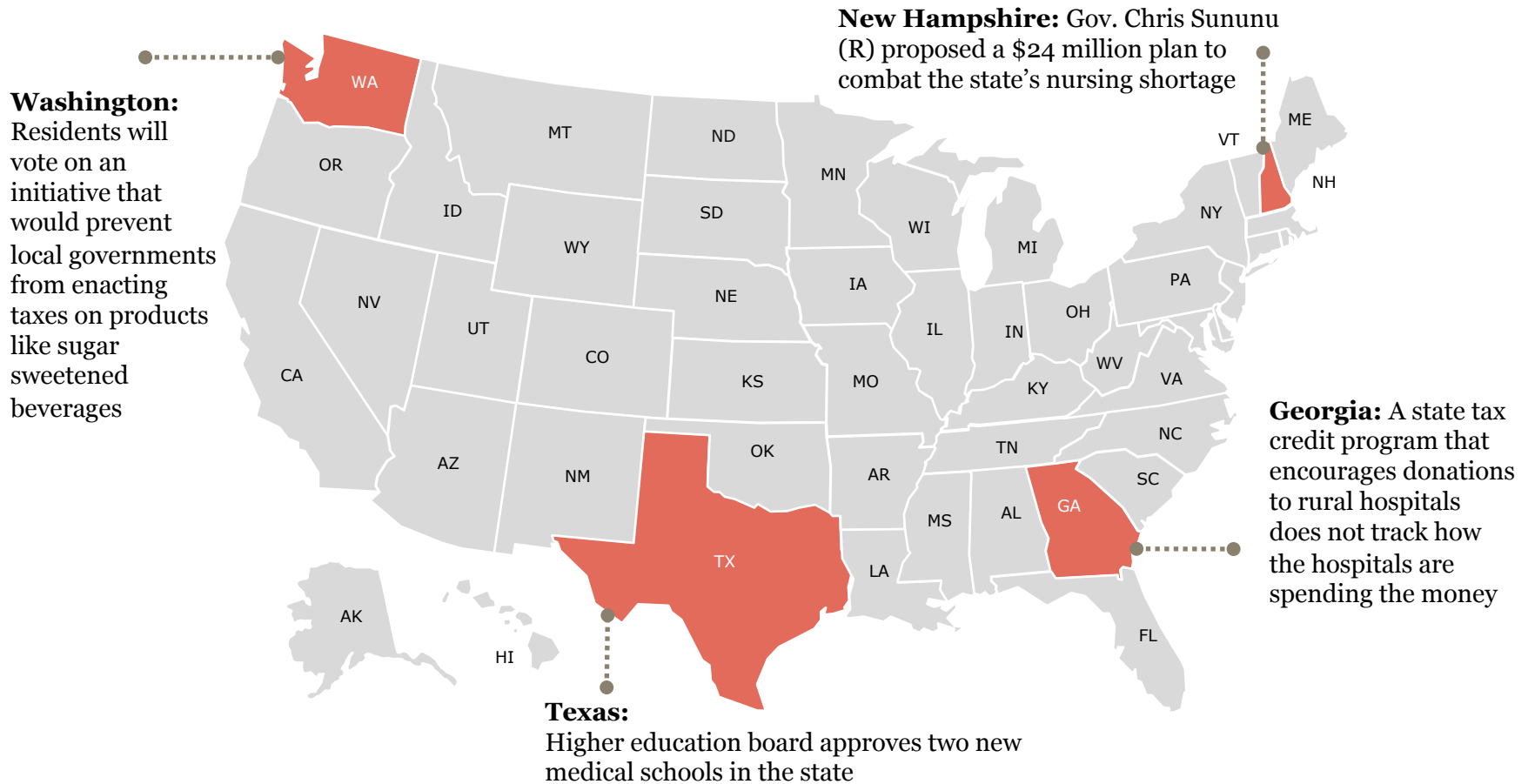


# The states of health care: October 22<sup>nd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>

Health care news stories from around the U.S.



## Washington: Residents will vote on an initiative that would prevent local governments from enacting SSB taxes



- Seattle passed a measure last year placing a 1.75 cent tax on sugar-sweetened beverages, which generated over \$10 million in its first six months
- The ballot initiative would not repeal Seattle's existing soda tax, but would prevent the city from creating additional related taxes
- State legislators would still be able to tax products
- Coca-Cola and PepsiCo have spent over \$20 million to convince Washington state voters to stop *local* governments from taxing individual products like sugar-sweetened beverages
- Groups representing healthy kids' organizations have raised only \$16,000 in cash to defeat the measure

## Texas: Higher education board approves two new medical schools in the state



- The Texas Higher Education Coordinator Board gave the University of Houston and the University of North Texas Health Science Center permission to launch doctorate of medicine programs
- All nine board members voted for UH, and only one, John Steen, Jr., voted against the North Texas proposal
- The hope is that an increase in the number of Texas-based medical schools will decrease the shortage of primary care physicians in the state
- The UNT Health Science Center received a donation to fund one year of tuition for the inaugural class and UH raised \$35 million to pay for four years of tuition for its first cohort

Sources: Shannon Najmabadi, "Texas higher education board approves medical schools for University of Houston and UNT Health Science Center," The Texas Tribune, October 25, 2018.

## Georgia: A state tax credit program that encourages donations to rural hospitals does not track how the money is spent



- Businesses and individuals have donated tens of millions of dollars to rural Georgia hospitals as a result of a state tax credit program
- The Georgia legislature increased the tax credit from 90% to 100% of donations, allowing a dollar-for-dollar reduction on state income taxes
- There is currently no publicly available data on the amount and manner in which each hospital is spending the donations
- Legislators plan to create new measures that track how dollars are spent and to increase transparency within the tax credit program

## New Hampshire: Gov. Chris Sununu (R) proposed a \$24 million plan to combat the state's nursing shortage



- Gov. Sununu unveiled a \$24 million plan to boost New Hampshire's health care workforce shortage
- Plymouth State University and University of New Hampshire will each receive \$9 million to double the size of their nursing programs and Keene State College will receive \$6 million to expand its nursing facilities
- New Hampshire currently has 1,300 nursing vacancies, and Gov. Sununu predicts the number will increase over the next five to seven years