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 **Bacon's****Digest**

Acting Head of FDA Is Unlikely to Keep Post

President Bush is unlikely to name the acting head of the Food and Drug Administration as its permanent commissioner, according to Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt. He indicates it is more probable that acting FDA chief Andrew von Eschenbach will resume his role as director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Because of conflict-of-interest concerns, von Eschenbach has taken a temporary leave of absence from his position at the NCI.

Helping uninsured children

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich has proposed a medical plan that would make Illinois the first state to offer health benefits to all uninsured children. The proposal would target children in families lacking sufficient income for private coverage but earning too much to qualify for established state-funded programs.

FDA names women's health leader

Theresa Toigo has been appointed acting director of the office of women's health at the FDA. She also serves as director of the agency's office of special health issues.

Prescription purchasing pool formed

Maine has joined with Iowa, Utah and Vermont to create a prescription drug purchasing pool. Maine Gov. John Baldacci believes that the Sovereign States Drug Consortium could save \$1 million each year in Maine's Medicaid program.

Rhode Island examines health care costs

Rhode Island Gov. Don Carcieri has proposed a five-part plan to reduce that state's health care costs. The focus would be on primary care and preventive services.

Survey examines impact of depression

Middle-age Americans, women and various ethnic groups are more likely than other segments of the population to experience a major depressive disorder (MDD), according to the National Institutes of Health. But it also says that the risk for the onset of MDD increases sharply among the 12- to 16-year-old population group.

Massachusetts warned of Medicaid cut

The federal government warns that it may cut as much as \$385 million in Medicaid monies to Massachusetts if the state fails to pass health care legislation by early next year. The federal government wants the state to develop a plan to reduce the number of uninsured residents.

FDA extends review date for cancer drug

The FDA has extended its review date for Celgene Corp.'s cancer drug, probably until early next year. The company had been hoping for regulatory approval of Revlimid, a derivative of thalidomide, for use in a blood cancer.

Children lack health coverage

About 1 million eligible children in California are not signed up for government health coverage merely because of misconceptions concerning its availability, according to the Foundation for Health Coverage Education (FHCE). "Well-meaning, hard-working legislators mandated programs but hadn't effectively communicated them to people in need," notes FHCE founder Philip Leberherz.

