



the Reporter

March 20, 2009

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GOVERNOR'S BUDGET PROTECTS HEALTH CARE

In his first budget proposal, released March 18, Gov. Pat Quinn made health care a top priority. "In these extremely difficult economic times, we are gratified that the Governor wants to preserve Medicaid funding for hospitals in the state budget and that he is committed to taking the necessary steps to address the Medicaid backlog," said IHA President Ken Robbins in a [statement](#) to the media.

The Governor's budget proposal reflects a commitment to move the Medicaid payment cycle to 30 days, which will allow the state to take advantage of nearly \$3 billion in additional Medicaid funds under the federal economic stimulus law. The stimulus law includes a prompt pay requirement as well as a provision to maintain current Medicaid eligibility standards.

"In his address, the Governor noted that the state's economic recovery depends not just on creating jobs but also on protecting our children and senior citizens by not cutting health care funding," Robbins said. "Hospitals are an essential part of the health care safety net for our most vulnerable citizens, so we applaud the Governor for making sure that they and the health care system are protected. We urge legislators to support and approve his budget plan."

With his "[Reform, Responsibility and Recovery](#)" plan, Quinn intends to create a balanced budget by increasing the state income tax,

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THIS WEEK'S MAIL

[Sunset of Employer
Disclosure Law](#)
TO: CFOs; Patient Account
Managers

[IHPFB Notices](#)
TO: CEOs; VPs, Planning,
Marketing & Business
Development

[March CON
Docket](#) (password required)

[Highlights of IHA's 2008
Member Survey](#)
TO: CEOs

[Small & Rural Hospitals e-
Newsletter](#) (March)

[Quality and Health
Information Technology
Update](#)
TO: CEOs; CMOs; CQOs;
CNOs; COMPdata Contacts

[Illinois Society for Healthcare
Marketing and Public
Relations' Judging/Network
Event](#)

Save the Date
[The Revised 2009 Joint
Commission Medication
Management Standards](#)

[This Week's Mail Archive](#)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 24: [Working with
Hospital Volunteers:
Marketing Your Volunteer
Program](#)

April 2: [IHA Management
Institute 101: Performance](#)

changing pension benefits for new employees and increasing license plate fees, among other things. IHA will be sending members a memo with more details about the Governor's budget plan.

IHA is also pleased that the Governor is including \$100 million in his state capital program proposal for hospitals. Members are urged to testify at House hearings on the capital budget through April 16. The next hearings are:

March 23: White Oak Elementary School, Morris;
March 23: Champaign Public Library;
March 30: Rock Island City Council Chambers; and
March 30: United Township High School, East Moline.

[Click here](#) for the full schedule of hearings. If you are interested in testifying, please contact [Kathleen Dunn](#) at 217-541-1153, [Nichole Magalis](#) at 217-541-1162 or [Danny Chun](#) at 630-276-5558.

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URGE LAWMAKERS AND GOVERNOR TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REFORM, EXTEND CON

Legislation supported by IHA calling for extensive reforms and a 10-year extension of the Certificate of Need (CON) Program is being considered in the General Assembly. **HB3651** and **Senate Amendment #1 to SB1905** are based on recommendations of the state Task Force on Health Planning Reform, which included several representatives of the hospital community. The CON program is scheduled to sunset on July 1, 2009.

Members are urged to contact their state representative and senator and the Governor to tell them about the importance of continuing the CON program and to ask legislators to urge their leaders to move the CON legislation. It is also important to let the House Speaker and the Senate President know that hospitals support this legislation.

To send an email to your legislators and the Governor, [click here](#). To send an email to the House Speaker, [click here](#). To send an email to the Senate President, [click here](#).

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IHA BOARD ACTS ON PATIENT SAFETY COLLABORATIVE, OTHER ISSUES

At its March 19 meeting, the IHA Board of Trustees heard a summary of the significance of Governor Quinn's FY2010 budget proposal (see

[Management](#)

[April 3: IHA Small & Rural Quality Series: Quality Counts - Implementing Quality Improvement Strategies](#)

[Education Programs](#)

[COMPdata Programs](#)

[Sponsorship Opportunities](#)

story, above), and gave its approval to four resolutions of significance to members.

