

### THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

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### ROBBINS TESTIFIES AT COOK COUNTY HEARING

The Cook County Board's Committee on Health and Hospitals met Jan. 22 regarding an ordinance proposing a hospital assessment program based on a Cook County tax. The ordinance passed and will be forwarded to the full board.

IHA President Ken Robbins provided testimony about the plan approved by the IHA Board, as well as the proposed Cook County plan. "There are very diverse interests in our membership, academic medical centers, safety net hospitals, suburban, other urban, and rural. We try to harmonize those disparate interests and are trying to continue to do that," Robbins said.

He noted that the Cook County Bureau of Health Services (CCBHS) and safety net hospitals were part of IHA's Medicaid Hospital Reimbursement Task Force and that the IHA Board of Trustees reaffirmed its commitment to CCBHS by unanimously approving a resolution instructing the Association to develop proposals for how it can assist in addressing the financial challenges confronting the Bureau.

"A better approach that is much more likely to succeed – and that has a proven track record of success – is a statewide solution to help meet the health care needs of patients all over Illinois – in Cook County, the suburbs, rural areas, and downstate," said Robbins. "Securing state and federal approvals for any assessment proposal – no matter how a county-based proposal is structured – requires the support of legislators throughout the entire state." Robbins asked County commissioners to give the variety of processes now underway time to mature to develop a plan that will benefit more hospitals and that will receive more support.

[www.ihatoday.org](http://www.ihatoday.org)

### THIS WEEK'S MAIL

[HCAHPS Preview Data and Result Variations](#)  
TO: CEOs

[CON Docket - January \(password required\)](#)  
TO: CEOs

[2008 Education Calendar](#)  
TO: CEOs

[Genetic and Metabolic Screening - New Provisions](#)  
TO: CEOs; Directors of Maternal and Child Care

[Annual Adjustment of Record Copy Fees](#)  
TO: Medical Records Directors

[IPC Expands its Contracting Resources](#)  
TO: CEOs; CFOs; COOs; Material Management Executives

[This Week's Mail Archives](#)

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### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Feb. 21: [Infusion Confusion - What's Your Solution? - Updates for 2008 OPPS](#)**  
(Webinar)

**[2008 Education Calendar - Year at a Glance](#)**

**[2008 Sponsorship Opportunities](#)**

**COMPdata:** [Click here to view list of programs.](#)

IHA continues to be involved in discussions regarding the plans and will testify at a hearing concerning the assessment program to be held Jan. 29 by the Illinois Senate Appropriations II Committee.  
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## **URGE EXTENSION OF MEDICAID MORATORIUM**

As Congress works on an economic stimulus package, hospitals should urge Senators Durbin and Obama and their U.S. Representatives to include an extension of the current moratorium on implementation of CMS Medicaid rules related to intergovernmental transfers, certified public expenditures and graduate medical education set to expire on May 25. Rules affect the Cook County intergovernmental transfer (IGT) program, a vital part of the financial structure of the state's Medicaid program.

Congress is also considering a temporary increase in Medicaid's federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) to help states. Illinois currently receives the lowest federal match allowable by law. To contact your members of Congress, go to IHA's web site.  
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## **SCHIP VETO OVERRIDE VOTE FAILS AGAIN**

By a vote of 260-152, an override of President Bush's veto of **HR3963** failed on Jan. 23. The revised bill would have reauthorized and expanded funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) for five years. Democrats have promised to continue to push for expansion of the program in the coming months.  
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## **OUTPATIENT REPORTING DEADLINE IS JAN. 31**

In order to receive a full outpatient payment update in 2009, hospitals paid under the outpatient prospective payment system must advise the program contractor by Jan. 31 that they plan to participate in the program. The Notice of Participation is available on the QualityNet web site. More than 1,000 hospitals have not yet returned the notice and risk a 2% reduction for calendar year 2009. A memo was sent to members on Jan. 15 with full details.  
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## **HCAHPS RESULTS UNDER REVIEW BEFORE POSTING**

As it moves toward its goal of including patient satisfaction

among hospital performance indicators to be publicly reported, CMS last week released to hospitals the preliminary results of its Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey. The survey is the first nationally standardized instrument to collect data on patient satisfaction, and its results are scheduled to be posted on CMS's "Hospital Compare" web site in March. CMS has also presented HCAHPS for possible inclusion in the new payment approach under Value Based Purchasing, as noted in the CMS Report to Congress.

The preliminary HCAHPS results are still undergoing review and correction, with many hospitals noting discrepancies between HCAHPS survey results from their vendors and those released by CMS. CMS is currently adjusting the results to allow for differences among patient populations and variations in the methods used to survey patients' data.

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## **PARTNER TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE**

Hospitals are invited to partner with Prevent Child Abuse Illinois to promote April 2008 as Child Abuse Prevention Month to help increase local and statewide visibility of prevention activities. Outstanding hospital programs are eligible for regional awards. Three media launch events will be held in Chicago, Springfield and East St. Louis.

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## **BRIEFLY NOTED**

✓ The state Task Force on Health Planning Reform will meet for the first time on Jan. 31 in Chicago. The task force is charged with looking at reforms to the Certificate of Need program, which is currently scheduled to sunset in August.

✓ **PA 94-677**, the law that took effect Aug. 2005 establishing caps on non-economic damages in medical liability cases, also required the Illinois Dept. of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) to make Illinois physician profiles available to the public. However, because a circuit court in November declared the law unconstitutional, the IDFPR has postponed publication of the physician profiles until there is a decision by the Illinois Supreme Court in that case, or other clarification of the law. For further information, contact [Barb Haller](#) at 630-276-5474.

✓ Health Systems of Illinois, the state's Medicaid Quality Improvement Organizations, will no longer notify hospitals of a cancelled admitting diagnosis review when the admitting diagnosis is not subject to review.

✓ The Dept. of Homeland Security released a new, streamlined guide for emergency planning, preparedness and response on Jan. 22. The National Response Framework replaces the National Response Plan and includes many annexes dealing with issues such as public health and medical services.

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✓ The state of Pennsylvania announced Jan. 22 that it will no longer make Medicaid payments to hospitals for serious, preventable medical errors. Pennsylvania hospitals that treat Medicaid patients covered under fee-for-service programs will have to absorb the cost of avoidable mistakes, such as operating on the wrong body part or patient.

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