

REVIEW & OUTLOOK

OPINION

Shut Down or We'll Sue

...ing to reopen their
...gress could at least
...cludes passing the
...t

... stressed the steps it has taken to protect work-
...ers and customers, and in many cases it is im-
...possible to prove where an individual picked
...up the virus. The standard for
...lawsuits against business
...should be evidence of reck-
...less conduct or deliberate in-
...difference.

A plague of lawsuits hangs over the recovery without new protection.

...lawyers are
...y manufac-
...refusal to
...emotional
...nursing
...denial
...s little
...don't

...cluding those who use new treatments in their
...frantic efforts to save lives. Lawsuits should
...have to prove gross negligence. Companies
...rushing to produce new drugs and vaccines
...need assurance that they won't be fleeced if
...their products fail. Companies that stepped into
...new areas to make vital equipment—breweries
...producing hand sanitizer, automotive firms
...making ventilators—deserve guards against
...lawsuits for unintentional design or manufac-
...turing flaws. The liability standard here should
...be reckless or willful misconduct.

...The White House and Senate Republicans
...want liability protection to be part of any new
...virus relief, and we hope they stick to it. Texas
...Senator John Cornyn is working on a bill that
...would protect essential and non-essential busi-
...nesses from lawsuits if they comply with federal
...guidelines.

...Democrats oppose all this, with Senate Mi-
...ity Leader Chuck Schumer accusing Republi-
...cans of working for "big CEOs." But let's re-
...member whom Senate Democrats work for.
...8 million to Mr. Schumer's campaigns, more
...than \$1.6 million to Nancy Pelosi's. They've
...more than \$4 million to the Democratic
...Campaign Committee and nearly \$3
...million to the House Democratic committee in
...the cycle. Individual candidates bene-
...fited from nearly \$3 trillion in vi-
...tal funding for hospitals, struggling busi-
...nesses and local governments. The
...government used to save jobs and busi-
...nesses from trial-lawyer bank
...ruptcy. Government lockdowns put the
...economy into recession. Now govern-
...ment help businesses reopen with-
...out litigation.

De Vos

...al funds.
...mon-sense reforms
...on female students.
...ma official who en-
...d that the new stan-
...dards, that pre-
...sumably permissible to rape
...with impunity."
...and automatically
...of school if he

...further. The
...ges to

De Blasio, Covid-19 and Some Orthodox

...Regarding Jeff Ballabon and Mark
...Goldfeder's "De Blasio's 'Message' to
...Jews" (op-ed, May 1): I am
...many thousand
...Jews

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

States Created Their Own Pension Debt Mess

...Regarding the letters of April 30
...responding to Andrew Biggs's "A
...Bailout for Illinois? Not Without
...Strict Conditions" (Cross Country,
...April 25): The coronavirus crisis has
...laid bare that many state govern-
...ments are in dire straits because of
...the huge pension debts they have
...run up. However, many municipali-
...ties have the same issue.

...A Forbes magazine article from
...May 2019 says that Pension Tracker
...calculates the total pension debt on a
...market basis at \$5.2 trillion for state
...and local governments. Any taxpayer
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...huge liabilities, both state and local,
...that are growing exponentially. Tax-
...payers at the state and local levels
...must step up to the plate and vote
...out any politicians who are unwilling
...to finally recognize and correct this

...sword of Damocles dangling over our
...heads. It will take decades to work
...our way out of this mess, even if the
...changes are made now.

...Public employees should have the
...same retirement options private-sec-
...tor workers have—Social Security
...and 401(k)s, to which they must con-
...tribute. The days of guaranteed pub-
...lic-employee pension payments,
...which can be multiples of Social Se-
...curity, and granted 10-15 years be-
...fore private sector-workers can re-
...tire, must stop. The largest transfer
...of wealth in the U.S. for the last 15
...years has been from middle-class,
...private-sector workers to govern-
...ment employees. If you do the math,
...most "public servants" are multimil-
...lionaires by virtue of their guaran-
...teed pension payments.

KATHERINE L. NEWMAN
Coral Gables, Fla.

Telemedicine Has Its Big Moment in the Sun

...Your editorial "The Doctor Will
...Zoom You Now" (April 27) brings to
...light another disturbing trend. Anal-
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...The oversimplification of diagnosis
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...doubtedly lead to gaps in care.

