

UNIMAS NEWS BRIEFS

DECEMBER 1, 2013 - DECEMBER 31, 2013

12/01/13

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: OBAMACARE WEBSITE UPDATE

Time: 3:23 pm

Synopsis:

The government claims more than 50,000 people can log on to its troubled health care website and more than 800,000 people will be able to shop for insurance coverage each day. Officials from the Department of Health and Human Services on Sunday released a progress report on fixes to the website, which saw its first weeks plagued by technical errors. Officials say the website is improved but acknowledge it's far from perfect. There is no way to independently verify the administration's figures. Even with the repairs in place, the site still won't be able to do everything the administration wants, and companion sites for small businesses and Spanish speakers have been delayed. Questions remain about the stability of the site and the quality of the data it delivers to insurers.

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12/03/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: HUNGER STRIKE FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM

Time: 2:28 pm

Synopsis:

Three immigrant advocates on a hunger strike to pressure lawmakers to reform the country's broken immigration system ended their three-week fast on the National Mall, while a new group of fasters including U.S. Rep. Joe Kennedy Jr. took their place. About half a dozen congressional lawmakers, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, were on hand as the fasters left the tent Tuesday. Meanwhile, immigration advocates in a handful of cities around the country announced their own fasts in solidarity with those in D.C. Nearly a dozen activists in central and South Florida embarked on one-day fasts, as did groups in California and Oregon. President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Cabinet secretaries and top White House advisers have also visited the activists.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: HOLIDAY SALES LATEST

Time: 4:23 pm

Synopsis:

Mobile devices made this cyber Monday the biggest online shopping day in history. That's the word from IBM who also says that sales jumped 20.6% from 2012 to 2013. Purchases made on mobile devices made up 17% of the day's total sales, with more people using smartphones than tablets. This is in stark contrast to Black Friday sales, which fell 13.2% from last year. But analysts say that's partly because retailers opened their stores on Thanksgiving Thursday before Black Friday.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: OBAMACARE WEBSITE

Time: 7:22 pm

Synopsis:

President Barack Obama's Chief of Staff said on Tuesday that more than 1 million new visitors had checked out the HealthCare.gov website on Monday, the first day after a major overhaul of the troubled site used to shop for health insurance required under new reforms. White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough said the website's new queuing system, used in times of high traffic, worked "pretty well", with 13,000 visitors choosing to receive an email to return later on Monday when there was less traffic, and half of that group accepting that invitation.

Duration: 30 secs
Topic: LETTERS TO CONGRESS
Time: 9:28 pm

Synopsis:
Children with undocumented parents got together to write letters not to Santa but to congressmen instead. This group of children is campaigning to congress asking for an immigration reform that will allow their parents to stay in the country. Most if not all of the kids who are participating are natural U.S born citizen. The leaders of the campaign are expecting to collect a total of 6,000 letters across the nation.

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12/05/2013

Duration: 30 secs
Topic: US SPY AGENCY TRACKS MOBILE PHONE WORLDWIDE
Time: 2:23 pm

Synopsis:
The American National Security Agency (NSA) has been gathering nearly 5 billion records a day on the location of mobile phones outside the United States, enabling the agency to track the movements of individuals in what leaked documents call an effort to find suspicious travel patterns or coordinated activities by intelligence targets. Citing the documents provided by former intelligence contractor Edward Snowden, who now lives in Moscow, The Washington Post said the phone records that are gathered include those of Americans living abroad. The report said the NSA is able to access billions of records by tapping into worldwide mobile network cables.

Duration: 30 secs
Topic: MESSY BABIES
Time: 10:24 pm

Synopsis:
According to a new study out of the University of Iowa, kids who smoosh, smash and even throw their food are actually learning as they play with their meals. The study also suggests that these messy eaters may be better and faster learners in the long run. Published this week in The Developmental Science Journal, the study looked at how a group of 72 toddlers learned to identify nonsolid objects like oatmeal, applesauce and milk. The researchers found that the children who, quite literally, got their hands dirty playing and messing with each substance tended to learn words associated with these goopy items more quickly than those who didn't. As the study points out, previous research has shown that toddlers can identify solid objects, like cup and apple, more readily due to their unchanging size and Mushy, gooey and liquid substances, on the other hand, often prove to be a bit trickier.

