

Massachusetts law limits drug firms' gifts to medical professionals.

The [Boston Globe](#) (8/11, Allen) reported that Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick (D) signed into law a bill that "provides \$25 million to promote electronic medical record-keeping in doctors' offices, requires the state university to graduate more primary care doctors, and gives regulators the power to hold hearings when health insurers want to raise premiums."

"The new law will [also] establish a medical-home demonstration project aimed at reducing healthcare costs through preventive, coordinated care of patients," [Modern Healthcare](#) (8/11, Rhea) added. "Under the legislation, hospitals and community health centers will be required to adopt computerized physician order-entry systems by 2012 and electronic health-record systems by 2015." The bill also requires that "[h]ospitals...report all healthcare-associated infections, and state payers will no longer reimburse providers for certain so-called 'never events' such as wrong-site surgeries." The [Wall Street Journal's](#) (8/11, Hensley) Health Blog also covered the story.

Proposed legislation may lead Massachusetts businesses to drop health coverage altogether, retail group says. The [Boston Globe](#) (8/12, Lazar) reports, "Businesses are balking at a proposed state regulation that, a leading retail group says, will force small companies to spend thousand of dollars more in health insurance for their workers, and could lead many employers to drop coverage altogether." Gov. Deval Patrick's (D) administration recently proposed rules that "are intended to help close a gap in funding the landmark healthcare law. The regulations, if adopted, would take effect Oct. 1, and raise about \$45 million this fiscal year." Currently, "employers with more than 10 full-time equivalent employees" are required "to offer health coverage or to pay an annual 'fair share' penalty of \$295 per worker." They also have the option to "pa[y] at least 33 percent of full-time workers' premiums within the first 90 days of employment or mak[e] sure that at least 25 percent of their full-time workers are covered by an employer plan." The proposal "would require employers to meet both requirements, or pay the penalty." As a result, a retail group said that "many small retailers would find it cheaper to just drop health coverage and pay the annual fine instead