Pharmacy Choice

High-quality, Life-extending Cancer Care Still a Goal, Not a Reality for Patients Under Medicaid

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) released a Medicaid Reform Policy Statement, published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology. Read the full policy statement here. Michael Halpern, MD, PhD, MPH, an associate professor and chair of the public health policy and management section at the University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, is one of the co-authors.

The ASCO policy statement calls for major changes to Medicaid, the nation's safety net health insurance program for low-income Americans. With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid now provides health insurance coverage to 67.9 million Americans, many of whom will require – but not be able to access – high-quality cancer care. Read more

Health Day

CPR Phone Guidance Boosts Cardiac Arrest Survival, Study Finds

Talking bystanders through CPR methods for a cardiac emergency during a 911 call can significantly boost survival rates, a new study suggests. State researchers in Arizona examined the aggressive use of so-called pre-arrival telephone CPR guidelines – step-by-step dispatcher instructions on administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation before trained rescuers arrive – and found that it bumped survival of cardiac arrest patients from about 8 percent to more than 11 percent. Lead researcher Ben Bobrow,
MD, who is affiliated with the UA College of Medicine – Phoenix, among other roles, said the type of focused intervention studied in his home state – not only training telephone dispatchers but measuring bystander CPR outcomes and circling back to 911 centers with feedback – is not done uniformly on a national basis, despite American Heart Association (AHA) guidelines. Read more

Arizona Daily Star

UA-Banner Health Merger Due Jan. 31

University of Arizona President Ann Weaver Hart and UA Health Network CEO Michael Waldrum, MD, sent out memos Monday to tell employees the deal with Banner Health is set for Jan. 31. Banner Health is set to acquire the UA Health Network, which has 6,300 workers. “As we move closer to completing this merger, I am even more convinced that this new organization will transform health care in Arizona,” Dr. Waldrum wrote in his memo to employees. Read more

White Mountain Independent

Programs Aim to Move Med Students Toward Primary Care

Arizona suffers from a lack of primary care physicians to meet the need in many areas, particularly in rural and underserved parts of the state. According to a study by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (that also considered dentists and mental health professionals), only 53 percent of Arizona’s primary health-care needs are being met. To combat the problem, UA medical students held a Primary Care Week recently, offering speakers and events to promote the specialty of primary health care and address reservations students may have about entering the field. Read more

Outside Magazine

The Case for Ditching the Bike Helmet Isn’t What You’d Expect
Helmet advocates have been dealing with a PR crisis ever since a new study questioning the lids’ efficacy in preventing brain injuries received widespread attention this month. A recent helmet study, led by a trauma surgeon from the University of Arizona, Bellal Joseph, MD, and published in the European Journal of Trauma and Emergency Surgery, reviewed 709 cyclists who came through Joseph’s trauma center.

“Bicycle helmets protect against bruising and scratching,” Dr. Joseph concluded from examining the cyclists, but not against intra-cranial bleeding – the bleeding inside the skull that ultimately causes brain injury and death. The non-helmeted cyclists in the study were more likely to have a skull fracture, but not any more likely to have intra-cranial hemorrhage than cyclists who crashed while wearing a helmet. Read more