces — based on hundreds of studies showing that time in nature can benefit people’s psychological well-being and increase social engagement. Much of this research to date has focused on the role of green space in improving mental health. But what about “blue” space — water settings such as riverside trails, a lake, a waterfront or even urban fountains? (Roe, 12/10)
ProPublica: These Homes For Mentally Ill Adults Have Been Notoriously Mismanaged. Now, One Is A Gruesome Crime Scene. - On the afternoon of Dec. 3, workers at the Oceanview Manor Home for Adults found resident Ann McGrory, 58, lying on the floor, lifeless, with her pants down around her ankles. She had cuts and bruises on her hands, head and face. By her side, seated atop his bed in Room 512, was resident Frank Thompson, 64, her sometimes-boyfriend who had a reputation at the home as a heavy drinker with a short temper. The aides called police. Thompson was brought into custody for questioning later that day and placed under arrest on Wednesday. (Sapien, 12/9)

Cleveland Plain Dealer: Ohio Bill Aims To Increase In-Network Care For Mental Health, Addiction Treatment - A new bill in the General Assembly aims to increase mental health and addiction treatment covered by Ohio insurance companies, after a recent report showed patients are increasingly going out-of-network for care. (Hancock, 12/9)

St. Louis Post Dispatch: Missouri Should Set Basic Standards Of Care For Local Jail Inmates - People are confined to county jails for all kinds of reasons, including alleged crimes that haven’t yet been proven or convictions for minor offenses. But whatever the reason, there are — or should be — basic standards of reasonable daily hygiene available: shampoo, soap, feminine hygiene products and the like. These aren’t luxuries but necessities. Denying them to inmates (including those not yet convicted of anything) isn’t something that should ever happen in 21st Century America. Yet in Missouri, it does. Unlike the majority of U.S. states, Missouri has no statewide minimum jail standards, including any uniform rules regarding what personal supplies must be available to county jail inmates. (12/10)

Feds Work To Protect Parents With Intellectual Disabilities - Federal officials say that a state has agreed to change its ways after child welfare workers sought to remove children from their mom and dad allegedly because of the parents' low IQs. Read More >

Cruise Line Going 'Sensory Inclusive' - A major cruise operator is training its staff, offering up tools and taking other steps to welcome people with disabilities in a move they say is an industry first. Read More >

New Center To Treat Adults With Autism - People with autism and other neurodevelopmental disabilities often have few places to go for treatment when they are no longer children. A new center is set to focus specifically on adults. Read More >

Why Those With Disabilities Wait Years For Programs They Need To Live On Their Own - Despite a court order requiring one state to shrink its waiting list, most adults with developmental disabilities wait seven years or longer for services. Read More >

Helping Kids Who Are Immature - What parents can do to support children who are behind their peers. Read MORE ▶

How Can We Help Kids With Self-regulation? Teaching kids how to control their emotions and manage their own behavior. Read MORE ▶

Helping Kids Deal With Embarrassment - Don't minimize their feelings, but do praise them for being resilient. Read MORE ▶

How to Help Kids With Sleepover Anxiety - A step-by-step plan for building comfort away from home. Read MORE ▶

Is Your Child Being Bullied? - What are the signs, and what’s the difference between teasing and torment? Read MORE ▶

Is It ADHD or Immaturity? - How to tell the difference. Read MORE ▶

Politico: 'We Ate Their Lunch': How Pelosi Got To 'Yes' On Trump's Trade Deal - Some issues were worked out quickly: An agreement to strip out protections for biologic drugs, which opponents say would allow drug companies to keep prices high, was struck in those first few weeks, said Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), who focused on the issue for the working group. It was deliberately kept under a proverbial lock-and-key to help prevent a propaganda campaign from the powerful pharmaceutical lobby, which could have derailed the handshake deal. The early win for Democrats boosted
members’ confidence and showed the administration was willing to make concessions. But compromises on other areas — specifically, labor and enforcement provisions — remained elusive. The caucus began to splinter over summer recess as moderate Democrats grew increasingly anxious to hold a vote on the agreement. (Cassella, 12/10)

**Kaiser Health News: Among U.S. States, New York’s Suicide Rate Is The Lowest. How’s That?** “I just snapped” is how Jessica Lioy describes her attempt in April to kill herself. After a tough year in which she’d moved back to her parents’ Syracuse, N.Y., home and changed colleges, the crumbling of her relationship with her boyfriend pushed the 22-year-old over the edge. She impulsively swallowed a handful of sleeping pills. Her mom happened to walk into her bedroom, saw the pills scattered on the floor and called 911. (Andrews, 12/11)

**New Orleans Times-Picayune: A Look Inside The Progress At Children’s Hospital Expanded Mental Health Facility** - Children’s Hospital New Orleans is close to opening a new 51-bed unit for children in need of inpatient mental health services, expanding its current 39-bed facility amid what experts say is a shortage of treatment options in Louisiana for kids with mental illness. The 70,000-square-foot building, set to open next month, is part of a $300 million renovation and expansion plan at the hospital's Uptown campus. (Woodruff, 12/10)

**Health News Florida: Panel Grapples With Substance Abuse, Mental Health Concerns Among Physicians** - A state licensing board continues to grapple with how best to address mental-health issues and substance abuse among medical students and physicians across Florida. A Florida Board of Medicine subcommittee last week agreed to reduce a look-back period for mental health and substance abuse on a licensure application from five years to two years. But a day later, the full Board of Medicine raised concerns that it could put the public’s health at risk. (Sexton, 12/10)

**Stat: Mental Health, Addiction Care Poorly Covered By Insurance Networks** - More than 70,000 Americans died of overdoses in 2017, yet insurers spent only 1% of their total health care dollars on treatment for substance use disorders — a decrease from two years earlier. This alarming statistic is just one of many in a new report released by Milliman, an independent actuarial firm. The report confirms that insurers have failed to adequately cover lifesaving care even as U.S. life expectancy declined over the past three years, primarily due to overdoses and suicides. (Patrick Kennedy, 12/10)

**The Hidden Crisis in Rural America: A Lack of Mental Health Services** - There is no doubt that the United States faces a provider shortage. But for those living in rural America, it is especially difficult to find care. Most non-metropolitan communities do not have a local psychiatrist and many even lack psychologists. With suicide in among farmers on the rise, rural America faces challenges often unseen. [Read the full story in The Atlantic](https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2019/12/the-hidden-crisis-in-rural-america-a-lack-of-mental-health-services/606392/).