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12/06/2013

Duration: 30 secs
Topic: BILL BANS E-CIGARETTE SALES TO MINORS
Time: 3:23 pm

Synopsis:
An effort to ban the sale of electronic cigarettes to minors in Pennsylvania is underway in the Senate. The Judiciary Committee approved enabling legislation last week following a vote by the Pennsylvania Medical Society urging a ban on the sale of e-cigarettes to minors and a report by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calling attention to their increasing use by teenagers. E-cigarettes are an electronic battery-powered device that produces vapor containing nicotine and artificial flavors.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: OBAMA UNEMPLOYMENT

Time: 5:23 pm

President Barack Obama is calling on Congress to extend benefits for the long-term unemployed before they expire at the end of the year. In his weekly radio and Internet address, Obama says more than one million Americans will lose benefits if lawmakers don't act. He says unemployment insurance is one of the most effective ways to boost the economy and that providing benefits does not stop people from trying to find work.

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12/07/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: FBI USES WEBSITE TO SPY ON SUSPECTS

Time: 10:37 pm

Synopsis:

The FBI has an elite hacker team that uses malware to spy on suspects and even secretly turn on users' webcams. This sort of state-sponsored hacking has raised alarm among privacy advocates. But despite fears of a Big Brother police state, the FBI's hacking team is nowhere near all-knowing. Court documents have revealed new details about the agency's high-tech investigative techniques in the case of "Mo," allegedly an Iranian who has made threats of mass murder against US citizens. The scale of the FBI's hacking effort is hard to pin down, but Mo is just one of a handful of suspects known to have been targeted. Unfortunately for the feds, their hackers haven't turned up much about Mo. The FBI bungled the installation of its malware after the suspect's email address was misspelled, then had to rewrite part of the tool after an internal software update. Finally, the agents successfully emailed Mo a link that would install the malware, which he clicked on. But the tool malfunctioned and "never actually executed as designed." Investigators learned only that Mo appeared to be in Tehran.

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12/08/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: GENE THERAPY-CANCER

Time: 4:23 pm

Synopsis:

Doctors are reporting a major advance against leukemia and other blood cancers. They say an experimental treatment, gene therapy, is giving strikingly high success rates in tests on more than 120 patients with various types of leukemia, lymphoma and other blood and bone marrow cancers. The treatment involves removing certain white blood cells from a patient, altering them in a lab to contain a gene that attacks cancer, and returning them to the patient. In one study, all five adults and 19 of 22 children with one type of leukemia had a complete remission, meaning no cancer could be found after treatment, although a few have relapsed since then. Doctors will describe the studies at an American Society of Hematology conference that began Saturday in New Orleans.

Duration: 30 secs

REPUBLICAN REFORM

Time: 10:23 pm

Synopsis:

As immigration activists ended a fourth week of fasting on the Mall, they were buoyed by a promise from Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to visit their encampment Monday. But minutes before Reid's scheduled appearance at the "Fast for Families" tents a few blocks from the Capitol, the action's organizers told reporters and photographers that they had just received a call from Reid's office canceling his visit. The office blamed the icy weather - although the majority leader, it turned out, was already in

Washington, and the roads were clear. A spokesman for the Nevada Democrat said the visit will be rescheduled, but Reid had better hurry: The activists are expected to announce on Thursday, a month after they started the fast, that they are folding their tents. House Republicans appear to be little, if any, closer to passing immigration legislation than they were a month ago. They're planning to leave town for Christmas break at the end of the week (they returned last week from Thanksgiving recess) and House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) didn't respond to the two letters the fasting activists delivered to him requesting a meeting.

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12/09/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: DEADLINE TO AVOID ANOTHER POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Time: 3:25 pm

Synopsis:

A budget deal aimed at avoiding a U.S. government shutdown on Jan. 15 and relieving federal agencies of some indiscriminate spending cuts that are set to begin with the New Year could emerge in Congress on Tuesday, congressional aides said on Monday. Democratic Senator Patty Murray and Republican Representative Paul Ryan are scheduled to meet on Tuesday with the goal of finalizing a deal, according to aides who asked not to be identified. If such a deal is reached, the specifics could then be given to senators who are holding closed-door meetings during lunches that Democrats and Republicans hold separately on Tuesdays. For the past several weeks, Murray and Ryan, who head their chambers' respective budget panels, have been privately trying to reach a two-year budget deal that aims to end the Republican-Democratic brinkmanship over fiscal affairs that led to October's 16-day partial federal government shutdown.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: AMERICAN AND U.S AIRWAYS MERGER

Time: 3:25 pm

Synopsis:

