

By Dan Goldberg | 10/03/2017 05:43 AM EDT

TODAY IN HEALTH — Gov. Andrew Cuomo is in New York City and is scheduled to hold a press conference at 2 p.m. He is expected to address the Disproportionate Share Hospital funding cuts the state faces. This press conference was supposed to happen Monday but was postponed.

NURSING PROBLEMS — ProPublica [reports](#): "An audit released late last week by the New York state comptroller's office found the state's Education Department, which regulates nursing, failed to investigate top-priority complaints against nurses in the time allowed by law. It also found nurses' backgrounds were not adequately checked and that they were not properly monitored for criminal behavior after licensure. All of these findings confirm those in a ProPublica investigation into New York's nursing regulations [published in April of 2016](#)."

... The U.S. Office of the Inspector General released a similarly damning [report](#) regarding nursing home complaints. "As was the case with immediate jeopardy complaints, some States accounted for a higher number of late onsite investigations of high priority complaints than did others. Across all 5 years, Arizona, Maryland, New York, and Tennessee accounted for almost half of the high priority complaints not investigated onsite within 10 working days."

PREDICTIONS — In April, we asked readers to submit their favorite baseball team and a prediction of how many wins they'd have in 2017. Correct guesses would win swag. Unfortunately, no one correctly predicted his or her own team's success (or in my case, failure). Better luck next year and congrats to Bryan O'Malley, whose prediction that the Yankees would win 88 games was closest. The Yankees won 91.

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WATER QUALITY — The first meeting of a long-awaited water quality council tasked with setting new limits on contaminants in drinking water focused on the health effects and removal costs of 1,4-dioxane, a cancer-causing chemical that's been found on Long Island. The council has been directed to set limits for 1,4-dioxane; perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA; and perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS. Drinking water in Hoosick Falls was found to contain high levels of PFOA while PFOS was found in Newburgh's water. The discoveries and the public's outrage led to an increased focus on water quality in New York. The council meeting held Monday focused on 1,4-dioxane, while a future meeting in the Albany area is planned to discuss PFOA and PFOS. Read more from POLITICO New York's Marie French [here](#).

NOW WE KNOW — Here's one report that shows how some people just have their priorities all out of whack. A [survey found](#) that nearly one-third of Europeans are too busy at work to drink coffee. The survey also explained why people drink coffee: liking the taste (56 percent); to have

time to pause and rest while drinking or preparing coffee (40 percent); and to feel more alert or less tired (both 29 percent).

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU: This roundup is for you, so please tell us how we can make it even better. Send tips, news, ideas, calendar items, releases, promotions, job postings, birthdays, congratulations, criticisms and corrections to dgoldberg@politico.com.

SUFFOLK CLINIC CONFLICT — Financing for a \$5 million health clinic in Suffolk County is being held up over a potential conflict of interest as an executive of the company chosen to construct the facility is also on the board of directors for the company that will own the health center. The county's Economic Development Corp. deadlocked on whether to authorize tax-free bonds to help pay for the proposed Bay Shore clinic. Read more from Newsday [here](#).

EXPANSION — Chautauqua health center plans a \$4.6 million expansion, according to [Buffalo Business First](#).

OPINION — Risa Levine, an attorney, former infertility patient and board member at RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association, wrote an op-ed in the Albany Times-Union arguing that excluding IVF from insurance coverage in New York makes no sense. Read it [here](#).

A SECOND OPINION — Doug Wirth, president and chief executive of Amida Care, a special-needs health plan for people with chronic conditions, had a letter to the editor printed in The New York Times. The [letter](#) supports reducing barriers to pre-exposure prophylaxis. "Making those who inquire about pre-exposure prophylaxis feel uncomfortable and shamed will only hold us back."

PHARMA REPORT:

SPEEDING GENERICS — The Food and Drug Administration is considering steps it can take to combat branded pharmaceutical companies' actions that block generic market entry, commissioner Scott Gottlieb said Monday. The announcement comes as part of the FDA's Drug Competition Action Plan, which aims to make the generic approval process more efficient and get more generics to patients faster. Gottlieb did not specify which actions FDA is considering but said more information would come soon. "Among other things, we're actively looking at ways that we can forestall some of the so-called gaming tactics that branded companies engage in as a way to block generic entry," Gottlieb said at a public workshop on generic drugs. "We think there are additional steps we can take to address this practice. We'll have more to say on this very soon."

... Gottlieb also called high drug prices are "a public health concern that FDA should address." Read more in [The Wall Street Journal](#).

