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# — News From The States —

# **EVENING WRAP**



By [Kate Queram](#)

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The good: Autumn temperatures.

The bad: COVID-19, colds and flu.

The newsletter: Health care news and Trump!

## **The Big Takeaway**

A psychiatric hospital in Oregon on Wednesday announced changes to its transportation policies after an “extremely dangerous” patient escaped and careened down the interstate in a state-owned van on his first day at the facility. The changes were mandated by a federal inspector who [investigated the incident](#) and found that vehicles and transport protocols at the Oregon State Hospital posed an “immediate” threat of injury or death, [the Oregon Capital Chronicle reported](#).



*The Oregon State Hospital in Salem.*

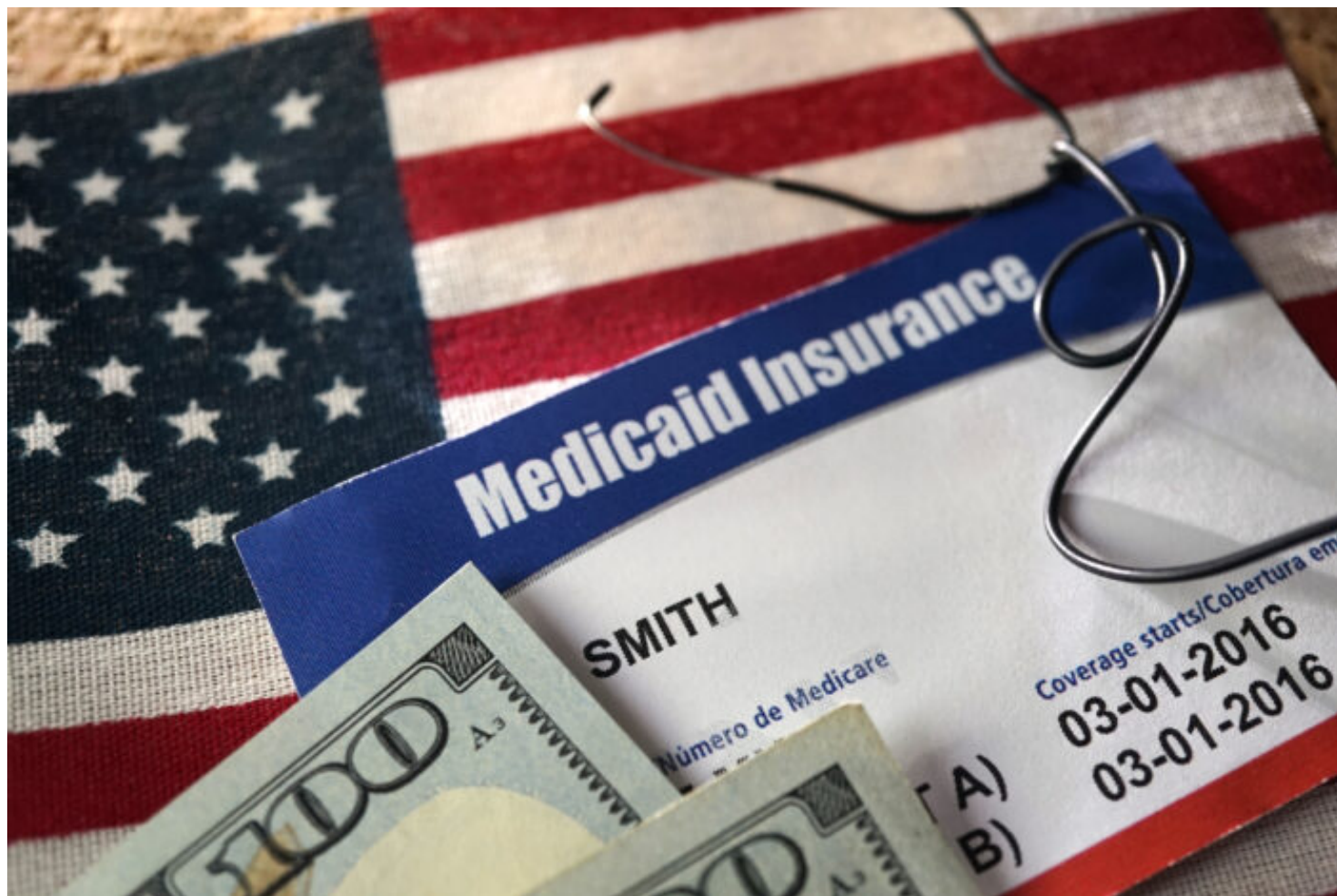
*(Photo by Michael Romanos/Oregon Capital Chronicle)*