American Airlines has emerged from bankruptcy protection and US Airways culminated its long pursuit of a merger partner after the two completed their deal Monday to create the world's biggest airline. The merger survived a challenge from the government and criticism from consumer groups, who fear it will lead to higher prices. It's the latest in a series of mergers that will leave four airlines controlling more than 80 percent of the U.S. air-travel market and with more power than ever to limit seats and boost profits. American emerges from bankruptcy as American Airlines Group Inc. It will mark a monumental victory for CEO Doug Parker and his executive team at smaller US Airways, who convinced American's creditors that a merger made more sense than letting American remain an independent company. Plans call for Parker to mark the day by ringing the opening bell on the Nasdaq Stock Market, where the new company will debut under the ticker symbol AAL. Parker's team will spend the next two years or longer combining the two carriers. The American Airlines name will live on, while US Airways will join Continental, Northwest and other airlines that now exist only in the memories of employees and longtime travelers.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: CAN OBAMA STOP DEPORTATIONS USING HIS EXECUTIVE POWER?

Time: 5:22 pm

Synopsis:

President Obama has said he can't, but the immigration reform network believes he can but will not. Stop deportations, that is. A Korean immigrant student raised the challenge to Obama during the President's recent visit to San Francisco. Obama muttered he does not have that power. He has always maintained that any law to halt removal proceedings would require an act of Congress. The FilAm sought the wisdom of four immigration lawyers who explained that Obama can, indeed, use his executive power to stop deportations. He has used the same power to enforce the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) to grant legal status to qualified DREAM Act youth and also to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act paving the way for same-sex couples to wed.

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12/10/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: NSA SPYING ONLINE GAMES

Time: 2:22 pm

Synopsis:

American and British intelligence operations have been spying on gamers across the world, media outlets reported, saying that the world's most powerful espionage agencies sent undercover agents into virtual universes to monitor activity in online fantasy games such as "World of Warcraft."

Stories carried Monday by The New York Times, the Guardian, and ProPublica said U.S. and U.K. spies have spent years trawling online games for terrorists or informants. The stories, based on documents leaked by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, offer an unusual take on America's world-spanning surveillance campaign.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: OBAMACARE IN SPANISH WEBSITE UPDATE

Time: 4:26 pm

Synopsis:

The Spanish language Obamacare enrollment website, "cuidadodesalud.gov", is running smoothly in its first week online and does not appear to be suffering the same growing pains as its English-language counterpart. On Tuesday afternoon, an error screen appeared once at the Spanish language site, offering an apology "Lo sentimos," but the problem was quickly resolved. Logging in and getting information from "cuidadodesalud.gov" was fast and easy. It's a different story at the English language site. Most attempts to log in or get information about insurance options were denied Tuesday - more than a week after the Obama Administration promised the site would be working for a "vast majority of users."

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12/11/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: PARENTS DEMANDING RECALL

Time: 2:24 pm

Synopsis:

Fisher-Price released the following statement: "For more than eighty years, Fisher-Price has taken great pride in providing thoughtful features and solutions for parents that we've identified through research. We know parents have different needs, which is why we strive to offer them a variety of choices for baby products, like infant seats, so they can choose the one that best suits their lifestyle. We want to clarify that we do not position the Aptivity Seat, or any of our other infant seats, as educational products for children. It is unfortunate that factual omissions about the product, such as the time-out feature that only allows for 10 minutes of activity with our app before requiring a manual reset, and parent reviews from those who have purchased the product that show strong parent involvement and support, have not been accurately characterized in recent reports."

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12/12/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Time: 1:24 pm

Topic: REPUBLICANS EYE IMMIGRATION REFORM

Synopsis:

Immigration reform has emerged as the next Republican battleground after a high-profile split between party leaders and the Tea Party over budget compromise led to growing expectation of a similar bipartisan deal to legalize America's 11 million undocumented migrants. House speaker John Boehner signaled a

major break from right-wing conservatives on Thursday when he accused activist groups of losing "all credibility" by opposing his efforts to reach a deal with Democrats over the \$1tn federal budget. Heritage Action, a group behind many Tea Party Republicans, claimed on Friday that Boehner was trying to clear the way for immigration reform next year by severing his links with opponents on the right of the party. Some conservative commentators, such as Red State blogger Erick Erickson have even speculated this was the prime motivation behind Boehner's surprise attack on the right, describing it as the "first real shots" in the party's forthcoming battle over immigration. Boehner's office was not immediately available for comment on Friday, and there were plenty of other grounds for the falling out, but experts familiar with immigration reform point to a number of recent developments which suggest he is preparing to work with Democrats on the issue in the New Year.

