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# COA Report

## California Orthopaedic Association

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### TOP NEWS

## Altarum Introduces MIPScast™



Altarum

### A Scoring Tool that Helps Clinicians Achieve the Highest Possible Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) Scores (free of cost to small practices)

Altarum today announces MIPScast™, a user-friendly, interactive web-based tool designed to help clinicians predict and improve their Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) scores in order to comply with the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA).

MIPScast helps clinicians proactively manage their future Medicare payments by providing a simple way to compare benchmarks and estimate their final score while allowing them to evaluate different scenarios and maximize their score before submitting it to CMS. Through an online web application, MIPScast allows clinicians to select, enter or upload data for their preferred measures and activities across all performance categories (Quality, Advancing Care Information, and Improvement Activities for 2017). Different reporting methods, measures and bonus points can be evaluated to determine the best choices that may yield the highest scores. [READ MORE](#)

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## Senate confirms former drug exec Alex Azar as Trump's health chief



CNBC

The Senate confirmed the nomination of former drug company executive Alex Azar as head of the U.S. Health and Human Services Department on. Azar's long-expected approval as HHS secretary puts him in a charge of a department with a trillion-dollar budget that oversees the massive Medicare and Medicaid health coverage

systems, drug regulatory bodies, disease-fighting agencies and the ever-controversial Obamacare health reform law. [READ MORE](#)

## Oregon approves new taxes to address Medicaid costs



The Associated Press

Oregon approved taxes on hospitals, health insurers and managed care companies in an unusual special election that asked voters — and not lawmakers — how to pay for Medicaid costs that now include coverage of hundreds of thousands of low-income residents added to the program's rolls under the Affordable Care Act. [READ MORE](#)

## New information on opioid prescribing: Studies suggest shortening initial opioid prescriptions may reduce misuse



COA

Two new studies examine the issue of opioid prescribing as it relates to likelihood of continued opioid use. The first, published online in the journal *The BMJ*, suggests that prescription duration may be more strongly associated than dosage with opioid misuse in the early postsurgical period. The authors conducted a retrospective cohort study of 568,612 opioid-naïve patients who received postoperative opioids. They found that total duration of opioid use was the strongest predictor of misuse; each refill and additional week of opioid use was linked with an adjusted increase in the rate of misuse of 44.0 percent and with a 19.9 percent increase in hazard.

[Read the abstract...](#)

A second study, to be published in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, suggests that reducing the default opioid prescription size in an electronic medical record (EMR) system may help reduce prescription sizes ordered by providers. The research team found that reducing the default setting to 10 opioid tablets was linked to an increase of 22 percent in the number of initial 10-tablet prescriptions, a nearly 7 percent decrease in the number of 20-tablet prescriptions, and a more than 13 percent decrease in prescriptions of 11 to 19 tablets.

[Read more...](#)

[Read the abstract \(when available\)...](#)

## Alternatives to opioids in the pharmacologic management of chronic pain syndromes



Medscape

Chronic pain exerts a tremendous burden on individuals and societies. If one views chronic pain as a single disease entity, then it is the most common and costly medical condition. At present, medical professionals who treat patients in chronic pain are recommended to provide comprehensive and multidisciplinary treatments, which may include pharmacotherapy. [READ MORE](#)

## Price of generic drugs



The New England Journal of Medicine

Low-cost generic drugs have improved outcomes in patients while saving the health care system more than \$1 trillion in the past decade. However, the prices of some generic drugs, such as captopril (Capoten)<sup>1</sup> and pyrimethamine (Daraprim),<sup>2</sup> have risen substantially in recent years, threatening these gains. Effective competition can ensure low prices of generic drugs, but how much is needed remains an open question. [READ MORE](#)



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