



Healthcare Weekly News and Deals – January 20th, 2026

1. Takeaways from JPM 44th Annual Healthcare Conference 2026

The J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference 2026 reflected a turn toward cautious yet genuine optimism, fueled by policy tailwinds, AI's proven impacts, and robust activity in strategic collaborations and consolidations. AI emerged as a core driver, transitioning from hype to operational ROI via agentic systems, closed-loop workflows, and ambient tools that enhance discovery, delivery, and administrative efficiency. Federal efforts, including outreach on quality and access alongside high-impact innovation programs, underscore a proactive stance on reducing barriers and accelerating progress. Cross-border dynamics and emerging modalities added to the forward-looking tone, signaling diversified growth opportunities. The event highlighted healthcare's trajectory for AI-enabled reinvention, with widespread alignment on prioritizing efficiency, transparency, execution, and adaptive strategies to navigate global and regulatory shifts.

a. **PitchBook Analyst Note: Takeaways from the J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference** ([Link](#))

2. OpenAI acquires Torch in ~\$100M deal to accelerate ChatGPT Health

OpenAI bought healthcare startup Torch, which aggregates users' lab results, medications, visit notes, wearable data and consumer test reports into a unified health record, and will fold its team into efforts to expand ChatGPT Health. The year-old Torch platform was built as a "medical memory" to unify fragmented records into a single context layer for AI. The acquisition follows OpenAI's launch of ChatGPT Health, which links the chatbot to medical records and wellness apps for more personalized responses. OpenAI reports that about one in four of ChatGPT's 800 million regular users asks at least one healthcare-related question each week. ([Link](#))

3. Boston Scientific (NYSE: BSX) to acquire Penumbra (NYSE: PEN) in \$14.5B cash-and-stock deal to expand vascular and neurovascular portfolio

The transaction will be paid approximately 73% in cash and 27% in Boston Scientific stock, giving Penumbra shareholders the option of cash or shares subject to proration. Penumbra brings a portfolio that includes Lightning Bolt and Lightning Flash computer-assisted vacuum thrombectomy systems, peripheral embolization solutions, and neurovascular devices for stroke, aneurysms and other complex vascular conditions. Boston Scientific plans to fund the roughly \$11 billion cash component with a mix of cash on hand and new debt and currently expects the deal to be modestly dilutive to adjusted earnings per share in the first full year after closing, turning neutral to accretive thereafter. ([Link](#))

4. Modella AI acquired by AstraZeneca (LON: AZN) to scale AI-driven oncology R&D globally

The acquisition expands a multi-year collaboration by embedding Modella AI's multimodal foundation models and agentic AI platform directly into AstraZeneca's oncology research and development ecosystem. Modella AI's technology, built at the intersection of pathology, clinical data and advanced generative AI, will be used to accelerate clinical development, enhance biomarker discovery and support data-driven decision-making across AstraZeneca's global oncology portfolio. AstraZeneca plans to deploy these AI agents and pathology foundation models to increase automation, scalability and consistency in data-intensive workflows and to support the development of targeted therapeutics and companion diagnostics. ([Link](#))

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5. Smith+Nephew (NYSE: SNN) to acquire Integrity Orthopaedics in Deal Worth up to \$450M to Strengthen Rotator Cuff Portfolio

The transaction includes an upfront \$225 million cash payment plus up to \$225 million in performance-based milestones over five years and is expected to close this month. Integrity Orthopaedics' Tendon Seam rotator cuff repair system is designed with patented micro-anchors, individually locked stitches and an integrated implantation system to reduce re-tear rates and shorten procedures compared with traditional techniques, which can have structural failure rates of 20–40%. The acquisition supports Smith+Nephew's RISE 2026 strategy and builds on prior shoulder investments, including the Regeneten bioinductive implant, Q-Fix Knotless All-Suture Anchor and the Aetos Shoulder System. ([Link](#))

6. Boston Scientific (NYSE: BSX) acquires Valencia Technologies to add eCoin ITNS device to urology portfolio

The eCoin implantable tibial nerve stimulation system, placed under the skin near the ankle, is intended for urge urinary incontinence patients who do not tolerate or sufficiently benefit from conservative therapies, and received FDA clearance in 2022. In a pivotal study, 68% of treated patients achieved at least a 50% reduction in UUI episodes, underscoring its potential clinical impact. The transaction is expected to close in the first half of 2026, positioning Boston Scientific alongside Medtronic's Altaviva device in the growing neuromodulation market for overactive bladder-related symptoms as the company continues to expand its pelvic health and neurology device franchises. ([Link](#))

7. Abbott (NYSE: ABT) and AtaCor collaborate on Next-Generation Extravascular ICD System

The partners are combining an investigational parasternal extravascular defibrillation lead (Atala) with a minimally invasive implantable defibrillator platform intended to keep hardware outside the heart and vasculature, aiming to avoid complications such as vascular injury, lead fracture and infections. The Atala lead is placed through a rib space beside the sternum and is designed both to deliver defibrillation shocks and to direct pacing energy efficiently toward the heart. A pivotal ALARION EV Investigational Device Exemption study is planned for 2026 to evaluate the system as a potential new option for patients at high risk of life-threatening arrhythmias. ([Link](#))