Duration: 30 secs

Time: 3:26 pm

Topic: SUPPORT IMMIGRATION REFORM WITH PATH TO CITIZENSHIP

Synopsis:

As the nation's Catholics come together to celebrate La Virgen de Guadalupe, Mexican Catholics' patron saint, on December 12th, the United Farm Workers, UFW Foundation, Radio Campesina and other immigrant rights groups will host a procession and vigil in Tacoma asking Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) and Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.) to endorse comprehensive immigration reform with a path to citizenship. Farm workers, students, families and members of the faith community will come together for a procession and vigil culminating at the Tacoma Northwest Detention Center to demand an end to deportations and the separation of families and that Congress overhaul our country's broken immigration system. The Tacoma Northwest Detention Center, where immigrants detained by immigration officers are transferred to be processed for deportation, is the only facility of its kind in the Pacific Northwest. The event is being sponsored by immigrant rights groups throughout the states of Washington and Oregon organizing to defend the welfare of immigrant families. In targeting Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers, the Republican legislator who represents the 5th Congressional District in Eastern Washington, and Republican Greg Walden, who represents the 2nd District in Oregon, these groups hope to advance currently stalled immigration legislation in the House of Representatives. Immigration reform activists, who plan on mobilizing communities in both states, seek to ramp up the pressure on Republican legislators during Congress's last days in session this year. Friday, December 13, is the last day Congress is expected to be in session. The procession and vigil, held on a day of celebration for the nation's Catholics, aims to highlight the pain and suffering of immigrant families living under the constant threat of deportation without a working immigration system.

Duration: 30 secs

TOPIC: EXTENDED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS ON TRACK TO EXPIRE DEC. 28

Time: 10:26 pm

Synopsis:

Unless Congress acts very quickly, some 1.3 million workers will lose their extended jobless benefits on December 28. Democrats were scrambling late Wednesday to link an extension of benefits to a budget deal that is expected to get a vote as soon as Thursday. But if the effort fails, they will come back at it in 2014. And House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, did not slam the door shut on the possibility of renewing the jobless benefits eventually. When asked whether he would consider allowing an extension of the funding, he said he told President Obama he would keep such a plan on the table. The White House, along with Democratic leaders, had hoped to extend the benefits before they expired this year. But those plans seemed to diminish on Tuesday, when Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., unveiled their bipartisan budget deal that did not include any last-minute reprieves for the Federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation program. Because the House plans to leave on Friday, the vote on the budget package is expected very soon. The White House had wanted the benefits included in the budget, saying that besides the 1.3 million people who will lose their benefits on Dec. 28, an additional 3.6 million people will fall out of the unemployment insurance program in the first half of the year without an extension. Democrats, along with a few Republicans, want to have a chance to renew the jobless benefits. A group of moderate House Republicans sent a letter to their leaders saying: "We respectfully request that the House consider a temporary extension of emergency unemployment insurance to protect an essential safeguard that has aided Americans who have endured through a weak economy".

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12/13/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: CELL PHONES ON PLANES

Time: 8:34 pm

Synopsis:

The Federal Communications Commission voted 3-2 Thursday to consider lifting its ban on in-flight cell phone use. On the same day, the Federal Department of Transportation and three members of Congress took steps to block those calls. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx said in a statement to CNN that he is looking into the possibility of banning in-flight calls, citing its aviation consumer protection authority. The DOT will determine whether allowing calls is "fair to consumers." Many people consider the idea of cell phone conversations annoying in the close confines of a plane, and some are casting it as a consumer 20 rudest things people do on planes. Meanwhile, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-California) and Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tennessee) introduced legislation on Thursday to ban cell phone conversations on commercial airline flights. House Rep. Bill Shuster, (R-Pennsylvania) has also introduced a bill that would prohibit in-flight voice communications but allow text messaging. Those actions come as the FCC considers whether it should lift its decades-old ban on cell phones on aircraft. Are the two government entities working at cross purposes? Perhaps. But each cites its individual and independent mandates. The FCC has banned in-flight calls for technical reasons. But new technology has made that ban obsolete, the commission says, and there's no reason to continue it. The DOT, which includes the Federal Aviation Administration, is entrusted with safe air travel, but also with protecting the rights of air travelers. The FCC has been pelted with criticism in the last several weeks after the commission's new chairman made the announcement. The current requirement that cell phones may not be used in-flight would actually be expanded to include all bands, said Wheeler, unless airlines install new on-board equipment that prevents interference with terrestrial networks.