Federal officials typically allow weeks for facilities to correct problems, but the escape at the state-run hospital warranted [“immediate action”](#) to prevent a recurrence of what an inspector described as a preventable incident. The patient — a 39-year-old man facing attempted murder, robbery and assault charges — [absconded with a van](#) hours after being admitted on Aug. 30. He’d had an altercation with another patient and was being transported back to the hospital after receiving medical treatment at an emergency room. He’d been shackled, police said, but was able to commandeer the van after “hospital staff left the vehicle keys in the ignition unattended,” according to the federal report. He was free for 36 hours before firefighters found him in a muddy pond near Portland.

Officials with the Oregon Health Authority announced late Friday that federal regulators had warned that conditions at the hospital put patients in “immediate jeopardy” — the most serious notice issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. But the state did not release the accompanying inspector’s report until Wednesday, when it also publicized the [proposed fixes](#).

The plan requires hospital staff to “maintain control of the vehicle keys at all times” and load and

unload passengers from vans in enclosed garages with dedicated security staff. The vans will also be outfitted with protective barriers between the front and back seats, officials said.



*Money and health care: America!*

*(Photo by Getty Images)*

**In Louisiana, lawmakers are clamoring to reevaluate a lucrative Medicaid technology contract** awarded without their input and without a competitive bid process, which they say unfairly excluded one company from deliberations. Those complaints, aired Friday at a budget meeting, echoed a number of talking points in a lawsuit filed two weeks ago by Gainwell Technologies, the group that lost out on the work, [the Louisiana Illuminator reported](#).

The multi-year contract, worth at least \$245 million, is part of a federally mandated overhaul of the state's outdated Medicaid processing services. It's a national requirement, so rather than accept bids for the contract, Gov. John Bel Edwards' administration used a cooperative method that selects vendors from a list of choices vetted by other states — in this case, Montana, which submitted five choices, including Gainwell, Conduent (the eventual winner), and three other companies.

Gainwell, which oversees the state's current Medicaid system, was not selected as a finalist, which the company objected to in legal filings, noting that it ranked first among the five choices for affordability and technology. The company also claimed the process violated state law by bypassing the budget committee. On Friday, lawmakers agreed.

"We didn't even have an opportunity to look at this," state Rep. Daryl Deshotel said Friday at a budget meeting. "I'm just floored that we are even talking about a quarter of a billion dollar contract that we didn't vet."

**Floors:** [Alabama state employee health insurance premiums up, benefits down](#) ... [Lawsuit accuses Arkansas law firm of misconduct in early days of medical marijuana](#) ... [State officials dig in to launch center for Georgians with disabilities who are in crisis](#) ... [Number of Hoosiers without health insurance declines](#) ... ['A nice, regular fall': Kansas doctors call for more vaccinations to dampen COVID-19 cases](#) ... [Another Kentucky hospital adds surgery by robot](#) ... [Michigan Senate committee considers prescription drug cost oversight package](#) ... [Nearly 3,180 Granite Staters get Medicaid back under new federal guidance](#) ... [New Jersey lawmakers want automatic state funding bumps for cash-strapped social services groups](#)



## State of Our Democracy

Donald Trump on Wednesday attempted to straddle the line on abortion, both touting his role in creating the superconservative U.S. Supreme Court that overturned *Roe v. Wade* and warning Republicans of the political peril of pursuing an all-out national ban. The remarks, part of a typical stream-of-consciousness speech at a campaign rally in Iowa, followed days of GOP blowback over [an MSNBC interview](#) where Trump objected to both a national ban and state-level policies that restrict abortion after six weeks of pregnancy, [the Iowa Capital Dispatch reported](#).

