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Change Healthcare IOC's for Other Organizations to Assess Cybersecurity

Change Healthcare has reported the cyberattack that disrupted a number of its systems and services was orchestrated by a group known as ALPHV BlackCat. While the investigation is ongoing, it seems that the attackers took advantage of vulnerabilities in a software called ConnectWise ScreenConnect. This software is widely used, and if your organization uses it, it's crucial to check for potential issues. A cybersecurity firm, RedSense, warned that more organizations may be affected in the coming days. You can find guidance on what to look for and recommended actions on the [Health-ISAC website](#).

Additionally, to help organizations protect themselves, the American Hospital Association has also shared a list of [indicators of compromise \(IOCs\)](#). The attackers used malicious tools like the ALPHV Windows Encryptor, which encrypts files and demands payment for decryption. They also exploited a legitimate tool called "SimpleHelp Remote Management Tool" to gain unauthorized access to systems.

If your organization detects any of these indicators, it's important to act swiftly to contain and remedy the situation. Change Healthcare is a healthcare technology company that is part of Optum and owned by UnitedHealth Group.

Gov. Pritzker Announces New Maternal Health and Birth Equity Initiatives

Today, Gov. JB Pritzker and Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton visited the Chicago South Side Birth Center (CSSBC) to highlight new proposals to enhance birth equity across Illinois alongside CSSBC founder and midwife Jeanine Valrie Logan, State agency leadership and key advocates from the General Assembly.

The Governor is proposing a \$23 million investment in the State's Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget to advance birth equity. According to a [news release](#), this funding will focus on improving maternal health outcomes and reducing disparities for Black women through investments in community-based providers, expansion of the home visiting program, a child tax credit and a free diaper pilot program.

Across the nation, Black women are reportedly three times as likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women. To confront racial disparities in maternal mortality rates, Gov. Pritzker announced a number of initiatives in the FY25 budget to break down silos between agencies driving maternal health initiatives and uplift community-based care and local partnerships. To view the list of initiatives, [click here](#).

According to the Governor's Office, the Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services will continue its work to approve Medicaid reimbursement for doulas, lactation consultants and other community-based care providers, and to strengthen technical assistance to help low-income new mothers access crucial supports before, after and during birth. For nonprofits like CSSBC, the investments help support years of work disrupting dangerous maternal health outcomes for children and families.

New Funding Announced to Increase Capacity for Behavioral Health Services

Today, the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), announced \$36.9 million in notices of funding opportunities for grant programs supporting behavioral health services across the country.

The SAMHSA grant programs are aimed at addressing the overdose and mental health crises. For a list of the grant funding opportunities, [click here](#).

Additionally, HHS, through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), issued guidance that allows states to expand the pool of behavioral healthcare providers eligible for enhanced federal Medicaid funding, which HHS says will better support this critical workforce as well as improve access to care. The guidance also allows states to claim federal dollars for nurse advice lines.

CMS also released new guidance to state Medicaid directors to better support states in addressing the nation's mental health crisis. First, today's guidance expands the pool of behavioral healthcare providers eligible for enhanced Medicaid dollars to include Masters of Social Work and other master's-level behavioral healthcare providers, such as marriage and family therapists as well as mental health counselors. HHS says this policy will support states in hiring and maintaining the specialized expertise needed to administer a robust Medicaid program that can meet beneficiaries' behavioral healthcare needs.

Second, the guidance allows for federal funds to support Nurse Advice Lines as part of the continuum of supports available for Medicaid beneficiaries. Nurse Advice Lines can help support states to expand workforce capacity and provide access to an initial source of non-emergency care, including for behavioral health, according to HHS. Nurse Advice Lines can provide high-quality responses informed by evidence-based models of clinical practice, including for mental health and substance use needs. Following the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and particularly in rural areas, Nurse Advice Lines can be an important tool to support ongoing access to care.

BASE Prevention Programs Funding Opportunity

The Illinois Dept. of Human Services, Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery has announced a BASE (Build, Amplify, Support, Empower) Prevention Programs Funding opportunity.

Funding is available for organizations to expand or establish innovative evidence-informed substance use prevention programming geared toward youth and emerging adults.

A total of \$15,000,000 is available to be awarded over a period of three years to a minimum of seven organizations. The anticipated award range is \$100,000 to \$500,000 per period of performance.

BASE subrecipients will establish or expand innovative and evidence-informed programs to prevent, delay and reduce substance use among youth and emerging adults (ages 6–25), with particular attention to:

- Non-Hispanic Black youth and emerging adults, due to high disparities in overdose fatalities for older Black males;
- Youth who do not consistently attend school: This population is at high risk for substance use and has limited access to school-based interventions; and
- Youth who are more likely to use or misuse substances due to factors such as adverse childhood experiences, mental health symptoms or conditions, familial history of opioid use disorder, and neurodiversity (e.g., attention deficit hyperactivity disorder).

The initial period of performance will span July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. The deadline to apply for the grants is April 24 at 3 p.m. CT. For more information or to apply for BASE funding, [click here](#).

COVID-19 Information

The Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) has launched a weekly [Infectious Respiratory Disease Surveillance Dashboard](#) that will be updated weekly on Friday. This report provides the public with the latest data on hospital visits, seasonal trends, lab test positivity and demographic data.

[Click here](#) to visit the IDPH COVID-19 resources webpage. IDPH will continue to report the weekly number of people with COVID-19 admitted to hospitals from emergency departments, deaths and vaccinations, with COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus information also reported through the dashboard of the [Illinois Wastewater Surveillance System](#).

Briefly Noted

Last week, First Lady Jill Biden announced \$100 million in federal funding for research and development into women's health as part of a new White House initiative that she is heading up, according to a report by the [Associated Press](#) (AP). The AP reports the funding is the first major deliverable of the [White House Initiative on Women's Health Research](#), which was announced late last year. The money comes from the [Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health](#) (ARPA-H), which is under the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. The first lady announced the ARPA-H Sprint for Women's Health during an appearance in Cambridge, Mass.

On Friday, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced its [final decision](#) to withdraw approval of [Pepaxto](#) (melphalan flufenamide), which was approved for use in combination with dexamethasone to treat certain patients with multiple myeloma. The agency determined the following grounds for withdrawal were met, which includes the confirmatory study conducted as a condition of accelerated approval did not confirm Pepaxto's clinical benefit, and the available evidence demonstrates that Pepaxto is not shown to be safe or effective under its conditions of use.

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