

the Reporter

Illinois Hospital Association



September 3, 2007

STATE STILL SEEKS SHORT-TERM LOAN FOR ASSESSMENT

IHA continues to be engaged in discussions with the Governor's Office and other state officials to ensure that the state secures short-term borrowing as soon as possible to enable resumption of payments to hospitals under the Hospital Assessment Program.

While the state was not able to secure agreements in time to obtain short-term borrowing before Aug. 31, the Governor's Office has informed IHA that the state's constitutional officers are moving ahead with the necessary paperwork on short-term borrowing so that FY2007 payments can be made to hospitals, possibly by mid-September. The state must now use the spending authority under the FY2008 budget to make the FY2007 payments. Subsequently, the General Assembly will have to pass another supplemental appropriation to make the FY2008 assessment payments.

UNINSURED CRISIS GROWS WORSE

Both the percentage and the number of people without health insurance increased in 2006, according to a new report from the U.S. Census Bureau. The percentage of uninsured Illinoisans increased from 13.7% in 2005 to 14.0% in 2006, with the number of uninsured rising to 1.78 million from 1.73 million. Nationally, the percentage of Americans without health insurance increased from 15.3% to 15.8%, and the number of uninsured increased from 44.8 million to a record-high 47 million. The percentage and number of children under 18 without health insurance also rose, to 11.7% and 8.7 million in 2006. The report is available at www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/hlthin06.html.

The new figures are stirring debate between Congress and the White House about the future of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). The House and Senate have passed separate bills to reauthorize and increase funding for SCHIP, but the President plans to veto the bills, saying they would inappropriately expand the federal government's role in health care.

To focus public attention and spur action on the uninsured crisis, the American Medical Association recently launched "Voice for the Uninsured," a three-year, multi-million dollar ad campaign. The television, radio, print and online ads will appear in Washington, D.C., and the early primary states of Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina. The campaign's web site is www.VoiceForTheUninsured.org.

NURSE STAFFING BILL SIGNED

Legislation strongly backed by IHA concerning hospital nurse staffing was signed into law by the Governor on Aug. 24. **SB867/PA95-0401**, Nurse Staffing by Patient Acuity, creates a model by which each hospital, with recommendations made by a committee comprised of 50% direct care nurses, will address hospitals' staffing plans based on each hospital's patient acuity model. The text of the new law, which goes into effect Jan. 1, 2008, and a summary of the law are available on IHA's web site ([click here](#)).

WORKFORCE SUMMIT FOR REGION 4-5

"Health Occupation Programs - Let Them Work for You" will be held on Sept. 27 at the Holiday Inn in Mt. Vernon. IHA's half-day workshop for Region 4 and 5 members will focus on a recruitment model that partners area hospitals with local high schools. Encourage your local

education partners to join you and begin collaboration to improve recruitment in your area. For more information, [click here](#).

FOCUS ON QUALITY EDUCATION

To hear about the best in Illinois' patient quality initiatives, plan to attend IHA's Oct. 24 "Safety Connections" Conference in Bloomington, where lessons learned from the 2007 Collaborative "Working as One: Patients, Families and Caregivers," will be presented. Details are on the IHA web site ([click here](#)).

IHA also offers excellent resources for questions on quality issues and reporting. For state regulations, [click here](#). For the Hospital Report Card Act, send nurse staff questions to nursestaffreporting@ihastaff.org and SCIP questions to perfmeas@ihastaff.org. For questions on Consumer Guide data reporting, send to ubhelp@ihastaff.org.

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is seeking submissions for its new Health Care Innovations Exchange web site. The site will allow health professionals to obtain information on innovative programs as well as exchange stories and lessons learned. To learn more, visit the AHRQ web site at www.innovations.ahrq.gov.

STILL TIME TO REGISTER FOR IHA LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Members still have the opportunity to attend this year's IHA Leadership Summit, "Doing things right," Sept. 6-7 at Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa in Galena. Nationally-known experts and inspiring speakers provide an exceptional educational opportunity for your leadership team. Online and fax registration is recommended. [Click here for information](#) or contact Shirley Arnold at 630-276-5492 or sarnold@ihastaff.org.

BRIEFLY NOTED...

✓ The Governor signed **HB830** into law (**PA95-0480**) on Aug. 27, enabling hospitals to recover more of their costs for producing medical records in electronic format – 50% of the rate they charge for paper records. The law takes effect on Jan. 1, 2008. The legislation, backed by IHA, is a substantial improvement over a prior bill, backed by the trial lawyers, to set the medical records copying fee at only 75 cents per CD.

✓ In the Aug. 27 *Modern Healthcare*, IHA executives are quoted on three different issues: the new Illinois law requiring MRSA screening, the proposed new IRS reporting requirements for tax-exempt hospitals, and the disadvantages of mandatory Medicaid managed care in Illinois.

✓ Congress is back in session after Labor Day, and among the continuing items of concern to hospitals will be SCHIP reauthorization and expansion, the new CMS inpatient rule, IRS Form 990 redesign, and ongoing Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement challenges. Hospital staff and community members can go to IHA's web site and click on the "My Care Counts" link to urge Congress to oppose funding cuts that could threaten hospital services.

✓ Illinois ranks 14th in the country in child obesity and 25th in adult obesity, according to a report by Trust for America's Health. The report found that 15.8% of children between 10-17 and 24.2% of adults are considered obese. The full report is available at www.healthyamericans.org.

✓ Please note that IHA's former main phone number (630-505-7777) is no longer operational. Please contact us directly at 630-276-5400.

There will be no *Friday Mailing* on Sept. 7 or *Reporter* on Sept. 10 because of IHA's Leadership Summit, Sept. 6-7. For the latest news, check "Breaking News" on www.ihatoday.org.