**What you can do to help Nashville's growing mental health crisis | Opinion** - [Read the full story in The Tennessean](https://www.tennessean.com/opinion/2019/12/19/what-you-can-do-to-help-nashville-growing-mental-health-crisis/). It’s not a hotline, it’s a ‘warmline’: It gives mental health help before a crisis heats up - Our affiliate, the Mental Health Association of San Francisco launched a new program that is changing the way people in California can receive help. Unlike lines for those in immediate crisis, the warmline helps people with less urgent concerns and can even provide referrals to a therapist by phone or instant message. [Read the full story in USA Today](https://www.usatoday.com/story/health/2019/12/18/it-its-not-a-hotline-its-a-warmline-gives-mental-health-help-before-crisis-heats-up/4064518002/). California is not alone, about 30 states have warmlines across the country. [Find out more here](https://www.mentalhealth.org/our-work/warmlines/index.cfm).

**Let’s Make Mental Health Awareness a Hot Topic** - In this blog, author Monica Seuthe shares about her experience living with depression, ADHD and anxiety and why mental health is a hot topic to her. Recently, MHA kicked off a partnership with the Hot Topic Foundation to bring mental health awareness into the open. [Read the full story in Nerd News Social](https://www.nerdnews.com/blog/lets-make-mental-health-awareness-a-hot-topic/).

**Depression and the Domino Effect** - The holidays can be a stressful time for those living with mental illness and their loved ones. When your loved one’s symptoms cause a chain reaction with your own mental health, it’s time to regroup and practice self-care. Check out this article from our partner at Esperanza magazine. [Read the full story in Esperanza](https://www.esperanza.org/blog/depression-and-the-domino-effect).
January 2020 Additional Mental Health Related Articles from Around the Nation

Supergirl's Chyler Leigh Reveals Her Struggle with Bipolar Disorder: 'It’s Okay to Not Be Okay' - Actress Chyler Leigh has teamed up with MHA partner Be Vocal: Speak Up for Mental Health and "hopes to encourage others to find support by "speaking their truth" and changing the way mental health is portrayed in the media." Read the full story in People.

'They Saw Him Hanging and Did Nothing': A Teen's Agony in Rikers -The New York Times - *Sensitive Content Warning* - For seven minutes, guards looked in on Mr. Feliciano while he tried to hang himself, but did not enter the cell. Mr. Martinez, who had been wheeled into the area on a gurney after receiving medical treatment, said he shouted at the guards, “He’s hanging!” - More here.

Another Voice: N.Y. State must keep adolescents out of solitary confinement - The Buffalo News - New York political leaders have said they were going to end solitary confinement for adolescents last June. Why can our state prison system still hold 16- and 17-year-olds in cells for 18 to 22 hours a day? Research shows the long-term damaging impacts of isolation, especially on adolescents. The psychological effects of solitary confinement on teenagers is well-known. Since the frontal lobe is developing during the teenage years, forcing a child into solitary confinement inhibits this critical brain growth. And, because teenagers are still developing, they have less resilience to draw upon under these extreme conditions, and often experience a sense of hopelessness and vulnerability. More here.

An Unlikely Group Wants to Raise California’s Juvenile Justice Age to 20 - The Chronicle of Social Change - Efforts to shield more teens from the adult criminal justice system are viewed as a progressive cause across the country. But an effort to expand California’s juvenile justice system to include older youth has drawn skepticism, partly due to its chief architect: the state’s probation lobby. A proposal by the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) would reclassify 18- and 19-year-olds as juveniles in the eyes of the law. The yet-to-be unveiled legislation would also let youth who are involved with juvenile probation stay in probation-run facilities until they are 24 years old, past the current maximum age of 21. More here.

2. San Francisco Hopes To Improve Care For People With Mental Illness Living On Streets - Dr. Anton Nigusse Bland, a veteran of public health psychiatry, was appointed by San Francisco’s mayor earlier this year to a newly created job: director of mental health reform. His main task is to improve mental health and addiction treatment for people experiencing homelessness. (Brian Krans, 12/13)

The easy 988 number will replace the clunkier 800-273-TALK (8255) for anyone to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The FCC said in an earlier report that the increased costs that will come from more calls would likely be offset by avoiding medical costs such as hospitalizations or emergency department visits.

The Wall Street Journal: FCC Approves Making ‘988’ A National Suicide-Prevention Hotline Number - Americans would be able to dial 988 to reach a suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline under a proposal approved Thursday by the Federal Communications Commission. The new three-digit dialing code is designed to be an easier-to-remember version of an existing toll-free number, 1-800-273-TALK, known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Dialing 988 would connect callers to the lifeline, which routes calls to a nearby crisis center run by an organization designated to answer the call. (Tracy, 12/12)

The Hill: FCC Moves To Designate 988 A National Suicide-Prevention Hotline Number - All five FCC commissioners on Thursday voted in favor of a proposal to designate 988 as the country's national suicide-prevention hotline number, arguing that having a 911-like option for people who are experiencing mental health crises could help combat the rising rate of suicides in the U.S. "The need for suicide prevention services has never been greater in modern times," FCC Chairman Ajit Pai said at the FCC's open meeting on Thursday. (Birnbaum, 12/12)

The Associated Press: Regulators To Set Up 3-Digit Suicide Hotline Number Like 911 - A law last year required the Federal Communications Commission to study assigning a three-digit number for suicide prevention. The FCC said in a report that there is overwhelming support for a three-digit number because it would be easier for distressed people to get help. (Anderson, 12/12)
CNN: FCC Unanimously Approves Proposal For New 3-Digit Number As Suicide Prevention Hotline - During the public meeting Thursday, FCC commissioner Michael O’Rielly shared that his brother-in-law died by suicide and thanked the agency’s staff for the “hard work.” "These are about those that we can convince. These are about those willing to listen that can be driven in a different direction, that can be shown a path where life matters. So I pray that this item has the impact that we expect it to," O’Rielly said. (Stracqualursi, 12/12)

USA Today: 988: Suicide Prevention Three-Digit Number Gains FCC Approval - “The three-digit number is really going to be a breakthrough in terms of reaching people in a crisis,” said Dwight Holton, CEO of Lines for Life, a suicide prevention nonprofit. “No one is embarrassed to call 911 for a fire or an emergency. No one should be embarrassed to call 988 for a mental health emergency.” (Shannon, 12/12)

The New York Times: Why Hospital Workers Fear Moving 50 Criminally Insane Patients - Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center in New York City has long been a place of mystery, with little known about what goes on behind the razor-wire fences. As a result, the state-run facility for the dangerously mentally ill — located on Wards Island in Manhattan — has gone all but unnoticed for decades, despite having held some of the city’s most notorious criminals, including serial killers and cannibals like Daniel Rakowitz, the so-called Butcher of Tompkins Square Park. (Correal, 12/13)

