

the Reporter

Illinois Hospital Association



October 22, 2007

MRSA “A CALL TO ACTION”; NEW CASES CONFIRM COMMUNITY SOURCE

The lead author of a study in the Oct. 17 *Journal of the American Medical Association* called MRSA infections “a call to action for health care facilities,” reporting the prevalence of MRSA as twice what was previously believed. The data on methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* came from nine sites (none in Illinois) and received extensive nationwide media coverage. The Centers for Disease Control’s first true baseline for MRSA in the U.S. projected that 94,360 patients developed an invasive infection in 2005 and that nearly one of five (18,650) died. The study also concluded that 85% of invasive MRSA infections are associated with health care treatment, although only about one-quarter involved hospitalized patients.

As the CDC report surfaced, two students at a Naperville high school were diagnosed with MRSA, the latest in several cases reported nationwide. Classes were cancelled in 22 Virginia schools following the death of a student from MRSA Oct. 15. MRSA cases in Connecticut, Indiana and Maryland also have received extensive media coverage recently.

IHA has held many educational programs and conference calls on MRSA for members over the past year. IHA and about 170 Illinois hospitals are part of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s Five Million Lives Campaign, which has MRSA reduction/elimination as one of its key areas of focus.

Two infection control bills supported by IHA were signed into law in August. **SB233** made Illinois the first state to mandate screening all intensive care and other patients identified as high-risk by the hospital for MRSA. Illinois

hospitals are working to reduce infections through improving hygiene procedures, isolating infected patients, screening, and other measures recommended by experts. For IHA’s summary of the laws, [click here](#).

BUSH VETO OF SCHIP BILL SUSTAINED

By a vote of 273-156, the U.S. House on Oct. 18 failed to override President Bush’s veto of a bipartisan proposal for a \$35 billion expansion of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which provides a safety net for needy families for children without insurance. IHA and AHA strongly support expanding SCHIP and advocated for overriding the President’s veto.

The president has assigned three top advisers to try to negotiate a compromise with Congress, but Democratic leaders said they would insist on expanding SCHIP to 10 million children and would send the president another bill within two weeks.

SCHIP funding expired Sept. 30, but Congress extended funding through Nov. 16 in a stopgap bill. According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, Illinois is one of 20 states projected to face federal funding shortfalls in FY2008 if SCHIP is reauthorized but frozen at the current funding level. Public opinion polls indicate support for expanding SCHIP, with 61% of adults saying Congress should override the Bush veto, according to CNN-Opinion Research Corp.

STOP CMS MEDICAID CUTS

Ask your U.S. Representative to co-sponsor the Public and Teaching Hospital Preservation Act (**HR 3533**) to extend protection for Illinois’ Medicaid program. **HR3533** would extend until

May 2009 the moratorium on implementation of CMS rules related to intergovernmental transfers, certified public expenditures and Medicaid payments related to graduate medical education. The rules would reduce Medicaid funding by nearly \$6 billion nationally over five years, including \$623 million to certain public hospitals in Illinois and to the state, according to Gov. Blagojevich. To send an email to your representative, [click here](#).

TELL CONGRESS “MY CARE COUNTS”

Hospitals’ Medicare and Medicaid funding is still in jeopardy as the Bush Administration continues to press for more than \$100 billion in cuts to programs that support critical hospital services. Hospitals are urged to coordinate efforts with their employees, patients, and community supporters to send messages to Congress to protect health care from these devastating cuts.

IHA encourages members to support My Care Counts, a nationwide online grassroots campaign led by AHA. Go to www.mycarecounts.org or IHA’s web site ([click here](#)) and click on the My Care Counts link to send e-mail messages to Congress and to download resources to spread the word.

COMPDATA MEETS OCT. 29-30

Attendees will receive customized reports on how Medicare provisions such as the new DRGs will affect their hospitals at COMPdata’s 20th Anniversary meeting, Oct. 29-30 in Lisle. In addition to the listed speakers, Bruce Crowther, President and CEO, **Northwest Community Hospital**, Arlington Heights, will discuss being the first Chicago-area hospital to post health care data on its web site. For information, [click here](#).

IPC SAVINGS FOR CENTEGRA

The Illinois Purchasing Collaborative (IPC) recently issued a savings report for **Centegra Health System**, the first IHA member to join the new statewide group purchasing organization as

an affiliate member. The report documents an IPC success story with savings of nearly **\$900,000** annualized, about 300% above Centegra’s initial savings goal. Centegra indicated in a recent *Modern Healthcare* article that joining IPC has been a good financial and operational move for its hospitals. The savings report can be viewed by [clicking here](#). To learn more about IPC, contact: Patrick Sonin, director, regional contract operations, at 630-276-5458 or psonin@ihastaff.org.

BRIEFLY NOTED...

✓ “Proactive Connections: Lessons Learned from Mt. Sinai’s Experience with the California Nurses Association” will offer insights into the strategies used during Mt. Sinai’s successful experience during a union campaign to organize nurses. The half-day program for IHA members will be held Nov. 5 in Naperville and Nov. 7 in Springfield. [Click here for details](#).

✓ The Illinois Senate voted to reinstate only about \$8 million of the \$463 million in cuts that the Governor made to the FY2008 state budget through amendatory vetoes before ending the Veto Session on Oct. 12. While the House had voted to override most of the Governor’s 1,500 budget cut vetoes, including one for \$40 million in the Medicaid hospital line, the Senate did not vote on restoring most of the cuts.

✓ It’s the last chance to register for “Working as One: Patients, Families and Caregivers,” on Oct. 24 in Bloomington. This excellent program will feature national experts and presentations by hospitals in the 2007 IHA Patient Safety Learning Collaborative. Register now by [clicking here](#).