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12/14/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: SANDY HOOK ANNIVERSARY

Time: 7:05 pm

Synopsis:

Bells tolled 26 times in Newtown, Conn., on Saturday -- once for each of the victims who died a year ago at Sandy Hook Elementary School in a brutal, senseless massacre carried out by disturbed loner Adam Lanza. The bells began ringing at St. Rose of Lima Church in Newtown beginning at 9:30 a.m. - the moment the gunman shot his way into the school on Dec. 14, 2012, the Associated Press reported. Connecticut's governor had asked for houses of worship across the state to do the same, and flags were lowered to half-staff around Connecticut. At the White House, President Barack Obama and wife, Michelle, paused for a moment of silence in honor of the victims, standing at a wooden table in the Map Room before three tiers of 26 lighted candles.

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12/16/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: POLL ON OBAMACARE

Time: 4:23 pm

Synopsis:

Americans who already have health insurance are blaming President Barack Obama's health care overhaul for their rising premiums and deductibles, and overall 3 in 4 say the rollout of coverage for the uninsured has gone poorly. An Associated Press-GfK poll finds that health care remains politically charged going into next year's congressional elections. Keeping the refurbished HealthCare.gov website

running smoothly is just one of Obama's challenges, maybe not the biggest. The poll found a striking level of unease about the law among people who have health insurance and aren't looking for any more government help. Those are the 85 percent of Americans who the White House says don't have to be worried about the President's historic push to expand coverage for the uninsured. In the survey, nearly half of those with job-based or other private coverage say their policies will be changing next year - mostly for the worse. Nearly 4 in 5 (77 percent) blame the changes on the Affordable Care Act, even though the trend toward leaner coverage predates the law's passage.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: WORST DRIVERS IN THE COUNTRY REPORT

Time: 5:17 pm

Synopsis:

Just about every year, one organization or another tries to provide an answer, based on factors as varied as how many people could pass their state's written driving test, how many citations are written for distracted driving and how likely people are to die in a motor-vehicle crash. The latest such survey is from CarInsuranceComparison.com, a website for people to compare features of various automobile insurance companies. For its worst drivers rankings, the website compiles data on fatality rates per 100 million miles traveled, citations for failure to obey traffic signals and seat belt laws, DUI infractions, and tickets for speeding and careless driving. It collects data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the National Motorists Association and MADD. And the winner is -- drum roll, please -- Louisiana. Georgia is No. 14. According to CarInsuranceComparison.com, drivers in the Pelican State were propelled to No. 1 by finishing in the top five for failure to obey, speeding tickets and careless driving. Louisiana drivers also won this dubious distinction in last year's rankings.

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12/18/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: MONEYGRAM SERVICES

Time: 2:24 pm

Synopsis:

MoneyGram will offer money transfer, bill payment and money order services at all ACME Markets, Jewel-Osco, Shaw's and Star Markets grocery stores under a new agreement with New Albertson's Inc. Financial terms of the deal, announced today, were not disclosed. The deal involves MoneyGram services at more than 400 retail locations in the Mid-Atlantic, Midwestern and New England states.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: OBAMACARE LATINOS

Time: 3:24 pm

Synopsis:

Concerns among Hispanics that signing up for medical insurance under President Barack Obama's healthcare law may draw the scrutiny of immigration authorities has hurt enrollment, according to advocates of the policy. Convincing Latinos to enroll could be crucial to the law's success, and supporters of Obama's signature domestic policy are aiming their campaign at the 10.2 million Latinos eligible for the new insurance plans or the expansion of the Medicaid program for the poor. As a group, Latinos are younger than the overall population in the United States and signing them up in large numbers under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act could help offset the costs of covering older and sicker people.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: TEENS AND MARIJUANA

Time: 4:22 pm

Synopsis:

Teens are heeding the message to stay away from cocaine and cigarettes. But when it comes to marijuana, not so much. An annual survey by the National Institute on Drug Use found that 60% of high school seniors don't think regular pot use is harmful to their health. More than a third of them admitted to using it within the past 12 months. Nearly 7% say they smoke marijuana daily. That's nearly triple from

what it was 20 years ago. Researchers say going forward they'll explore the link between teen's drug use and states that allow the use of medical marijuana. Some teens report getting their hands on pot from someone else's prescription.