ProPublica and Chicago Tribune: A 7-Year-Old Complained About A Scary Office At School. This Is The Video His Parents Saw — A Month Later. - This week, ProPublica Illinois and the Chicago Tribune co-published an investigation about Gages Lake School, a therapeutic day school in Lake County for students in kindergarten through fifth grade with emotional and behavioral disabilities. It is our latest story in “The Quiet Rooms,” an investigation into the way schools across Illinois have used — and often misused — seclusion. Over the 15-month period reporters examined, Gages Lake used seclusion more than almost any other Illinois school included in the analysis. We also published a video, based on surveillance footage from Gages Lake, of a 7-year-old boy, Staley Sandy-Ester, who was routinely put in the school’s seclusion rooms last spring. (Cohen and Smith Richards, 12/13)

Kaiser Health News: San Francisco Hopes To Improve Care For People With Mental Illness Living On Streets - San Francisco Mayor London Breed has promised to tackle her city’s homelessness crisis, a vexing situation involving drug abuse and mental illness that is compounded by the city’s high housing costs. Breed has asked Dr. Anton Nigusse Bland, most recently the medical director for psychiatric emergency services at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital, to help solve the problem. In March, she appointed him to the newly created position of director of mental health reform. His main role is to help the city improve its mental health and addiction treatment for people experiencing homelessness. (Krans, 12/13)

The Oregonian: Fatal Portland Police Shooting Highlights Failures Of Mental Health System, Chief Says - Prior to being shot and killed by Portland officers on Sunday, Koben Henriksen had several recent encounters with local police, all of which ended without police force and with Henriksen in a medical facility. On Thursday, four days after Henriksen’s death, Portland police released information describing prior encounters with the Portland man, noting that his death highlights failures in Portland’s mental health system. (Ramakrishnan, 12/12)

Boston Globe: We’re Desperately Short Of Psych Beds. We Could Fix That — If We Wanted To - Though several Boston hospitals have their own psychiatric units, none has enough beds to take everyone who comes in through its emergency department. Because of low reimbursement for mental health care, hospitals lose money on psychiatric services. As a result, they tend to have fewer psychiatric beds than medical and surgical beds. (Garrett Johnson, 12/12)

Congress Weighs Renewal Of Program That Moves People Out Of Institutions - After years in limbo, advocates say a deal is in the works to permanently renew a popular federal program that moves people with disabilities from institutions to the community. Read More >
Nation Experiencing Severe Shortage Of Autism Therapists - Most states don't have nearly enough therapists trained to meet the needs of young people with autism, according to a first-ever review of the availability of ABA providers. Read More >

Teen With Asperger's Named Time Person Of The Year - Greta Thunberg, who has Asperger's syndrome and emerged as the face of the fight against climate change, is the youngest person ever selected to be Time magazine's Person of the Year. Read More >

Campaign Highlights Power Of People With Disabilities - Rather than focus on alarming imagery, a new awareness campaign against abuse and neglect of people with disabilities is emphasizing humanity, not helplessness. Read More >

The Associated Press: As Newtown Students Grow Up, Some Turn To Activism - They were - children themselves when they lost siblings, friends, and schoolmates in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. Too young to comprehend the massacre, they spent years in shock and denial. Seven years later, some young people in Newtown, still struggling with the trauma, are emerging as new voices for school safety and gun violence prevention. The activism, they say, has been a way to turn something horrific into something positive. (Collins, 12/11)

Iowa Public Radio: Questions Remain Over Decline In Use Of Iowa's Family Planning Program - Public officials say they're not sure why there has been a sharp decline in the number of people in Iowa using a state family planning program. According to a Department of Human Services report presented at a council meeting on Wednesday, 1,502 people used the program in 2018, a sharp drop from nearly 5,857 in 2017. (Krebs, 12/11)

The Associated Press: Fewer Kids Report Sex Abuse In US Juvenile Detention Centers - A new federal report has found the number of kids who say they have been sexually victimized in juvenile detention centers has dropped across the U.S. compared with past years. But remarkably high rates of sexual abuse persist in 12 facilities stretching from Oregon to Florida, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics report released Wednesday. The report analyzed data collected during more than 6,000 anonymous interviews last year at nearly 330 juvenile detention facilities. (12/11)

NPR: In Construction, Suicide Prevention Becomes Part Of The Toolbox - It has been five years, but the memory still haunts construction superintendent Michelle Brown. A co-worker ended his workday by giving away his personal cache of hand tools to his colleagues. It was a generous but odd gesture; no one intending to return to work would do such a thing. The man went home and killed himself. He was found shortly afterward by co-workers who belatedly realized the significance of his gifts. (Noguchi, 12/12)

MPR: Minnesota Cops Rethink How To Respond To Suicide Calls - Law enforcement leaders from across the state gathered in Bloomington Wednesday to talk about how best to respond to people threatening to kill themselves. Some police departments around the country have shifted how they respond to suicide calls, said Andy Skoogman, executive director of the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association. (Collins, 12/11)

The New York Times: ‘They Saw Him Hanging And Did Nothing’: A Teen’s Agony In Rikers - Nicholas Feliciano was hauled into a holding pen at Rikers Island on the night before Thanksgiving, after a brawl broke out among detainees at the jail. His lip had been gashed and his friend, Alfonso Martinez, had been stabbed. As Mr. Martinez was being taken to an infirmary, he recalled his friend saying, “If they separate us, I’m going to kill myself.” It was no idle threat. Mr. Feliciano, 18, had tried to take his own life several times before, most recently at a juvenile detention center, his grandmother, Madeline Feliciano, said. (Ransom and Sandoval, 12/12)

The Advocate: At Acadia Jail: No Mental Health Care, Botched Watch Logs And Two Suicides In Six Weeks - The jail has no mental health program, which is required under voluntary accreditation standards issued by the American Correctional Association and the National Commission on Correctional Health Care. The jail does not seek accreditation. Nor is there any record of either suicide resulting in a review of policies and procedures aimed at preventing another one. (Myers, 12/11)
ProPublica/Chicago Tribune: 'None Of The Children At The School Are Safe' - Since mid-May, DCFS has opened a total of 21 abuse investigations involving students at Gages Lake. Citing evidence from surveillance video, agency reports describe workers grabbing children by the wrists, shoving them into walls and throwing them to the ground in a cluster of four seclusion spaces — some with lockable doors, others open — that the school calls “the office.” Two aides at the center of the investigations resigned from the school. One of them is facing criminal charges; Lake County prosecutors allege he used excessive force on students. (Cohen and Richards, 12/12)