"We ended *Roe v. Wade*," Trump said Wednesday in Dubuque. "They couldn't get the job done. I got the job done. I got it done."



*Smarmy because he got it done.*

*(Photo by Robin Opsahl/Iowa Capital Dispatch)*

The change gave anti-choice groups “tremendous negotiating power,” Trump said. Still, abortion “cost us unnecessarily but dearly in the midterms,” in part because so many Republicans have been unwilling to consider exceptions to state-level bans for health reasons or victims of rape or incest.

“Without the exceptions, it is very difficult to win the elections,” Trump said. “We would probably lose the majorities in 2024 without the exceptions, and perhaps the presidency itself. But you have to follow your heart. ... But at the same time, we have to win elections. We don’t want to be back where we were.”

Trump also encouraged Republicans to straight-up lie about the reality of abortion by painting advocates as “radicals” who are “willing to kill a baby in the seventh month, ninth month, eighth month after birth, after birth,” which he claimed is a real thing codified in “legislation” in “some states.” These are, again, straight-up lies — abortions after 21 weeks of pregnancy account for

[less than 1%](#) of all abortions nationwide and are almost always due to fatal fetal anomalies or risk to the life of the pregnant patient, and abortion after a baby is born is a convoluted way of saying “murder,” a universally illegal thing! — but why bother fact-checking or using critical thinking skills when it’s so much easier to just buy whatever the snake oil salesman is selling?

But some people like it, I guess, including Mary Lockwood, who said Trump’s rally rambling “basically won me over.” She’d supported abortion access for most of her life, she said, but now favors restrictions on late-term abortions and thought Trump’s approach to the issue was “respectful.”

“I think that as a woman and a mother, I don’t want to see babies being killed either,” she said. “I thought that was just propaganda, but I really think anything over a few weeks is not acceptable to me.”

I regret to inform you that there’s so much more of this to come as campaign season ramps up, particularly in Iowa, where Trump plans to hold five events in the next six weeks in hopes of shoring up support for the caucus in January. He implored attendees at Wednesday’s rally to participate in that event, warning them that the 2024 election is “our final battle” against the warmongers and the globalists and the Marxists and the fascists and all the other usual suspects.

“The great silent majority is rising like never before,” he said, referring, I guess, to the MAGA movement that has garnered an unprecedented and exhausting amount of attention for the better part of the last decade. “Under our leadership, the forgotten man and woman will be forgotten no longer with your help, your love and your vote.”

**I know who I’d like to forget:** [U.S. Senate confirms a military nominee, the first since Tuberville blockade began](#) ... [Nora Dannehy says Barr meddled in Trump-Russia probe](#) ... [Indiana State Sen. Jack Sandlin dies](#) ... [GOP candidates bash Biden in first forum for Maryland congressional seat](#) ... [Manhattan Democratic Party boss has a target on his back — again](#) ... [Omaha steamfitter/union leader Dan Osborn to challenge incumbent U.S. Sen. Deb. Fischer](#) ... [Lobbying groups spent around \\$35 million to influence Tennessee lawmakers during the first half of 2023](#) ... [“Get ready”: Ken Paxton promises retribution in interview blitz after impeachment trial](#) ... [After ERIC withdrawal, Virginia strikes deals with 6 states to share voter data](#)



## From The Newsrooms

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- [‘We cheer for who we are’: New Mexico football rivalry spans generations](#)
- [Butler faces questions about ongoing racial issues within the Maryland State Police](#)
- [Tennessee leads nation in arresting and punishing pregnant women](#)
- [Biden administration offers temporary protection to Venezuelan migrants](#)

## One Last Thing

Apparently, Justin Timberlake sang, [“It’s gonna be May”](#) because the track’s producers were Swedish and that’s how “me” sounds with a Swedish accent.

“I sang, ‘It’s gonna be me,’” Timberlake said on an episode of the [YouTube series “Hot Ones.”](#) “And [the producer] was like, ‘No, no, no, no, no.’ He was like, ‘It’s may, MAY.’”

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