Recognizing the intense public focus on hospital-acquired central line blood stream infections and the exciting opportunity offered to IHA to partner with The Johns Hopkins University and the Michigan Hospital Association in a national initiative to reduce such infections, the Association urges all members to participate in the 2009 IHA Patient Safety Collaborative, “[Stop Central Line Associated Blood Stream Infections.](#)”

As legislation has been introduced on health facility closure to protect medical records and ensure safety of a closed facility, the Board adopted parameters to guide the Association’s evaluation of such legislation: 1) consolidating current requirements into a single checklist to submit to IDPH; 2) informing IDPH about closure plans; and 3) clarifying the definition of closure.

The Board adopted the recommendations of a public relations committee representing 25 member hospitals statewide for a communications campaign to improve legislators’ and the public’s perceptions of hospitals and the value of their contributions to their communities.

Recognizing that investor-owned hospitals provide significant levels of charity care, the Board agreed to a request from the Investor-Owned Constituency Section to remain neutral on a proposal to enact a tax credit for property tax paid up to the amount of charity care provided if pursued in the context of broader tax legislation.

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IHA MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS ARE IN

IHA’s 2008 member survey, based on interviews with 142 CEOs from hospitals of all types statewide, indicates that the Association’s performance improved to 8.14 on a 10-point scale last year.

Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement, physician issues, and workforce supply remained top concerns, while access to capital jumped to number four on the list of most challenging issues. As the [Member Survey Highlights](#) show, members in different areas of the state viewed their top challenges somewhat differently.

Members were asked a new question related to IHA’s key strengths as an association this year. State-specific advocacy, knowledge and responsiveness of staff, and effective information dissemination were the top three strengths noted.

SMALL & RURAL ANNUAL MEETING CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

The 30th annual meeting of IHA's Small & Rural Hospitals Constituency Section will be held June 23-25, 2009 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. "Celebrating 30 Years: Advancing Health Care in Rural Illinois" will feature top speakers including Larry Walker, Maureen Swan, Rich Miller, Faith Roberts and Todd Linden. For more information, contact [Anne Stilwell](#) at 217-541-1163.

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NEW LAW REGARDING SUBSIDIZED COBRA BENEFITS

Hospitals as employers and their patient financial services personnel who help patients attain coverage should take note that individuals who lose group health coverage due to involuntary termination between Sept. 1, 2008 and Dec. 31, 2009 are eligible for up to a 65% federal subsidy of their premiums for up to nine months, based on certain income thresholds.

Employers are required to send forms to former employees in order for them to elect to continue their group coverage and receive the subsidy. The new law does not change the length of time group coverage must be offered. Detailed information is available from the U.S. Dept. of Labor at 1-866-444-3272 or on the agency's [web site](#).

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BRIEFLY NOTED

- 1 IHA encourages hospital CEOs to complete AHA's rapid response online economic impact survey by March 25. Contact AHA Member Relations at 800-424-4301 for user names and passwords.
- 1 AHA's annual meeting is April 26-29. Make reservations at IHA's designated hotel, the Fairfax at Embassy Row, by [clicking here](#). For details on IHA events, [click here](#) or contact [Barb Filliung](#) at 630-276-5482.
- 1 The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the California Nurses Association (CNA) announced March 19 that the former rivals will work together to unionize hospital workers and promote universal coverage. SEIU, which currently represents 80,000 nurses and CNA, which will represent

150,000 nurses when it completes its merger with two other unions, have made mandatory nurse staffing ratios one of their top legislative priorities in Illinois and other states around the country. They are also pushing for “card check” legislation in Congress.

- | Applications will be available starting April 1 for [Illinois Health Information Exchange Planning Grants](#). The goal is to secure the commitment of a majority of physicians, hospitals, and clinics within each of the 15 Illinois Medical Trading Areas to participate in a health information exchange that will be part of a future state-level health information exchange. Proposals are due May 15.
- | CleanMed 2009, the sixth global conference on environmentally sustainable health care, will be held May 18-20 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. The event draws more than 600 health care leaders, architects, designers, and medical and building product vendors from across the U.S. For information, [click here](#).
- | The Illinois Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services has [updated](#) Chapter 100, Appendix E, Error Code Explanations.

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STUDIES AND SURVEYS IN THE NEWS

- | According to a new [survey](#) from Hewitt Associates, nearly 20% of employers plan to stop offering health benefits in the next three to five years.

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