8. Hippocratic AI acquires Grove AI to build end-to-end agentic AI platform for biopharma and medtech

The acquisition adds Grove AI's agentic platform, which has supported over 10 million patient interactions and powered more than 50 phase 2 and 3 clinical trials, into Hippocratic AI's life sciences division focused on regulated biopharma and MedTech use cases. Grove's "Grace" agent and participant relationship management tools will be used to speed recruitment, improve screening and streamline trial operations across top global pharma partners, while Hippocratic extends agents into commercial, direct-to-patient and HCP engagement. The company has appointed Ahad Wahid, M.D., as president of life sciences and formed a senior advisory council to ensure safety, compliance and large-scale deployment. ([Link](#))

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9. Agentis Longevity acquires Arete Wellness, via its financial sponsor Shore Capital Partners to build national precision longevity and recovery platform

The combined company will offer personalized, preventative programs that integrate advanced diagnostics, hormone and peptide therapies, IV recovery, performance medicine and lifestyle-focused support for high-performing clients such as professional athletes, entertainers and executives. Arete contributes a concierge recovery model delivered by a team of more than 45 traveling nurses and medical professionals, while Agentis brings precision-based longevity medicine focused on individualized, science-backed care. Leadership from both organizations position the deal as a way to expand geographic reach, increase accessibility and set a new standard for evidence-based performance longevity without disclosing financial terms. ([Link](#))

10. Apollo Care acquires eStrat, via its financial sponsor Flexpoint Ford to expand copay and patient access capabilities

Apollo Care is adding eStrat's copay program design and execution expertise to strengthen its technology-driven patient access, affordability and analytics platform. The combined offering aims to enable faster copay program launches, tighter integration between operations and analytics, and more seamless execution for pharmaceutical manufacturers across multiple therapeutic areas. Key eStrat team members are joining Apollo Care to ensure continuity for existing clients, with co-founder Trond Waerness stepping into a leadership role focused on patient affordability strategy. The companies say the deal will help manufacturers reduce complexity while improving access and affordability for patients. ([Link](#))

11. Zelis acquires Rivet, via its financial sponsors Bain Capital, Parthenon Capital Partners, Valspring Capital, BPEA Private Equity, Edison Partners, Bain Capital Ventures, Norwest, Ergo Partners, HarbourVest Partners and Mubadala Investment Company, to expand AI-enabled revenue cycle analytics for healthcare payers and providers

The deal adds Rivet's analytics platform to Zelis' existing payments technology, giving providers deeper visibility into claim payment patterns and denial trends via insight-rich dashboards and workflow tools. By reducing transactional back-and-forth, payers can shift focus to collaborative efforts that improve first-time claim success and cut down on costly rework. Executives from both companies frame the combination as a way to address mounting margin pressure, rising administrative costs and regulatory complexity while pushing the industry toward a more transparent, efficient financial experience for providers, payers and patients. ([Link](#))

12. Genomate Health acquires Oncompass Medicine to build integrated precision oncology platform in Europe

The deal gives Genomate Health a long-standing European base with established logistics, clinical operations and market presence in personalized oncology, particularly in Hungary and across Europe. Oncompass, founded in 2003, brings two decades of experience in companion diagnostics and next-generation sequencing-based tumour profiling in routine clinical care. Scientific and clinical leadership will be driven by Genomate Health Founder and CSO Istvan Petak, who will also serve as Managing Director of Oncompass Medicine, as the combined organization deploys Genomate's computational reasoning technology to turn complex molecular data into scalable, actionable treatment decisions for cancer patients worldwide. ([Link](#))

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13. Behavioral Framework partners with Autism ETC, backed by Renovus Capital Partners, to expand autism care platform

Autism ETC, which operates five ABA therapy and autism diagnostic clinics in Tennessee and Arizona, will join Behavioral Framework while retaining its leadership team and clinical staff to ensure continuity for families and employees. The combination is intended to extend high-quality, individualized autism services across both center-based and home-based models in the Southeast and beyond, supported by Behavioral Framework's operational infrastructure, technology and growth resources. Both organizations emphasize preserving Autism ETC's culture and clinical integrity while scaling access and investing in clinician development as part of Behavioral Framework's broader growth strategy. ([Link](#))

14. EnableComp acquires Health Resources Optimization via its financial sponsors Primus Capital and Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe to expand complex revenue recovery for hospitals

The acquisition brings H/ROI's clinical denials and post-bill DRG validation expertise under EnableComp, strengthening its focus on complex claims, DRG downgrades and medical-necessity denials. The combined organization aims to capture more hidden revenue for providers facing intense margin pressure and payer scrutiny by pairing seasoned clinical judgment with an AI-driven revenue cycle platform. Serving over 1,000 hospitals and recovering \$3 billion annually, EnableComp is integrating H/ROI to deliver deeper clinical insights, earlier underpayment detection and faster resolution of intricate denials so health systems can safeguard margins and improve financial stability while maintaining patient care. ([Link](#))