WHAT WE'RE READING:

CHIP IS LATEST CRISIS — States are scrambling to shore up the government health insurance program that covers nine million low-income kids after Congress failed to meet the

deadline to renew its funding over the weekend. A number of state officials are looking for ways to keep their programs afloat, hoping Congress will approve money for the federal Children's Health Insurance Program before they have to cut off coverage. Despite bipartisan agreement to continue the program, lawmakers missed a Sept. 30 deadline to renew funding. Many say they still have time to get money to states, despite progressive groups decrying over the weekend that Republicans allowed the program to "expire." While states won't run out of money immediately, at least 10 [will deplete funds](#) by the end of the year, according to the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. If Congress doesn't approve funding by then, some state officials say they expect to terminate enrollment in the beginning of next year or shift eligible kids to other government insurance programs with potentially less federal support. Read more from my D.C. colleagues [here](#).

NEW GUIDELINES — NPR [reports](#): "Health organizations are emphasizing that myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome is a serious long-term illness, not a psychological disorder, and that standard forms of exercise do not help. Instead, they're acknowledging that exercise can make the disease much worse unless doctors and patients are very careful."

BROKEN HEART DEVICES — Medicare ended up paying more than \$1.5 billion to replace faulty heart devices, Kaiser Health News' Fred Schulte and Christina Jewett write in the New York Times. [More here](#).

NOBEL PRIZE — STAT [reports](#): "The 2017 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine was awarded on Monday morning to Jeffrey Hall, Michael Rosbash, and Michael Young for their discoveries of the molecular underpinnings of the circadian rhythms that help organisms adapt to our 24-hour days."

WHAT'S IN A NAME? — Turns out the Pharma Bro isn't the only Martin Shkreli caught in the long arm of the law. A Brooklyn man of the same name allegedly "took part in an \$800,000 money-laundering scheme that imported drugs and weapons, including an M80 Zolja anti-tank rocket launcher and 15 AK-47s from Kosovo," according to the [New York Post](#).

TODAY'S TIP — Comes from Northwell Health's Dr. Jon Morgenstern, who treats substance use disorders, and shares [five things you need to know](#).

STUDY THIS:

CALIFORNIA STUDY — A [study in Health Affairs](#) examined the effects Medicaid expansion had on payday loans. "The early Medicaid expansion was associated with an 11 percent reduction in the number of loans taken out each month. It also reduced the number of unique borrowers each month and the amount of payday loan debt. We were unable to determine precisely how and for whom the expansion reduced payday borrowing, since to our knowledge, no data exist that directly link payday lending to insurance status. Nonetheless, our results suggest that Medicaid reduced the demand for high-interest loans and improved the financial health of American families."

MS PROGRESS — People with multiple sclerosis who underwent a form of electrical brain stimulation were less fatigued, a common symptom of the disease, according to research from the Multiple Sclerosis Comprehensive Care Center at NYU Langone Health. The work was published in the [Multiple Sclerosis Journal](#). "Fatigue is one of the most common symptoms affecting quality of life for MS patients and practitioners have lacked good treatment options," senior study author Dr. [Lauren Krupp](#), the Nancy Glickenhau Pier Professor of Pediatric Neuropsychiatry at NYU School of Medicine and director of the Multiple Sclerosis Comprehensive Care Center at NYU Langone Health, said in a press release. "However, the positive results from our study suggest that tDCS might offer benefit in fatigue reduction. The next step is to see if these benefits can be replicated and sustained in larger studies. But our initial findings are very promising." It should be noted that this is a relative small study. Only 27 people participated.

LUNG CANCER TREATMENT — A research team from the Perlmutter Center at NYU Langone Health, writing in [Nature Medicine](#), explain that new drug, CB-389, can be effective against certain types of lung cancer, specifically adenocarcinoma. The drug stopped tumor growth in mice with KRAS and KEAP1 mutations by cutting off the glutamate supply. Essentially, that's what fueled this cancer's rapid growth. "Our study results suggest that a drug currently in clinical trials may be more effective against cancers with combined KRAS and KEAP1 mutations, which represents perhaps ten percent of patients diagnosed each year with lung adenocarcinoma or 9,000 patients per year," corresponding study author Dr. Thales Papagiannakopoulos, assistant professor in the Department of Pathology at NYU School of Medicine, said in a press release.

CANCER TRIALS — Two cancer organizations want to expand eligibility criteria for cancer clinical trials to certain patient groups that historically been prevented from participating. The American Society of Clinical Oncology and Friends of Cancer Research together identified five areas in which eligibility criteria were most likely to exclude certain patients from participating in clinical trials despite little evidence to support that the trials posed a safety risk. Those were minimum age for enrollment, HIV/AIDS, brain metastases, organ dysfunction and prior or concurrent malignancies. Working groups formed last year are now recommending ways to expand access to trials for these patients in a [series](#) published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology.

MISSED A ROUNDUP? Get caught up [here](#).

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