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12/19/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: NEW BLOOD PRESSURE GUIDELINES

Time: 2:24 pm

Synopsis:

Many older adults with high blood pressure can be treated less aggressively, which could mean taking fewer pills to get it under control, according to new treatment guidelines from an expert panel. But not all experts are on board with the advice - including the federal agency that appointed the group. Panel members stressed that they are not changing the definition of high blood pressure: 140 over 90. For adults aged 60 and older, they are recommending a higher treatment threshold, prescribing medicine only when blood pressure levels reach 150 over 90 or higher. Too aggressive blood pressure treatment can cause fainting and falls in older patients, or bad interactions with drugs they're already taking for other illnesses, panel members said. The panel does endorse the lower target of 140 over 90 for younger adults - and for all adults who also have diabetes or kidney disease. The guidelines released Wednesday are based on a review of the most rigorous kind of medical research - studies in which patients are randomly prescribed drugs or dummy pills - published since the last update in 2003.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: SUPERBUG BACTERIA WIDESPREAD IN U.S. CHICKEN

Time: 5:24 pm

Synopsis:

About half of the raw chicken breasts in a nationwide sampling carried antibiotic-resistant superbug bacteria, a U.S. consumer group said on Thursday, calling for stricter limits on use of the medicines on livestock. It could be more difficult to treat people if they became ill after eating chicken with the antibiotic-resistant bacteria, said Consumer Reports, which describes itself as the world's largest independent product-testing organization. The group said it tested for six types of bacteria in 316 raw chicken breasts purchased from retailers nationwide during July. Almost all of the samples contained potentially harmful bacteria; some 49.7% carried a bacterium resistant to three or more antibiotics, according to the group, and 11% had two types of bacteria resistant to multiple drugs. Resistance was most common for the antibiotics used for growth promotion and disease treatment of poultry. Consumer Reports urged passage of a law to restrict eight classes of antibiotics for use only to treat humans and sick animals.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: DEPORTATIONS WILL LIKELY DROP FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A DECADE THIS YEAR

Time: 7:26 pm

Synopsis:

After rising to record levels under the Barack Obama administration, the decreasing figure, which Bloomberg says is on track to fall by more than 10 percent to a six-year low, resulted from shifting deportation policies adopted by Obama in the face of pressure from activists and Latino leaders frustrated with congressional inaction on immigration reform. The figure marks a turnaround for the President that holds the record for deportations, with nearly 2 million people removed from the country since taking office -- more than double the figure for his predecessor, George W. Bush. During the 2012 presidential campaign, Obama directed Immigration and Customs Enforcement to defer deportation for most undocumented immigrants brought here illegally as children for a renewable, two-year period. The change followed a memo issued by ICE Director John Morton encouraging immigration authorities to use prosecutorial discretion to focus on deporting serious criminals and repeat offenders. But deportations remain high by a historical standard. Bloomberg cited a figure of 343,020 from Oct. 1, 2012 to Sept. 7, 2013, with three weeks of the fiscal year yet to be tallied.

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12/20/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL TO BE TESTED FOR TUBERCULOSIS

Time: 4:22 PM

Synopsis:

All 1,800 students and staff at a southern California high school will be screened for tuberculosis Friday after 45 students tested positive for possible exposure. The Riverside County Department of Public Health and state officials have determined there is a possibility of exposure to other Indio High School students, though "the risk of transmission appears to be moderately low." According to a letter-to-parents on the school's website, officials said there is one active case of tuberculosis and they do not fear an outbreak. "The entire school is being tested out of an abundance of caution," said Riverside County Public Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser. Students will have to return to school in Indio, California, on Monday to have the test results evaluated, the letter says. Without verification of a current TB testing and results, students won't be allowed to return to school after the holiday break on January 6, the school said. County health officials expanded the testing to the entire school "after results of an initial screening were higher than expected," spokesman Jose Arballo Jr. said in a statement. Officials tested 131 students on Monday, and 45 of them tested positive to possible exposure to the illness. "Someone who is exposed does not necessarily have active tuberculosis, a condition that must be confirmed with more tests," Arballo said. On Thursday, follow up X-rays identified five students who require further examination.

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12/21/2013

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: MANY WILL LOSE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Time: 6:35 PM

Synopsis:

On Dec. 28, roughly 1.3 million out-of-work Americans will lose their unemployment insurance. That's because Congress declined to renew an emergency aid program for the jobless that's set to expire that day. This could still change: Senate Democrats have said they'll come back in early January and try to renew the Emergency Unemployment Compensation program for another year, which would cost roughly \$25.2 billion. But if that effort fails, the nation's safety net for the unemployed will shrink significantly in 2014.

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12/22/13

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: OBAMACARE DEADLINE EXTENDED

Time: 8:24 PM

Synopsis:

As Americans scrambled to beat a deadline to sign up for insurance under President Barack Obama's new healthcare law, the White House gave consumers shopping on the program's website an extra day, until Dec. 24, to pick plans for coverage that starts Jan. 1. The last-minute move by the Obama administration to accommodate high demand came on a day when officials reported record traffic on HealthCare.gov, the enrollment website that struggled with glitches after its launch in October.

