

## POLICY & PRACTICE

### Patients Want Internet Advice

Patients expect to rely on computers and other electronic technology in the future for many routine medical issues, and seem to be less concerned about privacy issues than providers are, a study in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine* found. The investigators convened focus groups of frequent Internet users, and then analyzed the transcripts. They found that the participants want customized health information from the Internet, and also want complete access to

their own health record. In addition, they expect that in the future, home monitors and other technologies will communicate with clinicians, increasing efficiency and quality of life for patients and providers. "Patients know how busy their doctors are and they want to reserve us for what they really need us for—treating serious illness and conditions," said co-author Dr. Tom Delbanco, professor of general medicine and primary care at Harvard Medical School.

### CMS Proposal: Rescind Medicaid Rules

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has proposed rescinding three Medicaid rules that were finalized in the last days of the Bush administration. Late last year, CMS finalized rules eliminating federal Medicaid reimbursement for school administrative activities and for transportation between home and school, and rules limiting treatments that could be billed and paid as Medicaid outpatient procedures. The agency also published a final rule posing new limits on case management services. However,

Congress halted implementation of these rules, so none have been fully implemented. CMS said rescinding the rules will allow further study "in light of concerns raised about the adverse effects that could result from these regulations, in particular the potential restrictions on services available to beneficiaries... and the lack of clear evidence demonstrating that the approaches taken in the regulations are warranted."

### Programs Improve School Performance

Comprehensive services for children and youth with serious mental challenges dramatically improve performance in academics, behavior, and emotion when the services are received from coordinated community-based networks, according to a report from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Such coordinated networks of care are associated with higher graduation rates among high school students with emotional challenges, and with significant decreases in reported levels of depression and anxiety, the report said. Improvements occurred among many young people within 12 months of their enrollment in these programs, SAMHSA said.

### Bonuses Help Medicaid Enrollment

Performance bonuses paid to the states to reward them for enrolling eligible children in Medicaid hold the potential to get many more children—especially the poorest children—covered, according to a report from advocacy group Families USA. As part of the recent reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program, federal lawmakers devised a bonus system to give states an incentive to find the lowest-income uninsured children and enroll them in Medicaid, even though states receive less federal money for enrolling children in Medicaid than they do for enrolling children in CHIP. The bonuses are designed to offset those additional costs. The report noted that states understand the steps they need to take to get children enrolled. However, "performance bonuses sweeten the deal for states that already are doing the right thing to cover low-income children, and they give states that have not been as aggressive a clear incentive to change their ways," the report said.

### Families Can't Afford Insurance

The majority of uninsured American families can't afford to buy nongroup health insurance, according to a study from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. The study measured families' median net worth—their savings plus other assets minus debt—rather than just income. The AHRQ concluded that while an income-based model works well to estimate how many families will enroll in employer-based coverage, it overestimates nongroup health insurance enrollment for families with low net worth and underestimates enrollment for families with high net worth. Also, families without access to employer-based coverage were much more likely than those with access to earn below 200% of the federal poverty level, the study showed.

—Jane Anderson

## Defining the role of alpha-2A receptors within ADHD

New preclinical science suggests that stimulation of alpha-2A receptors located throughout the prefrontal cortex (PFC) strengthens executive function including working memory, which is thought to play an important role within ADHD.<sup>1-3</sup>

Our current understanding of ADHD treatment includes, in part, increasing levels of norepinephrine that act at the alpha-2A receptor.<sup>1</sup> Directly engaging these receptors is thought to exert a positive effect on cognitive functioning, such as behavioral inhibition and impulse control.<sup>1,4</sup>

As we continue to learn more about ADHD, we must consider the emerging role of the alpha-2A receptor—it's big.