

the Reporter

Illinois Hospital Association



August 27, 2007

GOVERNOR SIGNS BUDGET WITH REDUCED SPENDING

Governor Blagojevich signed the FY2008 state budget on Aug. 23, using his veto authority to remove \$463 million in state spending. Included were reductions in the Medicaid appropriations for hospitals and nursing homes, which could have an impact on the payment cycle. IHA sent members a detailed analysis ([click here](#)) of the budget on Aug. 24.

IHA has very serious concerns about the Medicaid reduction. While seeking to expand health care coverage, the Governor has reduced the already under funded hospital Medicaid budget line. As the key sector of the health care delivery system that now does an exceptional job of providing care to the uninsured and underinsured, hospitals question how such a reduction furthers the goal of improving health care for Illinoisans. Hospitals should not be expected to both provide the care and finance the care.

IHA will be exploring whether there are alternatives to redress the Medicaid reduction. With the budget approved, the state will now be able to make FY2008 Medicaid payments to hospitals. There was no change in the FY2008 funding for the hospital assessment program.

KEEP FIGHTING MANDATORY MEDICAID MANAGED CARE

IHA last week sent a letter to every state legislator urging them to ask their leaders to remove the mandatory Medicaid managed care language contained in the Human Services Budget Implementation Act as passed by the Senate. A pilot program for Mandatory Medicaid Managed Care, as proposed in the language,

would jeopardize the development and implementation of a new hospital assessment program, which would bring the state hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding.

Legislators have told IHA that hearing directly from hospitals will impact their decision. Contact your state representative and senator as soon as possible and urge them to ask their leaders to oppose allowing this language to become law.

STATE UNABLE TO SECURE LOAN FOR ASSESSMENT VIA FY07 SUPPLEMENTAL

We have been informed by the Governor's Office that state officials could not obtain all the necessary agreements in order to secure short-term borrowing to make FY2007 assessment payments to hospitals by Aug. 31. Aug. 31 is the day that spending authority under the FY2007 supplemental appropriation expires.

"We are extremely disappointed that state officials did not achieve the collaboration that was essential to secure the short-term borrowing in this very tight time frame," said IHA Sr. Vice President Howard Peters.

IHA is continuing to work with the state to ensure that the FY2007 assessment payments will be made, possibly as soon as early September, by using appropriations from the just approved FY2008 state budget. Subsequently, it will be necessary for the General Assembly to pass another supplemental budget appropriation for the FY2008 assessment payments.

ILLINOIS LEADS IN MRSA SCREENING

With the Governor signing two infection control bills last week, Illinois is now the first state in the nation to mandate screening all intensive care

and at-risk patients for Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA).

SB233 requires hospitals to isolate patients testing positive and to institute appropriate infection control procedures with infected patients. **HB192** requires hospitals to conduct an annual infection risk assessment and develop policies to prevent the spread of those infections that pose the greatest risks in their institutions. The new laws take effect immediately. IHA will present an educational conference call on the new legislative requirements during the week of Sept. 10, with an educational program via videoconference following later in the fall.

“These new laws represent a significant step in the continuing efforts of Illinois hospitals to improve the quality of care,” IHA President Ken Robbins said in a statement.

FEDERAL BILL THREATENS NURSES’ HOSPITAL ROLE

A bill opposed by IHA that alters the supervisory status of charge nurses so that some may be eligible for union control will be considered by the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee after Congress returns from its August recess.

HR1644 narrows the definition of “nurse supervisor,” taking that status away from charge nurses who now qualify as supervisors and subjecting them to fines and other forms of discipline if they don’t follow union rules. Under this bill, these nurses would no longer be able to represent the hospital to patients, families and staff and hospitals would not be able to depend on them to ensure continuity of patient care during unanticipated events.

Please ask your House member to oppose **HR1644** and allow hospitals and their nurses to determine the best way to meet the health care needs of their patients. You can quickly and

easily send a message to your representative by [clicking here](#).

HEAR FORMER HEALTH INFO TECH CZAR AT IHA LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Dr. David Brailer is among the exceptional presenters at this year’s IHA Leadership Summit Sept. 6-7 in Galena. The former national coordinator for health information technology will speak on “Technology in Health Care – the Wave of the Future.” For registration information, [click here](#).

IHA SAFETY CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE SET

In its third year, IHA’s unique Patient Safety Learning Collaborative is focusing on implementing proactive strategies to engage patients and families in the delivery of safe, high quality care. All Illinois hospitals are invited to share the lessons learned from the 2007 Collaborative, “Working as One: Patients, Families and Caregivers,” at the Oct. 24 “Safety Connections” Conference in Bloomington. Watch the IHA web site for details ([click here](#)).

BRIEFLY NOTED...

✓ The U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services is awarding \$25 million in grants to hospitals and health care facilities for programs on hospital surge capacity, emergency care capability and preparedness for public health emergencies. Applications must be received by Sept. 7 and may be filed online at www.grants.gov.

✓ Beginning Sept. 1, 2008, home services agencies and home nursing agencies must obtain a license from IDPH, including those that provide home companionship or private duty nursing services. Proposed rules for the new license requirements were published in the August 3 *Illinois Register* (www.ilga.gov - click on Illinois Register under Rules and Regulations). Interested parties may comment on the proposed rules, which will be incorporated with home health rules, until Sept. 16, 2007.