Iowa Public Radio: Reynolds: University Of Iowa Doctors Will Review Treatment At Glenwood Center - Physicians from the University of Iowa will go to the Glenwood Resource Center to review residents’ health and their treatment charts, according to Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds. The U.S. Department of Justice is investigating allegations of mistreatment at the center operated by the Department of Human Services, which cares for Iowans with intellectual disabilities. (Gerlock, 12/11)

Urban Institute: New Data Show About 1 In 10 Adults Turns To Charitable Food Assistance - This holiday season, many people will donate money, food, or time to a local food bank or soup kitchen. Yet how much do we know about the individuals and families who use charitable food assistance? New data from the Urban Institute’s Well-Being and Basic Needs Survey (WBNS) reveal that more Americans than previously estimated turn to charitable food services to feed their families. As we discuss in our new brief, about 1 in 10 adults (10.3 percent) who were surveyed as part of the December 2018 WBNS said they or someone in their household received charitable food assistance in the 30 days before being surveyed. (Waxman, Joo and Gonzalez, 12/11)

Modern Healthcare: Lacking Specialist Access Drives Health Disparities - Primary care is not sufficient for residents in rural communities with complex chronic conditions, according to new research that revealed a lack of access to specialists has driven up mortality rates and preventable hospitalizations. Medicare beneficiaries who lived in rural areas had a 40% higher preventable hospitalization rate and a 23% higher mortality rate compared with their urban peers, according to a new study published in Health Affairs. (Kacik, 12/3)

Harris Co. Program Lowers Jail Costs, Population but Cuts out Punishment - KHOU—Texas

Maltreated Children More Likely to Be Juvenile Offenders - News Medical—National

Mass. Has the First Jail in the Country That’s Also a Licensed Methadone Treatment Provider - WBUR—Massachusetts

Miami-Dade County Builds Center for Mental Health and Recovery - NACo County News—Florida

Del. Police Add Behavioral Health Unit to Answer Addiction, Mental Health Needs - WHYY—Delaware

Grants Help People in Jail with Mental Illness, Substance Abuse Disorders - Chinook Observer—Washington

Preventing Youth Homelessness: Partnerships between Homelessness Services and Juvenile Justice Systems - United State Interagency Council on Homelessness—California and Minnesota

Searching for New Ways to Keep Hawaii’s Mentally Ill out of Jails and ERs - Honolulu Civil Beat—Hawaii

‘It’s a Make-A-Plan-And-Start-Doing-It Initiative’ Medication to Treat Opioid Use Disorder: Jails Expand - Arnold Ventures—National

How the Juvenile Justice System Is Failing Girls - YR Media—National

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Bp Magazine - Actor Chyler Leigh Opens Up about Living with Bipolar through Her Partnership with "Be Vocal: Speak Up for Mental Health" - Read more >>
ProPublica/Boston Globe: The Law Says She Should Have Been Protected From Birth. Instead, She Was Left In The Care Of Her Drug-Addicted Mother, Who Killed Her. The adults in her life began failing Jasmine Irwin before she ever left the hospital. Born severely underweight — just 4 pounds, 3 ounces — to a mother with a history of dealing and abusing methamphetamine, Jasmine might have been exposed to drugs in the womb, doctors believed, which should have jump-started intensive efforts to keep her safe. But hospital records show staff never followed up, failing to conduct drug tests on the baby or her mother, Tami Mann, before letting Mann take Jasmine home to the family's trailer in this small town north of the state capital. (Palmer and Huseman, 12/13)

ProPublica/Boston Globe: The Price Of America’s Inability To Track Child Deaths From Abuse And Neglect? Sometimes, More Lives, Experts have long suspected that the United States badly undercounts the number of children who die from abuse and neglect. The voluntary reporting system relied on for decades may be off by at least 200%, they say, missing thousands of fatalities. In 2012, Congress moved to make information about the deaths more accessible to the public by requiring states to release detailed reports on child fatalities and near-fatalities. But when The Boston Globe and ProPublica set out to collect these reports, it turned into a frustrating, three-year slog through child welfare offices from Maine to Hawaii. (Huseman, Palmer and Schroering, 12/13)

ProPublica/Boston Globe: Nobody Knows How Many Kids Die From Maltreatment And Abuse In The U.S., In 2016, ProPublica and The Boston Globe requested records for every child who died from child abuse between 2011 and 2015. We got around 7,000 records in response, a number that’s already slightly higher and much more detailed than the information available to the public from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System — the main source of this data since the 1980s — over the same period. But experts agree that it’s still a substantial undercount and that child fatalities may be three times higher. (Fung and Huseman, 12/13)

Kansas City Star: Why Do Former US Foster Children Often Become Homeless? - Every year, roughly 20 percent of the young adults who age out of foster care in America — more than 4,000 — immediately become homeless, studies show. And thousands more — rising to as much as 40 percent in some parts of the country — are homeless within four years of aging out. (Bauer and Thomas, 12/15)

Kansas City Star: Foster Kids Have Low High School & College Graduation Rates - The Star spent the past year examining the long-term outcomes for kids who age out of foster care. It found that many will end up homeless, jobless and in prison because, in part, they were shortchanged on education. Shuffled from home to home, often sent outside their original school districts, they fall behind early and don’t catch up. In every pocket of the nation, the graduation rates for foster children are significantly lower than for all other “special population groups,” including homeless students and those with disabilities. (Bauer, 12/15)

NPR: Is Social Anxiety Keeping You From Parties? Here's How To Cope - "If I say the word 'circus,' it means I'm ready to leave the party." That's what Angie Ebba, 39, of Portland, Ore., tells close friends when she's at a holiday soiree. It might sound strange, but coming up with a code word is one way Ebba tames her social anxiety. "If I need to leave, having a word I can slip into conversation is a discreet way to let my friends know," Ebba explains. (Fraga, 12/14)

USA Today: Weed And Psychosis: Does High THC Lead To Suicide, Schizophrenia? - Early one morning in March, Madison McIntosh showed up on his day off at the Scottsdale, Arizona, driving range and restaurant where he worked. The 24-year-old sat in his car until the place opened, then wandered around all day, alternating between gibberish and talk of suicide as co-workers tried to keep him away from customers. When he was still there 12 hours later, the manager contacted McIntosh's father in Las Vegas, who called police and rallied other family members states away to converge at the young man's side. (Hughes, Innes and O'Donnell, 12/15)
The Advocate: Oceans Mental Health Hospital Gets $1.4M Grant Approved - Baton Rouge Metro Council unanimously approved an economic incentive agreement with a Plano-based mental health provider for $1.4 million as a grant in exchange for a new niche psychiatric hospital in the parish. The Oceans Behavioral Health Care hospital is slated to be built at Howell Place near Harding Boulevard and Interstate 110. (Mosbrucker, 12/13)