15. Solis Mammography acquires Women's Center for Radiology, via its financial sponsors Madison Dearborn Partners and TowerBrook Capital Partners to expand Florida breast imaging footprint

The deal adds two Orlando centers to Solis Mammography's existing nine Florida locations in Gainesville, Fort Lauderdale and Miami, marking the company's entry into the Orlando market and broadening its statewide presence in specialized breast health services. The combined organization aims to deliver comfortable, convenient and compassionate breast imaging to more patients across greater Florida while maintaining personalized, community-focused care. ([Link](#))

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Venture and Other News

1. JPM26: Anthropic launches Claude for Healthcare to Turbocharge AI efficiency at Health Systems, Payers

Anthropic introduced Claude for Healthcare at the J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference (JPM26), providing purpose-built, HIPAA-ready AI tools for health systems, payers, providers, and hospitals to accelerate administrative and clinical workflows including prior authorization, clinical documentation, claims management, care coordination, regulatory submissions, and patient message triage. The platform connects Claude to key data sources such as the CMS Coverage Database (Local and National Coverage Determinations), ICD-10 codes, National Provider Identifier Registry, and PubMed (with over 35 million biomedical literature entries), enabling natural language querying, surfacing coverage differences, reducing claim denials, and supporting FHIR interoperability via Agent Skills. It builds on the October launch of Claude for Life Sciences with additional connectors for platforms like Medidata and ClinicalTrials.gov, while offering consumer-facing features like medical history summarization and health metric pattern detection through beta integrations with HealthEx, Function, Apple Health, and Android Health Connect. Emphasizing AI safety through its Constitutional AI approach, the tools aim to minimize hallucinations, ensure reproducible and cited results, and amplify human capabilities in high-stakes, regulated healthcare environments, with early adoption by organizations including Banner Health, Stanford Healthcare, Novo Nordisk, Sanofi, AbbVie, and Genmab. ([Link](#))

2. OpenAI Invests in Merge Labs' \$250M Seed Led by OpenAI with Bain Capital, Interface Fund, Fifty Years and Gabe Newell to Advance Noninvasive Brain-Computer Interfaces

Merge Labs, a brain-computer interface “research lab” co-founded by Sam Altman and collaborators from Tools for Humanity, Forest Neurotech and Caltech, raised \$250 million at an \$850 million valuation to pursue non-invasive BCIs that link biological and artificial intelligence using molecules and deep-reaching modalities like ultrasound. The startup aims to extend human capabilities and restore or enhance brain function by interfacing with neurons at scale, with applications well beyond current medical BCI use cases. OpenAI plans to collaborate with Merge on foundation models and AI operating systems that interpret neural intent and work robustly with limited, noisy brain signals. ([Link](#))

3. Proxima raises \$80M Seed Led by DCVC with NVentures, Braidwell, Roivant, AIX Ventures, Yosemite, Magnetic Ventures, Alexandria Venture Investments and Modi Ventures to Advance Proximity-Based Medicines

The AI-native biotech, formerly VantAI, is developing proximity therapeutics that modulate protein–protein interactions, including modalities like molecular glues and PROTACs, to reach historically “undruggable” targets across oncology, immunology and other diseases. Its NeoLink data-generation technology and Neo AI model series generate proteome-scale structural data on protein complexes to enable rational design of proximity-modulating small molecules, with aims to improve safety and shorten development timelines. The company has secured multibillion-dollar research collaborations with Johnson & Johnson, Bristol Myers Squibb and Blueprint Medicines, with multiple partnered programs progressing toward the clinic and the first expected to enter trials in 2026. ([Link](#))

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4. **Vista AI raises \$29.5M series B with Cedars-Sinai Health System, Intermountain Health, University of Utah Hospital System, Temple University/Fox Chase Cancer Center, Tampa General Hospital, Khosla Ventures and Bold Brain Capital to Expand Automated MRI Imaging Platform**

The company's AI software automates MRI scanning workflows to reduce complexity and variability, helping radiology teams keep up with rising MRI demand amid technologist shortages. Vista AI plans to expand from its FDA-cleared cardiac MRI platform into brain, prostate and spine imaging and add remote scanning services so sites without in-house expertise can offer advanced exams. Early adopters such as Brigham and Women's Hospital and Radiology Regional report 50% more cardiac MRI slots, elimination of a 28-day backlog, and scan times cut by more than half without adding staff or scanners. ([Link](#))

5. **Converge Bio raises \$25M Series A Led by Bessemer Venture Partners with TLV Partners, Saras Capital, Vintage Investment Partners and Executives from Meta, OpenAI and Wiz to Accelerate AI-Driven Drug Discovery**

The Boston- and Tel Aviv-based startup builds generative AI models trained on DNA, RNA and protein sequences to plug directly into pharma and biotech workflows across target discovery, antibody design, protein yield optimization and biomarker discovery. Its customer-facing systems integrate generative, predictive and physics-based docking models so clients receive ready-to-use platforms rather than stitching tools together. In two years, Converge has completed more than 40 programs with over a dozen customers across the U.S., Canada, Europe and Israel, reporting up to 4–4.5X protein yield gains and single-nanomolar affinity antibodies, and is now expanding into Asia. ([Link](#))