...Telemedicine is a reasonable alter-
...native during this period of social dis-
...tancing as a way of providing "Band-
...Aid" care and maintaining a degree of
...continuity. However, it should never
...be regarded as a replacement for, or
...being comparable to, direct patient
...contact. Once again, we will pay a
...hefty price down the road should we
...choose to take shortcuts and look for
...that easy fix.

RONALD G. FRANK, M.D.
West Orange, N.J.

...Disruptive technologies dramati-
...cally alter the way we do life. Blood-
...pressure monitors, thermometers,
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...for a collective cost at less than \$150
...(which I believe Medicare should com-
...pensate). Why not allow for stable,
...conscientious populations able to re-
...port these data to the health-care pro-
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...vices can evaluate these interactions
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...ingly. Should I spend 30 minutes in
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...(10 minutes with a nurse practitioner
...and 15 minutes with an M.D.) and 30
...minutes back home in traffic with
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SCOTT MARTIN, M.D., FCAP
St. Louis

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...home. Also, with office visits down, I
...could supplement my revenue and
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...lem—when we received our first in-
...surance payments, they were between
...\$20 and \$30. No doctor is going to
...agree to participate in telemedicine on
...a large scale unless reimbursement is
...changed.

JOSEPH DUVALL, M.D.
St. Louis

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

States Created Their Own Pension Debt Mess

Regarding the letters of April 30 responding to Andrew Biggs's "A Bailout for Illinois? Not Without Strict Conditions" (Cross Country, April 25): The coronavirus crisis has laid bare that many state governments are in dire straits because of the huge pension debts they have run up. However, many municipalities have the same issue.

A Forbes magazine article from May 2019 says that Pension Tracker calculates the total pension debt on a market basis at \$5.2 trillion for state and local governments. Any taxpayer bailout for the states will be a drop in the bucket compared with the huge liabilities, both state and local, that are growing exponentially. Taxpayers at the state and local levels must step up to the plate and vote out any politicians who are unwilling to finally recognize and correct this

sword of Damocles dangling over our heads. It will take decades to work our way out of this mess, even if the changes are made now.

Public employees should have the same retirement options private-sector workers have—Social Security and 401(k)s, to which they must tribute. The days of guaranteed, public-employee pension payments, which can be multiples of Social Security, and granted 10-15 years before private sector-workers can retire, must stop. The largest source of wealth in the U.S. for the years has been from middle private-sector workers to government employees. If you do most "public servants" are millionaires by virtue of their guaranteed pension payments.

KATHERINE L. NEWMAN
Coral Gables, Fla.

Voice your opinion regardless of whether people are actually listening

Telemedicine Has Its Big Moment in the Sun

Your editorial "The Doctor Will Zoom You Now" (April 27) brings to light another disturbing trend. Analogous to EHR (electronic health records), the concept of direct patient care is once again taking a back seat. The oversimplification of diagnosis and treatment without actually "laying hands" on the patient or spending adequate one-to-one time will undoubtedly lead to gaps in care.

Telemedicine is a reasonable alternative during this period of social distancing as a way of providing "Band-Aid" care and maintaining a degree of continuity. However, it should never be regarded as a replacement for, or being comparable to, direct patient contact. Once again, we will pay a hefty price down the road should we choose to take shortcuts and look for that easy fix.

RONALD G. FRANK, M.D.
West Orange, N.J.

face-to-person appointment? The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services can evaluate these interactions and compensate appropriately. What is the value of these services to our national health? Pay providers accordingly. Should I spend 30 minutes in traffic, 30 minutes in a waiting room, 25 minutes with my health provider (10 minutes with a nurse practitioner and 15 minutes with an M.D.) and 30 minutes back home in traffic with what could be accomplished in 20 minutes for a routine annual exam or prescription refill? I think not.

SCOTT MARTIN, M.D., FCAP
St. Louis

I was excited that telemedicine would be readily available for my practice because of the coronavirus. As a dermatologist it fit perfectly into my practice. I could see and help my patients without them having to leave home. Also, with office visits down, I could supplement my revenue and keep my employees. Only one problem—when we received our first insurance payments, they were being denied. I am going to telemedicine. I am going to get reimbursed.

JOSEPH DU

@wsj
@saintbarnabasnj

Disruptive technologies dramatically alter the way we do life. Blood-pressure monitors, thermometers, pulse oximeters are all available and their collective cost at less than \$100 (which is a fraction of what they used to be). Why not make these data to the health-care provider and eliminate the need for a

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