



## Top Stories

### Climate Change Remixed

Climate change science can be challenging to understand. A new interactive music video helps to explain simple concepts in climate science by mixing catchy beats, creative lyrics, and a hands-on experience in music. Users of the video's interactive site can add or drop sounds of a shredding guitar or rattling car, creating remixes to help the science sink in. David Holmes and Andrew Bean combine funk, folk and hip-hop elements in their song about fracking called "My Water's on Fire Tonight"—**check it out!** (*The Daily Climate*, 3.22.13) Create your own remix **here**.

### Toxic Lips

Researchers at UC Berkeley's School of Public Health found troubling levels of toxic metals in commonly used lipsticks and lip glosses found in drugstores and department stores. They detected lead, cadmium, chromium, aluminum and five other metals, some of which could raise health concerns. Lipstick and lip gloss are of special concern because when they are not being blotted on tissue or left as kiss marks, they are ingested or absorbed by the individual wearing them. Over time, excessive exposure to the toxins could lead to stomach tumors and toxicity in



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the nervous system. Currently, there are no U.S. standards for metal content in cosmetics; however, the study signals the need for more oversight by health regulators. (*UC Berkeley News Center*, 5.2.13) Read more about the **study, environmental health** and **toxic substances**.

### HIV Baby Cured

A baby born with HIV appears to have been cured, scientists announced, describing the case of a child from Mississippi who's now 2 1/2 and has been off medication for about a year with no signs of infection. The baby was born to a mother whose HIV wasn't diagnosed until she was in labor. Within 30 hours of birth, a doctor had started the infant on a powerful three-drug infusion, and that quick action eliminated the virus from the baby's blood before it could form hideouts—reservoirs of dormant cells. Studies are planned on this aggressive treatment, but preventing babies from being born with HIV remains the top priority. (*Huffington Post / Associated Press*, 3.3.13) Read **more** about HIV **transmission, treatment** and **testing**.

## Funding Agency News

### Combating Fraud

Health and Human Services announced a proposed rule that would increase rewards for reporting fraud to nearly \$10 million. The money would be paid to Medicare beneficiaries and other individuals whose tips about suspected fraud lead to the successful recovery of funds. Over the last three years, almost \$15 billion in fraud has been recovered from reporting by individuals – a proven tool for government to detect fraud, waste and abuse in the Medicare program. A person that provides specific information leading to the recovery of funds may be eligible for a reward of 15% of the amount recovered up to \$10 million. (*CMS*, 4.24.13) Read the **press release**.

### Suicide On the Rise

CDC reports that suicide rates have risen substantially in recent years, even surpassing deaths from motor vehicle crashes. Rates for middle-aged adults 35-64 years old increased the most at 28%.



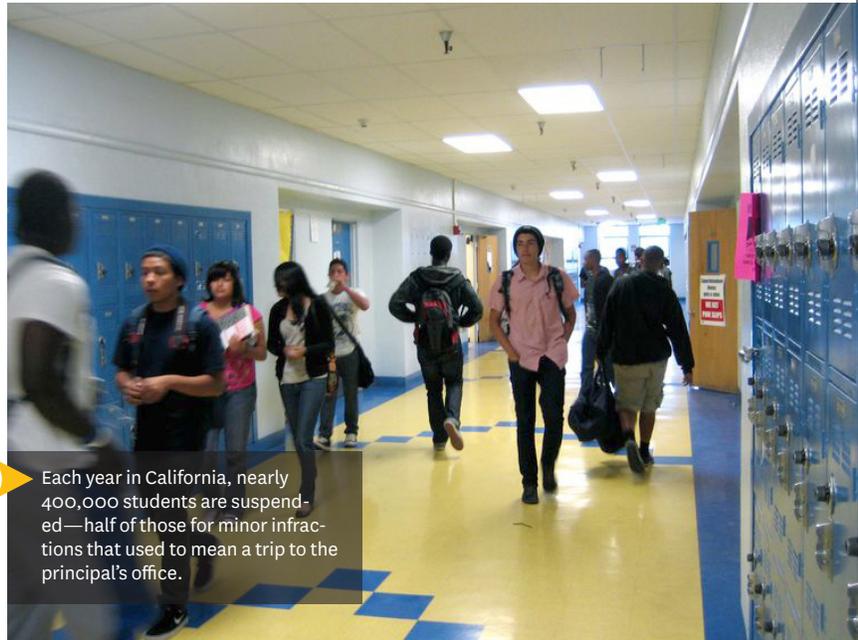
### Who We Are

Hollywood, Health & Society is a program of the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center, and is a free resource for entertainment writers working on health and climate change storylines. We have been funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The California Endowment, the Grantham Foundation, Climate-Works, Skoll Global Threats Fund and an anonymous donor, among others.

Firearm and hanging/suffocation were the most common methods for men in this age group, and poisoning and firearm were the most common methods for women. Suicide prevention strategies involve enhancing social support and community connectedness, improving access to mental health services and reducing stigma and barriers to seeking help. (CDC, 5.2.13) Read the [press release](#) and [more](#) about [suicide](#).

## A Stop to Suspensions

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) adopted a bill to end the use of willful defiance as a reason for suspensions. Instead, the bill aims to keep students in school and on the path to success through other disciplinary strategies. Each year in California, nearly 400,000 students are suspended—half of those for minor infractions that used to mean a trip to the principal's office—and only a very small percentage are for weapons or drugs. Further, young men of color are suspended at disproportionately higher rates. (*The California Endowment*, 5.15.13) Read the [press release](#) and more about [school discipline](#).



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## ➔ Real People, Real Lives



**ANGELINA'S DECISION** One of the most famous women in the world, Angelina Jolie, came out with a shocking revelation recently—she had a double mastectomy to reduce her risk of developing breast cancer. After her mother died of breast cancer at age 56, she discovered she carries a faulty BRCA1 gene, which gives her an 87% risk of

developing breast cancer and a 50% risk of developing ovarian cancer. Angelina decided to proactively undergo surgery on her breasts, minimizing her risk to under 5%. She says she can now tell her children they don't need to fear losing her to breast cancer – and feels empowered that she made a strong choice that in no way diminishes her femininity. It's a strong decision that sends a powerful message to women everywhere. (*The New York Times*, 5.14.13) Read [more](#) about [Angelina's story](#), [breast cancer](#), [BRCA testing](#), and [preventive mastectomy](#).

**IN UTERO REPAIR** At 18 weeks pregnant, Meagan Bishop learned her unborn baby had spina bifida, one of the most common birth defects in the U.S. Spina bifida occurs when the spinal cord doesn't finish forming completely causing physical and neurological impairments. The Bishops came to Texas Children's Hospital for a very delicate surgery in which doctors opened up the mother's uterus to repair her baby's spine. Traditionally, doctors would wait until after birth to make the repair. While the surgery carried many risks, three-week-old Berkley is a success story with the best possible prognosis. (*Click2Houston.com*, 4.24.13) Read [more](#) about [spina bifida](#) and [birth defects](#).

**FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT** Swarthmore College students are protesting, interrupting meetings and willing to go to jail in an effort to combat pollution and climate change by asking the endowment to divest in large fossil fuel companies. Kate Aronoff, a student who works with Mountain Justice, an advocacy group for this issue, says the students' actions are aimed at opening the conversations and holding the board accountable. The movement to divest from fossil fuels is lighting up college campuses across the country. Although the financial effects of divestment won't stop the companies, it will put them under extreme pressure to change their actions. (*Huffington Post*, 5.17.13) Read more about [divesting](#).