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ALS drug fails in trial, could be pulled

Setback for Cambridge biotech — and patients

By Jonathan Saltzman
GLOBE STAFF

In a startling reversal, Cambridge biotech Amylyx Pharmaceuticals, which won approval of a controversial and costly drug for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis in 2022, said Friday that its treatment failed to provide any benefit to patients in a large clinical trial.

The company is now considering withdrawing the drug from the market, a significant blow to ALS patients, their families, and

their doctors, given the dearth of effective treatments for the fatal disease.

About 3,900 ALS patients were taking the medicine, called Relyvrio, in the United States at the end of the third quarter of last year, according to the most recent numbers from Amylyx.

The drug was approved in September 2022, even though an advisory panel to the Food and Drug Administration initially recommended the agency reject it, citing weak

scientific evidence.

That panel later reversed itself amid wrenching pleas from patients and families affected by the paralyzing and fatal neurological condition, and after Amylyx presented more clinical data that it said showed the medicine extended patients' lives.

The founders of Amylyx, Brown University graduates Joshua Cohen and Justin Klee, made an unusual pledge at the time to pull Relyvrio from the market if a longer, larger study showed that the drug wasn't effective.

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Relyvrio costs about **\$163,000** a year per patient and generated nearly **\$381 million** in revenue.

Unusual tobacco ban is upheld

Brookline can block sales to those born this century

By Matt Stout
GLOBE STAFF

Massachusetts' highest court on Friday upheld a groundbreaking bylaw in Brookline that bans tobacco sales in town to anyone born in the 21st century, opening the door to other cities and towns statewide to pursue similar rules.

In its ruling, the Supreme Judicial Court upheld a lower court's decision to dismiss a lawsuit, known as Six Brothers v. Brookline, in which store owners argued Brookline's novel tobacco sales ban was unconstitutional and conflicts with a 2018 statewide law that set the statewide legal minimum age to buy tobacco at 21 years old.

The Supreme Judicial Court rejected both arguments. State law expressly allows towns and cities — long considered “local community laboratories” for public health policies — to prohibit tobacco sales in full, the court ruled. Further, Brookline's bylaw does not undercut state law but rather augments it, according to the high court, which argued the town has a “legitimate interest in mitigating tobacco use

SMOKING, Page A10

Southcoast Health shows interest in Steward site

By Aaron Pressman
GLOBE STAFF

The process of getting troubled hospital operator Steward Health Care out of Massachusetts got a boost on Friday when nonprofit rival Southcoast Health stepped forward as a possible buyer for a key Fall River facility.

The interest by Southcoast in taking over St. Anne's Hospital in Fall River marks the first public step toward bringing at least some of Dallas-based Steward's hospitals back into local

►Massachusetts senators demand answers from Steward. D1.

hands. The for-profit Steward has been in deep financial distress and is struggling to cover the cost of keeping its nine Massachusetts facilities afloat.

But the effort, coming as Steward has cast about for months in search of a solution, also shows the magnitude of the job ahead for health care industry leaders and regulators. St. Anne's is among the strongest of Steward's hos-

SOUTHCOAST, Page A10



DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

BY ALEX SPEIER | GLOBE STAFF

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic — Brayan Bello will not pitch this weekend in Estadio Quisqueya when the Red Sox and Rays play a pair of exhibition games in his native country, but he will be in the spotlight.

On Saturday afternoon, prior to the first game, Bello will take part in a press conference about his six-year, \$55 million contract, a deal that could turn the 24-year-old into a rotation linchpin for the rest of the decade.

For the Red Sox, the deal acknowledges a bit of a landmark — a homegrown pitcher around whom they are building. But for the people who know the unpaved path traveled by Bello to reach this point, it means something far more profound.

“Bello's kind of an inspiration and a north star,” Diofante de Peña, who trained Bello in Santo Domingo, said through a translator. “It's a beautiful story, what we lived out with Bello. The way he got there is difficult. It wasn't obvious.”

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BARRY CHIN/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

Above, players practiced at the Hippodrome, where Red Sox Brayan Bello (above) and Rafael Devers trained in the Dominican Republic.

Abortion doulas offer compassion and care in post-Dobbs world

‘People want to be witnessed. They want to be seen and they want to feel like there's at least one person who isn't trying to promote their own agenda for that person's life and future.’

CAIT VAUGHAN,
Portland, Maine-based doula who offers abortion care and other reproductive support

By Olivia Yarvis
and Zeina Mohammed
GLOBE STAFF

When it came to the question of whether to get an abortion, Camilla Thompson didn't feel she had much of a choice.

Her mother's words were clear: It was something you do, move on from, and stop thinking about.

For Thompson, then 16, the procedure itself was quick. But then came the doubts. *Had she squandered her chances of becoming a mother?* The shame. *How could she, an adoptee, terminate a pregnancy?* And the residual grief that would be her shadow for years to come.

Had there been a dedicated person to confide in, to affirm her experience, Thompson said, she would have “absolutely” used their help. But aside from

the clinic's standard pre-operation counseling, that option did not exist for her — not yet.

Nearly 14 years later, there is a close-knit support network of nonmedical professionals across New England filling that role — and Thompson is a part of it. She is an abortion doula: a judgment-free advocate for patients as they navigate the emotional, physical, and logistical journey of terminating a pregnancy.

Doulas are careful not to impose their own beliefs on clients, instead working to validate patients' decisions. To do this work, Thompson said, “you just have to be open-minded and you have to be able to not have a stance on the matter.”

Indeed, many doulas offer abortion support in addition to other forms of care along the re-

ABORTION, Page A6

The MBTA is inching closer to extending the Silver Line 3 bus line through Everett to connect to Sullivan Square Station on the Orange Line. B1.

Daylight saving time begins at 2 a.m. Sunday. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour.



RIGHTS RECOGNIZED



DIMITAR DILKOFF/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Members of the feminist collective “Les Rosies” marched in Paris to mark International Women's Day on Friday. On a day focused on advancing women's rights globally, France inscribed the right to abortion in its constitution, a first in the world and a powerful message of support to women.



Rains of the operation

Saturday: Cloudy, rain late. High: 41-46. Low: 35-40.
Sunday: Rain ends midday. High: 49-54. Low: 29-34.
Sunrise: 6:06 Sunset: 5:44
Comics and Weather, **D4-5**.
Obituaries, **C9**.

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