

# Three Minute Read™

Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

May 2022-3



**From the Editor:** This issue's summaries include Australia's performance, pandemic profiteering, three FDA approvals and the scary shortage of IV contrast fluids. To access each article, just click on the headline.



## [How Australia Saved Thousands of Lives While Covid Killed 1 Million Americans](#)

by Damien Cave, New York Times, 5/16/22

**TMR Topline** – If the US had the same Covid death rate as Australia, about 900,000 lives would have been saved. The countries have similar demographic profiles: median age 38; over 83% of the population live in urban areas. So, what went right in Australia and wrong in the US? Australia restricted travel and personal interaction until vaccinations were widely available, then maximized vaccine uptake before gradually opening up the country again. The key lifesaving trait that Australians displayed: trust, in science and institutions, but especially in one another. A belief that others would do what was right not just for the individual but for the community saved lives.

**TMR'S Take:** Among the 38 member nations of the OECD, the US Covid fatality rate has consistently ranked in the bottom quartile. At 4/30/22 the US was #31 at 298/100,000, trailed by seven former Soviet republics. Australia? #3 at 28/100,000.



## [House panel alleges cover-up by contract vaccine maker](#)

Associated Press, 5/12/22

**TMR Topline** – A [House](#)

[committee report](#) found that executives at contract vaccine manufacturer Emergent BioSolutions covered up quality control problems that led to more than 400 million doses of coronavirus vaccines needing to be trashed. Inexperienced staff and high turnover rates contributed to vaccine contamination at the problem-plagued Baltimore factory that was shut down by the FDA in April 2021. Emergent's CEO has apologized for "the failure of our controls" and blamed the problems on the complexity of quickly scaling up production for two different vaccines.



## [Report: Trump officials, meat companies knew workers at risk](#)

by Josh Funk, Associated Press, 5/12/22

**TMR Topline** – The House's Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis [report](#) found that the meat processing industry worked closely with political appointees in the Trump administration to stave off health restrictions and keep slaughterhouses open even as the virus spread rapidly among workers. That culminated in an executive order President Donald Trump issued in spring 2020 designating meat plants as critical infrastructure that needed to remain open. Emails show the companies had submitted a draft of the executive order to the administration days before it was issued. The report also highlighted how meat companies aggressively pushed back against safety recommendations from the CDC and OSHA.



## [The Covid testing company that missed 96% of cases](#)

by Anjeanette Damon, ProPublica, 5/17/22

**TMR Topline** – This in-depth report is a cautionary tale of political influence trumping public health. Nevada's Washoe County (Reno) contracted with Chicago-based Northshore Clinical Labs for Covid-19 PCR testing despite reservations from the Health District's epidemiology program manager. In many instances, students screened for Covid tested positive in rapid antigen testing, but negative in Northwell's PCR

retesting, resulting in symptomatic students remaining in the community. The director of the University of Nevada Reno's student health center began sending samples to both Northwell and the state's testing lab. More than 96% of the PCR results that came back positive from the state lab came back negative from Chicago. Through 5/5, the company had collected nearly \$165 million from the federal government. It's worth a read.

**TMR'S Take:** Early on, the pandemic brought out the best in America as healthcare heroes struggled to understand Covid-19 and scrambled to save the lives of the patients they treated, often at great personal risk. It also brought out the worst as the foregoing three article summaries illustrate.



[FDA approves Lilly diabetes drug that analysts expect to be a big seller](#), by Matthew Herper, STAT, 5/13/22

**TMR Topline** – The FDA has approved Mounjaro, a new injection for type 2 diabetes made by Eli Lilly that lowers blood sugar and can help patients lose weight. Five different clinical trials evaluated 5 mg, 10 mg, and 15 mg doses of Mounjaro compared to placebo, Ozempic, or long-acting insulins. The 15 mg dose of Mounjaro lowered hemoglobin A1c by 0.5% more than Ozempic and by about 1% more than two common long-acting insulins. In obese patients receiving insulin, weight loss averaged 29 pounds more than placebo.



[FDA clears COVID booster shot for healthy kids ages 5 to 11](#), by Lauran Neergaard, Associated Press, 5/17/22

**TMR Topline** – The FDA has authorized a Covid-19 booster shot for healthy 5-11-year-olds, opening a third shot of Pfizer's vaccine to elementary-age kids at least five months after their last dose. Pfizer/BioNtech's vaccine is the only one available for kids of any age.



[FDA authorizes first non-prescription test for COVID-19, flu,](#)

[RSV](#), by Julia Shapero, Axios, 5/16/22

**TMR Topline** – The FDA has authorized the first non-prescription Covid-19 test that can also detect the flu and

RSV. Individuals can collect their own nasal swab at home and send the sample to Labcorp for testing, then access results through an online portal.

**TMR'S Take:** Three important FDA approvals – and done by the book unlike last year's controversial Aduhelm approval that took first place in the Lown Institute's [Shkreli Awards](#) for 2021.

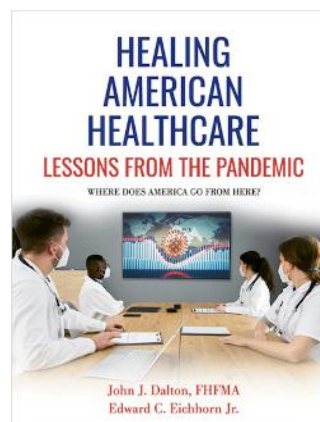


[IV contrast shortage leaves health systems dealing with safety risks](#), by Mari Devereaux, Modern Healthcare, 5/12/22

**TMR Topline** – GE Healthcare's Shanghai production facility shut down in April due to its Covid outbreak and their customers should expect an 80% reduction in supplies through June. More than half of the 75 million CTs performed annually require contrast. Nancy Foster, AHA's VP for quality and patient safety said, *"Health systems are working on rationing their current stock of contrast, prioritizing which x-ray procedures need to be done urgently and postponing non-emergency, elective imaging."*

New York's Mount Sinai Hospital normally has two weeks of contrast media on hand. Bradley Delman, chair of radiology said, *"When GE went down, anybody who had a preferred vendor contract with GE suddenly had no contrast media. Should we tolerate that risk ...or be aware of how much risk is inherent in that supply chain when people make these contracts?"*

**TMR'S Take:** Shanghaied by offshoring? It's déjà vu all over again. "Healing American Healthcare: Lessons from the Pandemic" draws seven important lessons from the U.S.'s 19 pandemic experience, including reduced reliance on low-cost foreign producers of vital supplies.



"Healing American Healthcare: Lessons from the Pandemic" portrays Covid-19's devastating impact on healthcare through the eyes of the journalists who reported on it. It's available in both softcover and eBook versions at a big discount for a limited time. [Click here](#) to buy it today!