Sanofi announces it will work with HHS to develop coronavirus vaccine

As the race for a vaccine or therapeutic for the novel coronavirus continues, Sanofi Pasteur announced yesterday that it has entered a partnership with the U.S Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority — or BARDA — to develop a vaccine. David Loew, Sanofi’s global head of vaccines, tells STAT that the company’s previous work on SARS, a related virus, gives Sanofi a leg up in the current race. Neither Loew nor BARDA revealed the financial terms of the partnership, but Loew shared that the U.S. agency is funding Sanofi to come up with a list of vaccine candidates and produce pilot lots of the vaccines that will be used in testing. Loew said that the company expects a candidate will be ready for lab testing in the next six months, and for testing in people within a year to 18 months. As of this morning, there have been more than 75,000 Covid-19 cases, and 2,011 people have died.
Scientists report baby boy born to a cancer patient who froze eggs prior to treatment

Scientists are reporting what they say is the first baby to be born from freezing and fertilizing immature eggs from a cancer patient. Many young cancer patients face the risk of infertility as a result of treatment, and the new report could offer hope for others. In a new letter to the editor in *Annals of Oncology*, researchers in France describe retrieving immature eggs from a 29-year-old woman before she underwent chemotherapy for breast cancer. The removed eggs were given more hormones to prepare them for fertilization and then frozen. Five years later, the woman was deemed infertile as attempts to become pregnant for a year after she completed cancer treatment were unsuccessful. Scientists then unfroze her preserved eggs, injected them with sperm, and one of the resulting embryos was transferred to the woman's womb. Nine months later, the woman gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

Nearly 1 in 5 children in rural areas have a developmental disability

New CDC data reveal that U.S. children living in rural areas are more likely to be diagnosed with developmental disabilities and are less likely to get treatment. Here's more from the report:

- **Overall trends**: Between 2015-2018, nearly 20% of children ages 3-17 and living in rural areas in the U.S. were diagnosed with a developmental disability, compared to 17% of those living in urban areas.

- **Diagnoses**: More than 11% of kids in rural America were diagnosed with ADHD, compared to around 9% of kids in cities and larger towns. An equal proportion of kids in both geographic areas had autism spectrum disorder diagnoses.

- **Treatment**: Children living in rural areas were less likely than their urban peers to have seen a mental health professional or had
U.S. were also less likely to have received special education or early intervention services.

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Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) account for 71% of the deaths worldwide

NCDs are not selective; they affect men and women in all countries and all socioeconomic classes, albeit with notable regional differences that influence intervention strategies and outcomes. Further amplifying the crisis, the high prevalence and chronic nature of NCDs have a direct impact on economies; the total global burden estimated to reach US$47 trillion between 2010 and 2030. Upjohn, a Pfizer division, shares insights on the major causes, trends and methods of intervention against NCDs.

Inside STAT: Sen. Chuck Grassley on drug pricing, insulin, and innovation

Sen. Chuck Grassley (R -Iowa) thinks that voters are interested in more pressing issues than the impeachment trial that has recently been dominating the news. “You can bet your boots, families care a lot more about what they’re paying each month for their child’s
investigations into insulin pricing to oversight probes into hospitals, Grassley's long career in Congress has placed him at the helm of a range of health care issues. STAT Plus subscribers recently had the opportunity to ask Grassley their questions about all things health care, and the questions ranged from what would happen to those senators who are up for reelection in November if the Senate fails to take action on lowering drug costs to how the government could address gene therapies. Subscribers can read more here.

**Broad support among Americans for tissue and organ donation for research**

The advocacy group Research!America is out with a small, new survey that finds broad support for the donation of tissue and organs for research. Here's more:

- **The survey:** More than 1,000 adults were surveyed about their views on organ and tissue donation for research, as well as whether they were signed up to be donors.
- **The findings:** 92% of those surveyed agree — most of them strongly so — that organ and tissue donations help with medical innovation. Majorities of respondents also support donation at death for transplants and for research.
- **Registered donors:** At the same time, 55% of those surveyed said they were registered as organ or tissue donors. Among those who weren't registered, they cited indecision as a major reason why.

**Medical practices bought by private equity firms more than doubled in recent years**

Private equity firms are increasingly acquiring physician groups, and new research finds that anesthesiology practices are most likely to be bought. Equity firms buying out medical practices help provide physician groups with the kind of financing they need to keep up...
other necessities. Looking at data from 2013-2016 across the U.S., researchers found that the number of acquired medical practices went from 59 in 2013 to 136 three years later, and most of these occurred in the South. Of the 355 groups that were acquired over the study period, nearly 20% were anesthesiology and multispecialty firms. Private equity firms usually expect a 20% or greater return, the authors write, and future research will have to examine whether these firms’ involvement with medical practices affects the quality and quantity of care in order to meet investor demands.

What to read around the web today

- Working in science was a brutal education. That’s why I left. BuzzFeed News
- Consumer groups and unions try again to block the AbbVie and Allergan merger. STAT Plus
- ‘Are you sick?’ For Asian-Americans, a sneeze brings suspicion. The New York Times
- Five years later, HIV-hit town rebounds. But the nation is slow to heed lessons. Kaiser Health News
- Opioid vending machine opens in Vancouver. The Guardian

Thanks for reading! More tomorrow,
Sanofi developing a coronavirus vaccine, developmental disabilities in kids, & Americans' views on tissue donation