Columbus Dispatch: Athens Rehabilitation Center Helps People Transition From Psychiatric Hospitals To Home - Andrew Green was being released from Summit Behavioral Healthcare in Cincinnati in May, but he wasn’t quite ready to go to his Athens County home. So he checked into the Adam-Amanda Mental Health Rehabilitation Center in Athens, the only clinic in the state designed specifically for people being discharged from psychiatric hospitals who could still use a little inpatient care. ...Too often, people who aren’t ready to function without the support of inpatient care end up back in the hospital, on the streets, in prison or dead, mental health experts say. And the suicide rate for individuals leaving a psychiatric hospital within the first 90 days after they’ve been released is 14 times higher than the general population, said Margaret Sterling, clinical coordinator for the Adam-Amanda Mental Health Rehabilitation Center. (Henry, 12/16)

The Oregonian: Wheeler, Multnomah County Point Fingers After Portland Police Shoot Mentally Ill Man - A debate about the state of Multnomah County’s mental health services raged on Friday as politicians traded criticisms over who should take responsibility for the death of a homeless man with mental illness killed by Portland police near Mall 205. Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said he agreed with comments made the day before by Police Chief Danielle Outlaw that systemic failures in the county’s services played a key role in Koben Henriksen’s death at the hands of police. (Goodykoontz, 12/13)

The CT Mirror: Most OB-GYN Practices Fall Short In Caring For Women With Disabilities - An estimated 207,100 female residents of Connecticut have at least one disability, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. The disabilities range from barely noticeable to those that render women unable to see, speak, move freely, or make sound decisions. But no matter the type of disability, all women need access to gynecological health care. (Heubeck, 12/15)

The Associated Press: Inmate’s Suicide Shows Need For Reforms, Advocates Say - The final two months of Cachin Anderson’s life in New York’s prison system were filled with warnings he was a man in crisis. He climbed on a sink and dove headfirst at the floor, saying he “wanted to end it and go home.” He urinated on guards. He hurled a can at one corrections officer and punched another in the face, knocking him out. (12/15)

The Oregonian: Oregon’s Mental Health System Is Broken. This Reformer Thinks He Can Fix It - Oregon’s new mental health chief Steve Allen is used to harsh winters as a long-time resident of Wisconsin and Minnesota, but has yet to experience Oregon’s damp and dangerous cold. ...For the past several years, Oregon has had the highest rate of people with mental illness in the country – one in four. It is also one of the worst at providing access to treatment and keeping people in care. The system has been so troubled that the U.S. Department of Justice has been demanding reform for more than a decade. The Oregon Health Authority’s director has been open about some of the mental health system’s persistent failures. (Harbarger, 12/14)

KQED: In The Expensive Bay Area, Artists Navigate Unique Mental Health Challenges - Grueling tour schedules, financial ups and downs, performance anxiety, fear of failure—musicians face unique job pressures that can make them more prone to mental illness. A 2019 survey of nearly 1,500 independent musicians conducted by music distributor Record Union found that 73 percent of respondents struggled with anxiety and depression, and 33 percent grappled with panic attacks. (Fraga, 12/12)

Des Moines Register: Expand Medicare To Cover Cost Of Long-Term Care: It’s A Crisis - You work hard all your life, save some money and look forward to retirement. Maybe you’ll take up a new hobby, volunteer or just putter around the yard. Then you have a massive stroke. Or a serious car accident. Or are diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. All your plans change. Instead of taking care of grandchildren, you need a caregiver. Instead of bicycling with your wife, she’s pushing your wheelchair. The money saved for travel will be needed to pay for long-term care. (12/12)
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Pediatricians Get New Guidance On Autism - For the first time in over a decade, the nation's pediatricians are getting updated clinical recommendations on treating children with autism. Read More >

Transportation Department Looks To Increase Airline Accessibility - Airlines would be required to improve accessibility for travelers with disabilities on more of their planes under a new federal proposal. Read More >

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Why Are Kids Different at Home and at School? - Some hold it together at school, only to lose it at home. Others stress out in the classroom. READ MORE ▶

Why Self-Care Is Essential to Parenting - Caring for children with intense needs can take an emotional (and physical) toll on parents. - READ MORE ▶

*The New York Times: Spending Deal To Avert Shutdown Carries Key Priorities For Both Parties* - Lawmakers on Monday unveiled a dozen bills that would allocate $1.4 trillion in federal spending for the remainder of the fiscal year to prevent the government from shutting down at midnight on Friday. The legislation, divided into two packages, provides funding for all federal agencies and departments and for extending a number of community and health programs. The measures drew bipartisan support after months of gridlock, and gave members of each party something to brag about. (Cochrane, 12/16)

*The Associated Press: Spending Deal Would End Two-Decade Freeze On Gun Research* - A bipartisan deal on a government spending bill would for the first time in two decades provide money for federal research on gun safety. A law adopted in the 1990's has effectively blocked such research and prohibits federal agencies from engaging in advocacy on gun-related issues. The spending bill, set for a House vote as soon as Tuesday, would provide $25 million for gun violence research, divided evenly between the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (12/16)

*NBC News: Millions For Gun Safety Research Approved By Congress For First Time In Decades* - The announcement "is a huge victory in our nation's commitment to addressing and solving the gun violence epidemic," said Christian Heyne, vice president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. "Students graduating from college this spring have never lived in a United States where the federal government studied this issue. That ends today." (Moe and Gregorian, 12/16)
Kaiser Health News: Surprising Swings In Momentum For Legislation On Surprise Medical Bills - After months of hearings and negotiations, millions of dollars in attack ads, full-court press lobbying efforts and countless rounds of negotiations, Congress appeared to be moving toward a solution to the nation’s surprise medical bill problem. Sort of. Surprise bills, the often-exorbitant medical bills that come when a patient doesn’t realize they've been seen by a provider outside their insurance network, have in recent months been viewed as public enemy No. 1 on Capitol Hill. (Bluth, 12/17)

