

Three Minute Read™

Insights from the Healing American Healthcare Coalition™

August 2021-3



From the Editor: As another pandemic summer is ending, America's battle against the Covid-19 pandemic has reached a major milestone with the FDA's full approval of the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine. Also, the search for the pathogens origins continues with the WHO forming a Scientific Advisory Group to investigate. To access each article, just click on the headline.



[FDA grants full approval to Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer, BioNTech](#), by Helen Branswell and Andrew Joseph, STAT,

8/23/21 **TMR Topline™** - The FDA has granted full approval to the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for use in people ages 16 and up. The application was based on a study of 44,000 people, half of whom were given two doses of the Pfizer vaccine. The other half received saline. Based on the six months of follow-up, the vaccine's efficacy in preventing a symptomatic Covid infection was 91.1%. Pfizer's vaccine is sold under the brand name Comirnaty, and 1.2 billion doses have been manufactured so far. Many vaccine-hesitant individuals had cited the EUA as the reason for their reluctance. Full FDA approval removes that excuse and provides firmer ground for public and private organizations to require vaccination.



[Where the Delta Wave Has Driven Up Covid-19 Vaccinations](#), by Lazar Gamio and Amy Schoenfeld-Walker, New

York Times, 8/26/21

TMR Topline™ - Since early summer, [vaccine uptake](#) is rising in every state, with the biggest increases in states that have been experiencing major outbreaks. Between 6/6 and 8/21, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida and Louisiana vaccinated an additional 12% of their population. Retired national guard colonel Robert Ator, who runs Arkansas' vaccination effort, said: *"The reason why we've seen the marked increase in demand is fear, it's the Delta variant."* Public health officials say some of the recent rise in immunizations is due to teens and tweens who are heading back to school, but the bulk of the increase is from working-age Americans. The FDA's full approval of the Pfizer vaccine is likely to spur new vaccinations, both among the vaccine hesitant and in response to new vaccine requirements by organizations including corporations, hospitals and colleges. States also are changing their public service announcement messaging. Said Mr. Ator: *"We have a rural couple talking to small rural communities. Instead of a guy wearing a tie. I would much rather have the locals talking to them."*



[Delta Air Lines health surcharge for vaccines could cascade across industries](#), by Eleanor Mueller, Oriana Pawlyk and Tatiana

Monnay, Politico, 8/25/2021

TMR Topline™ - In a [memo](#) to all employees, Delta Airlines CEO Ed Bastian served notice of a \$200/month health insurance surcharge for unvaccinated Delta employees to offset medical costs from a coronavirus infection. Delta said the average hospital stay for Covid has cost the airline \$50,000 per person, noting *"This surcharge will be necessary to address the financial risk the decision to not vaccinate is creating for our company."*

The Airline Pilots Association voiced concerns about the surcharge, saying that Delta needs to "bargain with the Delta MEC over any employer-mandated vaccination for pilots." To date, over 75% of Delta employees have been vaccinated.



[FDA: Stop Using Ivermectin Veterinary Drug to Treat COVID](#), by Robert Preidt and Robin Foster, WebMD, 8/23/21

(HealthDay News)

TMR Topline™ - After receiving multiple reports of people who have been hospitalized after "self-medicating with [ivermectin](#) intended for horses," the FDA has issued a warning that taking a drug meant for horses and cattle to prevent or treat Covid-19 is dangerous and could be fatal. Ivermectin is generally used to treat or prevent parasites in animals. The FDA [tweeted](#) "You are not a horse. You are not a cow. Seriously, y'all. Stop it." No form of ivermectin has been approved to treat or prevent Covid-19. The Ivermectin tablets and topical formulations for humans have "very specific doses" that are significantly smaller than the doses meant for animals.

TMR Take – The carrot didn't work, but the stick might. The rapid response by public and private organizations to impose vaccine mandates based on the FDA approval may finally move America closer to herd immunity. It's unfortunate that the FDA's limited resources also must deal with the misinformation about Covid-19 being propagated on social media. Last year, it was Hydroxychloroquine; this year it's Ivermectin. Will the dissemination of misinformation ever end?



[Delayed Wuhan Report Adds Crucial Detail to Covid Origin Puzzle](#), by Jason Gale, Bloomberg Business Week, 8/23/21

TMR Topline™ - A [research study](#) conducted from May 2017 to November 2019 surveying 17 shops at four Wuhan markets selling wild animals remained unpublished until this past June. Conducted by virologist Xiao Xiao, nearly 1/3 of the animals he examined bore trapping and shooting wounds consistent with being caught in the wild, and included masked palm civets, raccoon dogs, bamboo rats, minks and hog badgers. The Huanan market was shuttered 1/1/20, and China's CDC collected specimens that were positive for SARS-CoV-2.

A spillover from a wet market in Guangdong caused the 2003 SARS outbreak. In April 2020 a spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry denied that "wildlife wet markets" existed in China. Such animals are a well-known path for zoonotic disease transmission.



[U.S. intelligence agencies delivered a report to Biden on the virus's origins](#), by Julian E. Barnes, New York Times, 8/25/21

TMR Topline™ - DNI Avril

Haines delivered a report to President Biden on the origins of the coronavirus epidemic, but the U.S. spy agencies have not yet concluded whether the disease was the result of an accidental leak from a lab or if it emerged naturally in a spillover from animals to humans. Current and former officials have repeatedly warned that finding the precise origins of the pandemic may be more of a job for scientists than spies. The report remains classified for now. White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki stated "I can assure you the president wants to get to the bottom of the root causes of Covid-19."



[The WHO is looking for experts to help investigate the origins of pathogens — including the coronavirus](#), by Andrew Joseph, STAT, 8/25/21

TMR Topline™ - The Covid-19 pandemic has elevated scrutiny over how pathogens leap into humans like no crisis before it. To better understand how those events happen, the WHO is setting up a Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens, or SAGO. Maria Van Kerkhove, the agency's technical lead on Covid-19, is seeking up to 25 experts from a range of specialties including biosafety and biosecurity to work with the WHO as new threats arise and previous threats rear up again (e.g., coronaviruses, Lassa, Ebola, avian influenza). The group will help establish frameworks for investigating the origins of pathogens early on as cases of disease are reported, as well as determining the origins of SARS-CoV-2.

TMR Take – Whodunit? We may never know for certain given China's reluctance to cooperate with international efforts to determine the source of the novel coronavirus. Kudos to the WHO for its proactive response as well as its determination to take politics out of the process and remain rooted in science. As former CDC Director Dr.

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Thomas Frieden said in his 1/2/21 Wall Street Journal article, [Which Countries Have Responded Best to Covid-19?](#) *“Bad politics, quite simply, can trump good public health.”* **TMR** wholeheartedly agrees.