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12/23/13

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: IMMIGRATION JUDGES

Time: 2:23 PM

Synopsis:

Immigrants may have to wait longer to have their cases heard in immigration courts in 2014. That's because more than 100 immigration judges will be eligible for retirement next year and some may take the opportunity. As of 2013, 220 immigration judges presided over 59 immigration courts and they are still wading through a backlog of 350,000 cases. Thus far, there are 32 vacancies and through natural attrition, about ten immigration judges retire every year.

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12/24/13

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: OBAMACARE LAST DAY

Time: 2:27PM

Synopsis:

More than 850,000 people piled on to the federal health insurance website Monday, the last day to log on and sign up for health insurance coverage that begins January 1st. "It's something like lining up for Election Day", the administration says, "If you are standing in line when the polls close, you get to come in and vote." Experience shows many Americans will wait until the last possible minute to buy health insurance. There's nothing like a deadline to focus the mind. And in this case, experience also shows that people who waited may have fared better than people who tried to sign up early, although really last-minute users may have to line up. Signing up for health insurance is a multi-step process. The White House and Health and Human Services Department are also scrambling to make sure that people take the last step and pay their first premium so the insurance actually begins. It's not been easy for people using the federal website and some of the state sites. The Obama administration says the federal site is finally working well, but it's not entirely clear if the so-called back end is working as it's supposed to, transmitting the correct information to insurance companies

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12/25/13

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: UNEMPLOYMENT ENDS

Time: 5:26PM

Synopsis:

The expiration of benefits for 1.3 million jobless Americans this weekend will exacerbate the worst period of chronic unemployment in post-war history, the chairman of the White House council of economic advisers warns. The expiring programme, which provides emergency help for the long-term unemployed, was introduced after the banking crash in 2008 to cushion the impact of the recession but is due to end on Saturday. Congress had an opportunity to continue it, but failed to agree on an extension before breaking for Christmas. Although recent improvements in the economy have boosted overall job growth, economists are concerned that long-term unemployment rates remain higher than at any time between 1948 and the recent financial crisis. Republican critics claim that ending the programme will force recipients to find work, but new research suggests it will have the opposite effect, and will encourage them to drop out of the labor market entirely, according to Jason Furman, chairman council of economic advisers. Similar studies by the Congressional Budget Office and JP Morgan have suggested that ending the programme will knock between 0.2 and 0.4 percentage points off the US economy's growth rate and that the country will lose out on 240,000 jobs due to lower demand in 2014. Democrats are planning a

fresh push this week to highlight the issue. On a media conference call, House minority leader Nancy Pelosi argued for the extension of the benefits. "Unemployment insurance is part of the safety net of our country; not just for individuals but for the economy," said Pelosi in the call on Monday. "It is one of the biggest stimuli for the economy." But Pelosi's fellow Democrat, Senate majority leader Harry Reid, conceded more than a week ago that it was too late for Congress to act on the extension this year after it was left out of a hard-fought budget compromise between the parties.

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12/26/13

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: CONGRESS POOR POPULARITY

Time: 4:23PM

Synopsis:

The worst Congress ever. That's the verdict from two-thirds of Americans about the track record of the 113th Congress, according to a new national poll. And a CNN/ORC International poll released Thursday also indicates that nearly three-quarters of the public say that this has been a "do-nothing" Congress. Two-thirds of those questioned said the current Congress is the worst in their lifetime, with 28% disagreeing.

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12/27/13

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: MARYLAND LICENSES FOR UNDOCUMENTED

Time: 7:22 PM

Synopsis:

Maryland became the latest state to try and better integrate its own undocumented immigrant community by issuing them drivers licenses. Thanks to a bill passed earlier this year, state DMVs will now offer temporary licenses to residents regardless of immigration status. Proponents backed the move as a public safety measure, ensuring that more immigrants receive proper certification before driving and that they purchase auto insurance. The IDs will be specially marked to indicate they can be used only in limited circumstances as identification, but they will look identical to licenses used by legal immigrants.

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12/29/13

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: HEALTH OVERHAUL

Time: 3:31 PM

Synopsis:

The Obama administration says that following a December surge more than 1.1 million people have now enrolled for health insurance through the federal government's improved website. Nearly 1 million signed up this month through the federal exchange serving 36 states before the December 24 deadline to enroll for coverage to start in January. Compare that to a paltry 27,000 in October, the website's first, problem-plagued month. The Health and Human Services department says in the week leading up to December 24, nearly twice as many enrolled as in the first part of December. Sunday's number is only partial, because the administration didn't provide an update on the 14 states running their own websites. California, New York, Washington, Kentucky and Connecticut have done well, but others are still struggling.