Modern Healthcare: Beaumont Health, Universal Health Services Break Ground On Mental Health Hospital - Beaumont Health and Universal Health Services broke ground on a new mental health hospital in Dearborn, Mich., the not-for-profit and for-profit health systems announced Monday. Construction is slated to start in early 2020 on the $40 million, 150-bed hospital that will double Beaumont's inpatient mental health capacity. The 100,000-square-foot facility, which includes substance use disorder treatment and an integrated assessment and referral center, will open by mid-2021. (Kacik, 12/16)

Los Angeles Times: After Fatal School Shootings, Antidepressant Use Spikes Among Student Survivors - The children who experience a school shooting but live to see their parents and friends again are often called survivors. But by at least one measure of mental health, they too are among a gunman’s victims, new research finds. In the two years after a fatal school shooting, the rate at which antidepressants were prescribed to children and teens rose by 21% within a tight ring around the affected school. The increase in antidepressants prescribed to kids grew more — to nearly 25% — three years after a school shooting, suggesting that survivors’ depression lingers long after the incident has begun to fade from a community’s memory. (Healy, 12/16)

The Associated Press: Sexual Arousal Study Investigated At Iowa Home For Disabled Few details are being released about an investigation conducted by civil rights officials from the U.S. Department of Justice into possible human experiments focused on sexual arousal at a state-run Iowa institution for disabled residents, but Gov. Kim Reynolds recently acknowledged that the state’s response to long-term issues at Glenwood Resource Center was inadequate. (12/16)

KQED: Kaiser Mental Health Therapists Strike Again Over Long Wait Times - Four thousand mental health clinicians are walking off their jobs at Kaiser Permanente today, affecting care at more than 100 clinics across the state. The week-long strike is the second in a year, as the workers’ union and Kaiser management remain deadlocked on a new contract. Therapists’ main complaint is long wait times for patients. While industry best practice is to see clients every one to two weeks, the majority of Kaiser clinicians say their patients with anxiety and depression are forced to wait four to eight weeks between appointments. (Dembosky, 12/16)

Kaiser Health News: Despite Quick Fixes, Kaiser Permanente Mental Health Care Still Lags - After years of state sanctions and fines, Kaiser Permanente claims it has gone a long way toward improving its mental health care. The national managed-care giant — California’s largest insurer with 9 million members — touts more than 1,200 therapist hires since 2016, improved patient access to appointments and an expanded training program for mental health professionals. Regulators at California’s Department of Managed Health Care report that Kaiser is meeting the benchmarks laid out in a 2017 settlement agreement that resulted from two years of negotiations. (Gold, 12/17)
**Los Angeles Times: Will L.A. Finally House Homeless Instead Of Shooing Them Away?** - The U.S. Supreme Court did the right thing Monday when it refused to reconsider an appeals court decision that homeless people may not be prosecuted for sleeping on public property if there is no other shelter available. In Martin vs. City of Boise, six homeless people had challenged that city's enforcement of ordinances prohibiting sleeping or camping on public property at night. (12/17)

**Fox News: NY Times Columnist Is Wrong About Depression And Suicide Rates In Red States** - Paul Krugman of The New York Times has posited a theory: Red states cause depression and suicide. In a column titled "America's Red State Death Trip," Krugman wrote: "In 1990, today's red and blue states had almost the same life expectancy. Since then, however, life expectancy in Clinton states has risen more or less in line with other advanced countries, compared with almost no gain in Trump country. At this point, blue-state residents can expect to live more than four years longer than their red-state counterparts." On this basis, Krugman blasts Attorney General William Barr, who suggested this year that militant secularism lies behind rising mortality in the United States. Instead, Krugman suggested that "these evils are concentrated in states that voted for Trump, and have largely bypassed the more secular blue states." (Ben Shapiro, 12/15)

**The New York Times: Young Black People Are Killing Themselves** - I recently took a panicked call from a friend who’d just received a text from his 22-year-old brother that sounded like a suicide note. “Thank you for all that you’ve done to try to help me,” it read. “Nothing has gone right for me in life. I don’t have a job, any friends or a girlfriend. I hate being alone all the time. I feel like a failure. You and everybody else would be better off without me.” My friend didn’t know what to do, so he called me because I’m a clinical psychologist. (Inger E. Burnett-Zeigler, 12/16)

**The Hill: Advocates Hopeful Gun Violence Research Funding Will Lead To Prevention** - Doctors and advocates are hopeful that new funding for federal agencies to study gun violence will prove to be the first step in preventing mass shootings, suicides and other firearm deaths. For the first time in 23 years, a government spending bill will set aside funds — in this case, $25 million — for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) to collect data on what the American Medical Association has called a public health crisis. (Hellmann, 12/18)

**The Associated Press: Most US Opioid Overdose Deaths Accidental, 4% Are Suicide** - Accidental overdoses cause 90% of all U.S. opioid-related deaths while suicides account for far fewer of these fatalities than previously thought, a new analysis published Tuesday suggests. Rising use of heroin and illicit, highly potent synthetic opioids including fentanyl has likely contributed to the unintentional death rate, which surged nine-fold between 2000 and 2017, the researchers said. Opioid suicides also went up during that time but their share of all opioid-related deaths shrank. (12/17)

**KCUR: Alcohol Misuse And Gun Violence: What We Know** - While the relationship between gun violence and mental health get lots of attention, numerous studies have established a much stronger link between excessive alcohol consumption and gun violence. While politicians and media give a lot of attention to mental health in relation to gun violence, such a link has not been established in research. In fact, roughly 3 to 5% of violent crime is thought to be caused by people with a mental illness. (Dunn, 12/17)

**San Francisco Chronicle: SF Mayor Orders Budget Cuts As City Takes On Homelessness, Mental Illness** - Slowing revenue growth and rising costs have prompted San Francisco Mayor London Breed to mandate belt-tightening in an effort to stave off a budget deficit as the city steps up spending on homelessness and mental health. Breed issued instructions Monday calling on city departments to find ways to shrink their budgets by 3.5% in each of the next two fiscal years to deal with a projected $420 million budget shortfall over those fiscal years. (Fracassa, 12/17)

**Columbus Dispatch: DeWine Tours Columbus Psychiatric Hospital As He Pushes Strong Ohio Bill** - In an effort to re-evaluate Ohio’s mental health care system, Gov. Mike DeWine on Tuesday visited a state psychiatric hospital on the West Side. Twin Valley Behavioral Healthcare on West Broad Street hosted DeWine and Lori Criss, director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. ..DeWine’s decision to review Ohio’s six psychiatric facilities came in the wake of the Aug. 4 mass shooting in Dayton’s Oregon District, where a gunman killed nine people in around 30 seconds. (Filby, 12/17)
The Oregonian: Oregon State Hospital Halts Civil Admissions - The Oregon State Hospital, overburdened with patients from the criminal justice system, won’t accept people with a mental illness who are a danger to themselves or others for at least 10 days, state health officials said Monday. Patients who haven’t been charged with a crime but need treatment at the state hospital will have to wait in community hospitals until beds become available, no earlier than Dec. 27, according to a letter the Oregon Health Authority sent to advocacy and health care groups. (Zarkhin, 12/17)

