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BRINGING OUR MESSAGE TO CONGRESS AT AHA MEETING

Among the speakers at the AHA Annual Meeting, April 6-9, will be acting CMS administrator Kerry Weems. Hospital leaders who have not yet registered for the meeting can do so on our web site.

IHA's 2008 federal agenda will include asking for support for a new Illinois hospital assessment program and will emphasize urging Congress to enact **HR5613**, which would extend the moratorium on CMS Medicaid rules that would cost Illinois more than \$2.5 billion over five years and threaten access to care for Medicaid beneficiaries - including rules on public provider payment restrictions affecting intergovernmental transfers and certified public expenditures and the elimination of payments for graduate medical education.

While in Washington, IHA staff and hospital leaders will urge our members of Congress to protect Medicare and Medicaid in the final budget resolution and throughout the budget process. IHA's advocacy agenda also includes bills that would enable our rural hospitals to continue providing necessary health care services to their patients and communities. Other items on the

THIS WEEK'S MAIL

Flu and Pneumonia Vaccination Procedures
TO: CEOs; Chief Medical Officer; CNEs; Director of Infection Control; Head of Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee

Upcoming Releases:

"Unnatural Causes" PBS

Series; Dartmouth Study on Chronic and End-of-Life Care

TO: CEOs; CFOs; Chief Medical Officer; Quality Director; Public Relations Director; COMPdata Contacts

Electronic Health Record and Health Information Exchange Update

TO: CEOs; CFOs; Chief Medical Officer; Chief Information Officer; Chief Medical Informatics Officer; Quality Director; COMPdata Contacts

Upcoming Educational Opportunities: Focus on Quality Improvement and Public Accountability

TO: CEOs; CFOs; Chief Medical Officer; CNEs; Quality Director; Medical Records Director; Director of Infection Control & Prevention; Public Relations Director; COMPdata Contacts

The Administrative Professional Who Makes a Difference

TO: CEOs

agenda include legislation affecting the health care workforce, physician-owned specialty hospitals, and mental health parity.

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY RETURNS NEXT WEEK

State lawmakers will be back in Springfield April 1 after taking their spring recess. Among the critical health care-related issues

still to be addressed are approval of a new hospital assessment program, extension of the Certificate of Need Program (**HB5017**), and Medicaid funding in the state budget.

IHA continues to oppose **HB392**, which would impose mandatory nurse staffing ratios. The bill's sponsor, Rep. Mary Flowers (D-Chicago), is expected to schedule a subject matter hearing on nurse staffing ratios within the next few weeks. Members are urged to continue talking to their legislators, especially if they are on the House Health Care Availability and Access Committee, to express your opposition to mandatory staffing ratios.

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ILLINOIS APPEARS AVERAGE IN PATIENT SATISFACTION RATINGS

According to new patient satisfaction information from the HCAHPS survey to be posted on the Hospital Compare web site Friday afternoon (March 28, 2:00 p.m. Central), hospitals in Illinois closely mirror the national averages in every category reported. Pending some last-minute statistical adjustments still to be made by CMS, initial indications were that the data will show that Illinois' statewide averages are all within two points above or below the national averages in the "always" ratings. Categories include:

- Communication with nurses
- Communication with doctors
- Responsiveness of hospital staff
- Pain management
- Communication about medicines
- Cleanliness of hospital environment
- Quietness of hospital environment
- Overall rating of hospitals
- Willingness to recommend hospital

The new information, including hospital-specific data and state and national averages will be posted on the Hospital Compare web site.

[This Week's Mail Archives](#)

WEB TIPS

Find Your Legislator: An alphabetical listing of member hospitals with easy-to-use interactive links can be viewed by [clicking here](#). Clicking on the individual's name will take you directly to the elected official's web site.

To add a colleague to the IHA e-Update list or provide feedback on our format, email [Joanne Sterioti](#).



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 2: [Building a Strong Small & Rural Workforce for Tomorrow](#)

April 3: [IDPH Annual Bed Report Form Conference Call](#)

April 3: [IDPH Annual Hospital Questionnaire Conference Call](#)

April 6-9: [AHA Annual Membership Meeting/IHA Events](#)

April 7: [IHA Patient Safety Collaborative: Learning Session #1](#)

April 9: [Constituency on Volunteers Workshop: Not Another One! Leadership for Effective Meetings and More](#)

[Education Calendar](#)

[2008 Sponsorship Opportunities](#)

[COMPdata Programs](#)

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INSURED CONCERNED ABOUT HEALTH CARE COSTS

A survey sponsored by the AFL-CIO found that even the insured are worried about being able to afford health care. Although 78% of respondents from Illinois said they have health care coverage, more than half reported that their insurance does not cover all the care they need at an affordable cost. About 32% of Illinoisans said they skipped a doctor visit, test or treatment because of cost, and 18% said they paid more than \$5,000 out of pocket for health care in the past year. The entire study can be seen by [clicking here](#).

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BRIEFLY NOTED

- ✓ Our thanks to the hospital leaders who have participated in the series of 19 regional hearings on the state budget. Many of you spoke out and urged legislators to make Medicaid funding a top priority in the budget, which will help keep legislators aware of Medicaid needs as the budget is finalized.

- ✓ As of Jan. 1, 2008, the Department of Healthcare and Family Services established a system to enable survivors of sexual assault to receive follow-up care from providers outside of the hospital, and have that care paid for by the State. At the center of this important initiative is the generation of a "voucher" in the hospital emergency department that will be given to the survivor to take for follow-up care. For more information, see an IHA memo and an archived IHA Webinar on this issue on our web site.

- ✓ On April 7, the Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care will release new data on the care of Medicare beneficiaries with severe chronic illness during the last two years of life, including the amount and intensity of services provided by specific hospitals. The report will include rankings of hospitals by state and include expenditures by service as well as rankings by quality of care and end-of-life care from 2001 through 2005. IHA is sending preliminary raw data from the report to members this week and will share the final rankings with members prior to the April 7 public release.

- ✓ A report by the Medicare board of trustees predicts that the Medicare Part A trust fund will become insolvent in 2019. The same projection was made a year ago, but experts predict that the issue will attract more attention now because health care costs are an important issue in the upcoming presidential

election and 78 million baby boomers are coming closer to Medicare eligibility. Under a 2003 law, the prediction requires the next President to propose a way to contain Medicare costs.

✓ A new study from the online journal *Health Affairs* confirms that a disproportionate share of Medicaid and self-pay patients are referred to hospital outpatient departments compared to the number of privately insured patients referred to physician-owned ambulatory surgical centers, threatening the current hospital safety net. About 90 percent of privately insured patients were referred to physician-owned facilities, compared to relatively few (about two percent) of uninsured and indigent patients.

✓ *Cover the Uninsured Week*, a project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, will be held April 27-May 3. Hospitals may access a wide range of information, planning resources and free materials from the Foundation by [clicking here](#).

✓ Congratulations to the following hospitals that have made their 2008 IHA PAC goal: **Herrin Hospital**, Herrin; **Ingalls Memorial Hospital**, Harvey; **Memorial Hospital of Carbondale**; **Proctor Hospital**, Peoria; **St. Joseph Memorial Hospital**, Murphysboro; and **Van Matre HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital**, Rockford. To find out more about IHA PAC, contact [Nancy DeMarco](#) at 630-276-5564 or see our web site.

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