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12/30/13

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: OBAMACARE LATEST

Time: 3:24 PM

Synopsis:

The Obama administration said Sunday a late surge in sign-ups resulted in 1.1 million Americans enrolling in ObamaCare before last week's deadline to get insurance coverage starting January 1st. -- a sign the federal website is getting fixed but not enough good news to sway critics of the health care law. On Monday it was announced that U.S. health official Michelle Snyder, who oversaw the building of the troubled Obamacare website HealthCare.gov, is retiring from her job as chief operating officer at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS chief Marilyn Tavenner announced Snyder's departure in a statement that said Snyder had originally planned to retire at the end of 2012 but had stayed on at Tavenner's request to "help me with the challenges facing CMS in 2013."

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: VENDING MACHINE COUNTING CALORIES

Time: 5:29 PM

Synopsis:

Office workers in search of snacks will be counting calories along with their change under new labeling regulations for vending machines included in President Barack Obama's health care overhaul law. Requiring calorie information to be displayed on roughly 5 million vending machines nationwide will help consumers make healthier choices, says the Food and Drug Administration, which is expected to release final rules early next year. It estimates the cost to the vending machine industry at \$25.8 million initially and \$24 million per year after that, but says if just .02% of obese adults ate 100 fewer calories a week, the savings to the health care system would be at least that great. The rules will apply to about 10,800 companies that operate 20 or more machines. Nearly three quarters of those companies have three or fewer employees, and their profit margin is extremely low, according to the National Automatic Merchandising Association.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: NEVADA DRIVER LICENSE

Time: 8:32 PM

Synopsis:

A big change is coming for tens of thousands of Nevada drivers next year. Driver authorization cards will be available beginning this week for undocumented immigrants. But the new type of authorization card will only allow people to drive and will not serve as official identification. Illegal immigrants have been driving on Nevada's roads already but the new law will give them driver's licenses to hold them accountable if they get in a crash or get a ticket. That's what state legislatures decided earlier this year by making the driver authorization cards available. The law was passed with bipartisan support and signed by the governor.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: LUNG CANCER SCREENING

Time: 8:32 PM

Synopsis:

In a move that could affect millions of current and former smokers, a highly influential, independent panel of medical experts is recommending yearly screening for healthy adults between the ages of 55 and 80 at high risk for lung cancer. The screening would be done with low-dose computed tomography, commonly known as CT scans - and the panel's recommendation could require new insurance plans to cover them under the Affordable Care Act. Roughly 10 million people meet the task force's definition of high risk: adults aged 55 to 80 years who have a 30 pack-year smoking history and currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years. Someone smoking one pack a day for 30 years or 2 packs a day for 15 years, for example, would have a 30 pack-year smoking history.

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12/31/13

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: NEW LAWS GOING INTO EFFECT IN 2014

Time: 5:22 PM

Synopsis:

Legislatures have some big changes in store for 2014. Some of them pretty standard. 14 states will see minimum wage increases. California is enforcing stricter punishment for those pesky paparazzi. While Colorado and Washington will host marijuana retailers for the nation's first legal recreational pot industry. Hate it when you are out in Wisconsin drinking and you can't catch a cab? The Badger state will legalize pedal pubs. Multi-person bicycles with a bar mounted on top that ferries riders to and from bars. Everyone pedals, the driver steers and you enjoy one more beer for the road. Think the only lemon law applies to used cars? Illinois is a state where you can also return your pet - and get reimbursed for any vet costs - if illness was not disclosed by seller. The land of Lincoln is also banning tanning for anyone 17 and under.

Duration: 30 secs

Topic: IMPORTANT DATES FOR OBAMACARE

Time: 8:32 PM

Synopsis:

Catholic organizations made a last-minute effort Tuesday to get the Supreme Court to block portions of President Barack Obama's health care law that will force them to provide health insurance for students and employees that includes birth control. Several organizations, including the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Washington, the Catholic Diocese of Nashville, Catholic University and the Michigan Catholic Conference, asked justices to block the law until their arguments are heard. Parts of the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, go into effect on Wednesday. The law requires employers to provide insurance that covers a range of preventive care, free of charge, including contraception. The Catholic Church prohibits the use of contraceptives.

=====END OF DECEMBER 2013 REPORT=====