North Carolina Health News: After NC Prison Officers Die, Solitary Use Rises - The year after five prison officers were killed by inmates in 2017, the state prison system almost doubled the number of inmates with mental illness held in solitary confinement. Previously, North Carolina’s prison system made significant strides to reduce the number of prisoners with mental illness who are held in isolation for up to 23 hours a day. Prison officials were also meeting regularly with mental health advocates. (Knopf, 12/18)

The Baltimore Sun: Gardening Therapy Is Growing At This Maryland Mental Health Hospital — And In Corrections Systems Nationwide - Research shows that just being around plants can make people feel good, and mental health providers now believe working with greenery specifically offers benefits such as stress relief, anxiety reduction and aggression control. There is growing evidence that learning to care for plants also can boost self-esteem while providing work experience. Perkins isn’t a prison; rather it’s a hospital run by the Maryland Department of Health. It offers mental evaluations to assess detainees’ fitness for trial or treatment after they are found not criminally responsible, the state’s version of an insanity defense. The hospital has gotten some of the state’s toughest cases. (Cohn, 12/17)

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The Associated Press: Court: Part Of 'Obamacare' Invalid, More Review Needed - The 2-1 ruling handed down by a panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans means the ultimate fate of the rest of the Affordable Care Act including such popular provisions as protections for those with pre-existing conditions, Medicaid expansion and the ability for children under the age of 26 to remain on their parents’ insurance remains unclear. The panel agreed with Texas-based U.S. District Judge Reed O’Connor’s 2018 finding that the law’s insurance requirement, the so-called “individual mandate,” was rendered unconstitutional when Congress, in 2017, reduced a tax on people without insurance to zero. (Santana, Sherman and Alonso-Zaldivar, 12/18)

The Washington Post: Appeals Court Rules ACA’s Individual Mandate Unconstitutional; Lower Court To Decide Whether Rest Of Law Can Stand Without It - The 5th Circuit decision almost certainly will bring the health-care law before the Supreme Court for a third time, and California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, leading a coalition of his Democratic counterparts fighting to preserve the law, said Wednesday night that he was prepared to ask the high court to take the case before the lower court rules again. But by sending a thorny legal question back to the Texas jurist who already has held the law unconstitutional, the judges may effectively slow the progress of the case, so that the high court does not take it during its current term and decide it before the November elections. (Goldstein, 12/18)

The Hill: California To Appeal ObamaCare Ruling To Supreme Court - “The best way to get certainty is to go to the Supreme Court,” said Becerra, who is leading a coalition of Democratic attorneys general in defending the law. “We will move swiftly to challenge this decision and seek certification because this could mean the difference between life and death for so many Americans and their families,” he added. (Hellmann, 12/18)

The Hill: Grassley Accuses McConnell Of Blocking Progress On Drug Pricing Bill - Senate Finance Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (Iowa) on Wednesday accused Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (Ky.) of blocking progress on his bill to lower drug prices, escalating tensions between two powerful GOP senators. Asked why more Republican senators have not signed on to his bill to lower drug prices, Grassley told reporters, “Because McConnell’s asked them not to.” (Sullivan, 12/18)
Kaiser Health News: ‘An Arm And A Leg’: Reporter Says ‘Shame’ Spurred Hospital To Cancel Debt For Thousands - Multiple journalists have spotlighted huge medical bills that have left patients swimming in medical debt. After those stories were made public, in many cases health providers waived the bill or canceled the debt. Sadly, there are a lot of crazy-high medical bill stories out there — and not nearly enough journalists to go around. But in Memphis, Tenn., one journalist’s reporting produced a scaled-up response. (Weissmann, 12/19)

ProPublica: A Chicago Psychiatric Hospital Is Under Fire After Child Abuse Allegations. Again. - A federal lawsuit filed Wednesday by the Cook County public guardian alleged that children as young as 7 were sexually abused, while others were injected with sedatives to control them and physically attacked, at a Chicago psychiatric hospital. Child welfare officials, meanwhile, allegedly worked with the hospital to cover up the abuse. Charles Golbert, the Cook County public guardian, filed the lawsuit on behalf of seven children who are in the care of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and who had been involuntarily admitted to Chicago Lakeshore Hospital in 2017 and 2018. (Eldeib, 12/18)

The Associated Press: Lawsuit: Children In State Care Abused At Chicago Hospital - Children as young as 7 were subject to or witnessed sexual abuse by staff and peers, according to the lawsuit. When children reported the abuse, they were further victimized, the complaint said. One was allegedly given a powerful sedative when it wasn't necessary. “Instead of being placed in a safe environment where they could focus on their treatment, each plaintiff found himself or herself in a hospital of horrors where they were subjected to sexual, physical and emotional abuse and otherwise not properly supervised or monitored,” the lawsuit said. (12/18)

The Oregonian: Children In Foster Care Need Quick Access To Mental Health Care - A recent OPB report about Oregon’s foster care system shed light on the extraordinary actions of child welfare officials within the Oregon Department of Human Services. The state agency not only sent hundreds of children in our foster care system to out-of-state facilities run by a private, for-profit company, but it also ceded any responsibility for them as well. Oregon child welfare officials’ lack of oversight, lack of scrutiny, and lack of even basic tracking of the children placed in those facilities and their well-being are astonishing. (Jake Cornett, 12/18)

The CT Mirror: CT, Other Democratic States, To Ask Supreme Court To Reverse Obamacare Ruling - Connecticut Attorney General William Tong on Thursday said he will join other “blue” states in appealing a federal court’s decision that puts the future of the Affordable Care Act in jeopardy. “We will continue our fight against the attack on our nation’s healthcare system and the millions of Americans who have gained coverage and quality healthcare under the Affordable Care Act,” Tong said. The decision of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals puts at risk health care coverage for 250,000 Connecticut residents who have benefited from the ACA’s expansion of Medicaid. (Radelat and Carlesso, 12/19)

