

BIOETHICS NEWS STORIES

January–June 2026

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AI IN HEALTHCARE

[“Exclusive: 40 Million People Turn to ChatGPT for Health Care”](#)

by Megan Morrone, *Axios*, January 5, 2026

Americans are turning to AI tools to navigate the notoriously complex and opaque U.S. health care system. . . . Users turn to ChatGPT to decode medical bills, spot overcharges, appeal insurance denials, and when access to doctors is limited, some even use it to self-diagnose or manage their care.

[“Patients Are Using Chatbots to Fight Medical Bills, with Mixed Results”](#)

by Sarah Kwon, *New York Times*, April 8, 2026

Chatbots might seem to offer patients a way to fight back. But critics warn that the tools can dispense flawed advice, especially to users who are less experienced in using A.I., or who do not have much knowledge about the health care system.

One way people are using ChatGPT is to find billing errors, including duplicated charges or violations of Medicare rules. This has helped some patients, although others report that ChatGPT and other chatbots often miss the context and provide inaccurate information. This is a bigger problem for people who also use ChatGPT for diagnoses. One article reported that chatbots often miss when something requires immediate medical attention [[“1 in 3 Americans Use Chatbots for Health Advice. These 6 Patients Explain Why”](#)]. Additionally, uploading personal medical information to chatbots can be a privacy issue.

Nature reported that [“Dozens of AI Disease-Prediction Models Were Trained on Dubious Data,”](#) and *CBS* reported that over 4,000 fabricated citations were found in biomedical journal articles that used AI [[“AI Is Fabricating Citations in Biomedical Studies, Researchers Find”](#)]. Still, AI has helped people when doctors were unavailable or going to a doctor would be prohibitively expensive.

AI CRITICISM

[“The American Rebellian Against AI Is Gaining Steam”](#)

by Amrith Ramkumar, Katherine Blunt, and Lindsay Ellis, *Wall Street Journal*, May 19, 2026

The only thing growing faster than the artificial-intelligence industry may be Americans’ negative feelings about it—as former Google Chief Executive Eric Schmidt saw on Friday. . . . Like some other graduation speakers mentioning AI, Schmidt was met with a chorus of boos.

Americans, especially Gen Z, have soured on AI. In May, several tech industry graduation speakers were met with boos and protests when they mentioned AI. Sam Altman’s home was attacked by a 20-year-old who wrote a manifesto against AI. A congressman’s house was shot at because he voted in favor of data centers. While political violence should be condemned, many people were sympathetic to the grievances. This is, in part, due to the disconnect between Silicon Valley’s positive picture of AI and people’s actual experience with it, as reported in *The New Republic* [[“The AI Industry Is Discovering That the Public Hates It”](#)].

404 Media reported on a study by researchers at the Center for Democracy & Technology in which they outlined 37 “dark patterns” in chatbot conversations [[“New Study Reveals the Manipulative ‘Dark Patterns’ of AI Chatbots”](#)]. These patterns play on users’ psychological vulnerabilities to keep them engaged and to provide more personal information than they intended to. These dark patterns are by design, according to the report.

The Atlantic writer Tyler Austin Harper, who is not necessarily religious, struggled with the fact that best word he can find for the “deep moral failures of AI” is “sin” [[“There Is Already a Word for the Deep Moral Failures of AI”](#)].

And Pope Leo XIV released his first encyclical, *Magnifica humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence*, in which he critiques several aspects of AI, including the concentration of power by those who control it [[“Pope Leo’s](#)

['Magnifica humanitas': AI Must Serve Humanity Not Concentrate Power](#)"].

"These Rural Americans Are Trying to Hold Back the Tide of AI"

by Anvee Bhutani and Amrith Ramkumar *Wall Street Journal*, February 2, 2026

Fearing rising utility costs, job losses and privacy violations, locals blocked or delayed about 20 projects around the country representing nearly \$100 billion in combined investment in the second quarter of last year, according to Data Center Watch, a research firm tracking the fights.

In December 2025, Lauren Goode in *Wired* wrote that "[Billion-Dollar Data Centers Are Taking Over the World](#)," drawing from a quote from OpenAI CEO Sam Altman who said OpenAI's Roman Empire is the *actual* Roman Empire. Tech companies want massive amounts of land, electricity, and water to house and operate massive data centers for AI computing. However, there has been strong opposition to building data centers by the people in these rural communities. *The Wall Street Journal* has published several articles analyzing the business of building data centers, including how politicians have responded.

REPRODUCTIVE ETHICS

"The Supreme Court Keeps Abortion Pill Mifepristone Available by Telehealth"

by Selena Simmons-Duffin, *NPR*, May 14, 2026

The Supreme Court decided to keep the status quo in place for medication abortion access Thursday [May 14th].

In May, the US Supreme Court extended a stay in a case by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals that would have banned mail-order mifepristone via telehealth. Mifepristone is part of a two-drug regimen prescribed to terminate a pregnancy. The Fifth Circuit is in Louisiana, which has strict abortion laws. The Fifth Circuit reinstated an FDA requirement that people seeking mifepristone must visit a healthcare provider in person, rather than receiving drugs over telehealth. The Supreme Court's dissenting opinion by Justice Alito points out that this should be a matter decided by each state.

