

the Reporter

Illinois Hospital Association



December 10, 2007

REHAB DAY, NEW AD FOCUS ON PATIENT ACCESS ISSUES

IHA staff and hospital leaders gathered in Washington Dec. 5 to rally support for legislation that would preserve patient access to vital inpatient rehabilitation services. They urged legislators to support **S543** and **HR1459**, which would make permanent a 60% compliance threshold for the rehab 75% rule and continue to count comorbidities toward 75% rule compliance, and to ensure that these measures are included in Medicare legislation that is passed this year. Illinois attendees received encouraging feedback from congressional offices.

In addition, AHA and four other national hospital associations are sponsoring an ad urging Congress to extend a one-year moratorium – as proposed under **HR3533** – on the proposed Medicaid rule that would cut payments to public and other safety net hospitals by almost \$4 billion over five years. Members can send an email in support of **HR3533** from our web site ([click here](#)). The ad can be seen at www.aha.org/aha/content/2007/pdf/071129-moratorium-ad-final.pdf.

UHC MODIFIES NOTIFICATION POLICY

Following criticism by state and national hospital associations, including IHA, United Healthcare (UHC) announced that it is revising its new admission notification process, which took effect Dec. 3. UHC is still requiring notification of admission of all inpatient admissions no later than 24 hours after admission. However, notification of weekend admissions was changed to the next business day, until March 31, 2008. IHA met recently with UHC to express serious concerns about the original proposed changes to

the notification process, and will be meeting shortly with the Illinois Division of Insurance to seek further changes.

JOIN IHA'S 4TH ANNUAL PATIENT SAFETY LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

Registration is now open for the 2008 IHA Patient Safety Learning Collaborative, "Targeting Hospital Acquired Conditions: Keeping Patients Safe." The collaborative will focus on three hospital acquired conditions - pressure ulcers, hospital acquired injuries due to falls, and catheter-associated urinary tract infections. These were selected due to the high volumes as well as the high costs associated with these conditions. Implementing best practices and sustaining improvement for these broad-based conditions will greatly benefit both patients and caregivers.

To register, contact Becky Steward at 630-276-5585 or bsteward@ihastaff.org. Please note that participation is limited to 26 hospitals.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD: IHA PAC

The Illinois primary is less than two months away, on Feb. 5, 2008. The heated debate regarding health care will continue to be at the forefront at both the state and national levels. Supporting IHA PAC is one way you can be sure that Illinois hospitals have a strong voice on critical health care issues and can positively impact the election of candidates who support health care's vital role in society. Your contribution also tells policymakers that the Illinois health care community is united.

The IHA PAC's active involvement in the 2004 Illinois Supreme Court race in Southern Illinois –

a referendum on the medical liability crisis – showed that the hospital community is closely watching what policymakers do to solve the crisis of patient access to quality health care. This is a great example of both a strong PAC and the ongoing advocacy work of the IHA PAC. For information and a contribution form, [click here](#) or contact Nancy DeMarco at 630-276-5488 or ndemarco@ihastaff.org.

FCC ANNOUNCES GRANT RECIPIENTS

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has announced the recipients of the Rural Health Care Pilot Program grant. The Illinois Rural HealthNet Consortium has received \$21 million in grant funds and will be led by Northern Illinois University (NIU). IHA will work with NIU and other universities and rural health care providers to create a fiber-optic point-to-point wireless communications network among health care providers in rural Illinois. The network will allow participating rural hospitals and clinics to expand their medical services through telehealth and telemedicine technology, including improved diagnostics in radiology, neurology, cardiology and pre-natal care.

NURSING SCHOOLS LACK CAPACITY

New data from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing show that enrollment in entry-level nursing programs increased by 4.98% percent from 2006 to 2007, but capacity is still less than demand. Nationally more than 30,000 applicants were turned away from baccalaureate nursing programs last year, due primarily to an intensifying shortage of nurse faculty.

In Illinois, enrollments in nursing programs granting a baccalaureate degree or higher grew by 15.3% from 1996 to 2006, but a survey of Illinois nursing programs in January 2007 showed that 3,000 applicants were turned away in 2006 and more than 600 were placed on waiting lists. IHA is coordinating statewide efforts to develop and recruit faculty and expand

program capacity, focusing on addressing disparities in health care faculty salaries.

BRIEFLY NOTED...

✓ The American Red Cross of Greater Chicago is seeking nominations for area residents who have provided extraordinary service to others in 2007 for recognition at the 2008 Heroes Breakfast in April. Categories that might apply to hospital staff include community impact, disaster relief, emergency medical assistance, and Good Samaritan. To learn more and to nominate a hero online, go to <http://www.chicagoredcross.org> and look for the “Heroes Breakfast” poster.

✓ About 1.3 million of the 1.7 million eligible Medicaid and All Kids clients are now enrolled in Illinois Health Connect, the state’s primary care case management program, with enrollment completed in Cook County, the collar counties and the northwest regions of the state. Enrollment in the central and southern regions was expected to be completed last month. A DHFS update is available on our web site ([click here](#)).

✓ The Illinois Coalition for Jobs, Growth and Prosperity filed a lawsuit Dec. 4 against the Department of Healthcare and Family Services seeking a permanent injunction prohibiting the Department from enforcing or spending any public funds related to the Governor’s expansion of FamilyCare via emergency rule. The suit also asks that the Comptroller not authorize any payments related to the expansion unless authorized by the General Assembly.

✓ As a reminder, the *Reporter* will be sent electronically in a new format, with convenient links to important documents and the IHA calendar, starting Jan. 4, 2008.