Stateline: New Suicide Prevention Number Could Lead To Surge In Calls - Suicide rates in the United States have climbed steadily over the past two decades, contributing, along with drug overdoses, to a decline in the average U.S. life expectancy for the third year in a row. The demographers who first identified this trend have called it “deaths of despair.” In response, Congress enacted the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018, to encourage more people to seek help. It directed the Federal Communications Commission to study the feasibility of creating a three-digit suicide hotline number, like 9-1-1, that more people could remember. (Vestal, 12/20)

The New York Times: What It Took For A Fox News Psychiatrist To Finally Lose His License - Late in 2009, a 28-year-old woman not long out of graduate school found herself in a stressful job at a Bronx hospital and decided it would be useful to talk to someone. Searching online, she came across the name of a psychiatrist, Keith Ablow. Dr. Ablow was familiar to her from his writing, both his journalism and the best-selling thrillers he turned out — “Denial,” “Projection,” “Compulsion,” “Murder Suicide.” She had read all of those, as well as “Psychopath,” a book about a psychiatrist who prods the interior lives of strangers only to kill them, baroquely obscuring the distinction between patient and victim. (Bellafante, 12/20)
January 2020 Additional Mental Health Related Articles from Around the Nation

**ProPublica/Chicago Tribune: Schools Aren’t Supposed To Forcibly Restrain Children As Punishment. In Illinois, It Happened Repeatedly.** - The adults gathered in a hotel ballroom in Peoria — school employees, caregivers, health care workers — fell silent as their instructor, a muscled and tattooed mixed martial arts fighter, stared at them to demand attention. Over five days of training, the participants would learn how to physically control children who pose a danger to themselves or others. But first, Zac Barry focused on what he views as the most important lesson. (Richards, Cohen and Chavis, 12/20)

**CalMatters: Mental Health Care Outcry Targets Kaiser — And State Regulators** - The state is facing mounting pressure to enforce parity laws that are supposed to guarantee equal care for physical and mental health issues — with a spotlight this week on mental health care problems at health giant Kaiser Permanente. This week, Kaiser mental health clinicians are on a five-day strike, protesting long patient wait times and strenuous working conditions for providers. They say children and adults with serious mental health needs, including schizophrenia, anxiety and severe depression, are often waiting 6 to 8 weeks — sometimes longer — to see a therapist. And they contend that Kaiser’s behavioral health services have in many ways worsened in recent years, despite being under a corrective plan overseen by the state Department of Managed Health Care. (Wiener, 12/18)

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**The Washington Post: Rise In U.S. Homelessness Driven By A Surge In California, HUD Says** - A decline in homelessness in 29 states, as well as the District of Columbia, was offset by a spike in California of 21,000 people, or 16.4 percent, the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced Friday — evidence that homelessness in the nation’s most populous state is “at a crisis level and needs to be addressed by local and state leaders with crisis-like urgency,” HUD Secretary Ben Carson said in a statement. California leaders and advocacy groups share federal officials’ alarm over the state’s outsize role in that trend. But there’s significant disagreement over how to tackle the issue as the president singles out cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles as problems, clashing with a liberal state that often fights his policies. (Knowles, 12/21)

**The New York Times: Black, Homeless And Burdened By L.A.’s Legacy Of Racism** - Homelessness is Los Angeles’s defining crisis. Income inequality, a shortage of housing, failing mental health services and drug addiction all contribute to growing scenes of squalor across America’s second-largest city. The federal government recently estimated that a nearly 3 percent rise in homelessness nationwide this year was driven mostly by California. Yet it does not affect everyone equally. The historic displacement and fracturing of black communities in South Los Angeles have pushed black Angelenos like Mr. Wynn onto the streets at more than eight times the rate of other groups. In interviews with more than a dozen black men who are homeless in Los Angeles, the bitter inheritance of racism came up again and again. (Patel, Arango, Singhvi and Huang, 12/22)

**Texas Tribune: Homeless In Texas: Everything You Need To Know** - More than 25,000 Texans are experiencing homelessness. Their struggles to live without homes have received increased attention amid several recent debates over how best to address homelessness — and help people experiencing it. Gov. Greg Abbott and Austin Mayor Steve Adler have feuded over that city’s response to homelessness, and city officials are dealing with how to address homeless populations in their own regions. Meanwhile, President Donald Trump tapped the founding president of a shelter in San Antonio to lead the entity that coordinates with federal and local agencies to address homelessness on a national level. (Menchaca, 12/23)

**The Washington Post: ‘She’s Just OneMore Missing Voice’: D.C. Says 117 Homeless People Died Here This Year** - When Alice Carter died Wednesday after collapsing on a Northwest Washington street, there was no immediate outcry. She had slept on 17th Street north of Q Street for at least 15 years, an advocate said, a transgender woman struggling with addiction and mental-health issues. She recently secured housing through an assistance program, but it wasn’t enough to save her after a life led on the margins. (Moyer, 12/20)
Health News Florida: ‘We Always Need More Help’: Advocates For The Homeless Discuss South Florida’s Greatest Needs - On Friday, Miami will honor the lives of homeless people lost this year due to violence, drug use, and health complications at the National Homeless Persons’ Memorial Day. Homelessness remains a critical issue across South Florida, and the holidays are often seen as an opportunity for individuals to support those most in need. According to a 2018 report by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), more than 30,000 people experience homelessness on any given day in Florida. These include the elderly, veterans, and children. For the homeless, the holidays present tough challenges: finding a place to sleep, food, and clothes. (Martinez, 12/20)

Kansas City Star: US Foster Care Problems Lead Kids To Prison & Homelessness - He still has the last name of a woman who adopted him in grade school — then gave him back. From the time he was 3 until he turned 14, Dominic Williamson was bounced to 80 different foster homes. When he turned 18, he found himself alone and homeless, and resorting to a life of crime. Now, at 20, he has a home more permanent than any he’s ever known. The Hutchinson Correctional Facility in Kansas. (Bauer and Thomas, 12/15)

Houston Chronicle: Mental Health Match Helps More Than 500 Houston-Area Residents Find Help - In about five minutes, users can complete a anonymous five-part questionnaire with questions like whether you want to see an in-person or an online therapist and what you wish to discuss and work on. Then, you can select what approach of therapy you want to try, what cultural areas you want to look at or select from and how much you would be willing to pay so that you can find someone that you can forward. (Many therapists operate on a sliding scale, based on what clients can pay.) At the end of their questionnaire, users can see providers that have been matched up with them, complete with their pictures and a detailed profile of what they focus on and offer. All information on the website is completely anonymous, and the service for users is free. (The providers pay to be on the site.) At the end of the selection process, users do enter their email so that a therapist can contact them. (Maness, 12/20)

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