"Scientists Edit Human Embryo Genes with Startling Precision"

by Carl Zimmer, *New York Times*, June 4, 2026

Scientists at Columbia University have edited the DNA of early human embryos with unprecedented accuracy, an achievement that could open the way to babies engineered with particular characteristics.

Geneticist Dieter Egli at Columbia University has called for a public discussion after posting a paper of work done by his research team showing that base editing can precisely edit targeted genes in embryos. CRISPR tends to either cause off-target cuts or it fails to find all the targets. By combining CRISPR with other compounds, Egli's group used a technique called "base editing" that can remove a single DNA base letter and prompt the cell's machinery to fix it. Egli's work is funded by Nucleus Genomics, a private company

that screens IVF embryos and has been criticized for promoting screening for features like high IQ.

PHARMACEUTICALS

"Health Officials Slash the Number of Vaccines Recommended for All Kids"

by Pien Huang and Rob Stein, *NPR*, January 5, 2026

In an unprecedented change, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is reducing the number of vaccines routinely recommended for all children from 17 to 11.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention decreased the number of recommended vaccines for babies. Among the vaccines that are no longer recommended are hepatitis A, hepatitis B, rotavirus, RSV, meningococcal disease, flu, and covid. Vaccines that are still recommended for babies and children are measles, mumps, and rubella, whooping cough, tetanus, diphtheria, Hib, pneumonia, polio, chickenpox, and HPV.

Some parents choose not to follow even the recommended vaccinations, which has resulted in an increase in measles cases throughout the US among those who are not vaccinated [["Charted: The Big Measles Surge"](#)].

"Pancreatic Cancer mRNA Vaccine Shows Lasting Results in an Early Trial"

by Kaitlin Sullivan, Marina Kopf, and Anne Thompson, *NBC News*, April 18, 2026

Scientists caution that more research is needed, but nearly all of the patients who responded to the personalized vaccine are still alive six years later.

Pancreatic cancer is an insidious cancer that is difficult to detect and to treat. Most people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer will not live for more than five years after diagnosis. A new mRNA therapeutic has changed this for several people involved in a phase 1 clinical trial. The therapeutic was given to patients post cancer de-bulking surgery with the hope that it would prevent recurrence. Like the mRNA covid vaccines, this cancer therapeutic works by recruiting the body's own immune system to fight off any cells that have the same genetic signature as the pancreatic cancer cells.

As a note on wording, *MIT Technology Review* reported that Moderna and BioNTech, makers of the mRNA covid vaccine, have started calling their mRNA products "cancer immunotherapies" rather than "vaccines" [["What's in a Name? Moderna's 'Vaccine' vs. 'Therapy' Dilemma"](#)]. The companies' reasoning is that these products are given to people after they have been diagnosed with cancer and serve as a therapy rather than a vaccine to prevent cancer. Some speculate that the companies have changed their wording to distance their products from the controversies around the covid vaccines.

“Wegovy Obesity Pill Now Available at Pharmacies”

by Sydney Lupkin, *NPR*, January 5, 2026

The Food and Drug Administration approved the pill for obesity on Dec. 22. It's also approved to reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke in patients who are obese or overweight.

Novo Nordisk, maker of Wegovy, the semaglutide GLP-1 weight loss injection, now has a pill version of their weight loss drug. Studies show that participants on the Wegovy pill lost as much weight over a 64-week period as those on the Wegovy injection. Participants reported similar side effects as the injection, too. Several articles reported on interesting side effects of GLP-1 injections, including anhedonia, or losing the ability to enjoy things that were once enjoyable [[“The Mysterious Symptom Popping up in Some GLP-1 Users”](#)]. This may be tied to the way GLP-1 drugs turn down “food noise” for many people. A *New York Times* Article reported on people’s experience with GLP-1s quieting what they describe as incessant thoughts about food [[“The Day the Food Noise Died”](#)]. However, once a person stops taking the drug, the food noise returns, and in almost every case, the person gains back the weight that they lost. An article in *The Guardian* reports on a study from the University of Oxford showing that people who stop taking GLP-1 drugs regain all the weight they lost in under two years, which is

much faster than other types of weight loss programs [[“People Who Stop Taking Weight-Loss Jabs Regain Weight in Under Two Years, Study Reveals”](#)].

OTHER NEWS

“Novartis Settles with Henrietta Lacks’ Estate over Use of Her ‘Stolen’ Cells to Advance Medicine”

by Brian Witte, *Associated Press*, February 26, 2026

Novartis has settled a lawsuit by the estate of Henrietta Lacks that alleged the pharmaceutical giant unjustly profited off her cells, which were taken from her tumor without her knowledge in 1951 and reproduced in labs to enable major medical advancements, including the polio vaccine.

HeLa cells are a mainstay in pharmaceutical testing and biomedical research. These cells, named for Henrietta Lacks, were obtained without Lacks’ consent from a cervical cancer tumor by doctors at Johns Hopkins Hospital, where she was being treated. Those cells were the first human cells that were grown and replicated in a lab indefinitely, a so-called immortal cell line. This recent lawsuit with Novartis is the second lawsuit brought by Henrietta Lacks’ family accusing a pharmaceutical company of profiting from her stolen cells without compensating the family.