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ASSESSMENT SUPPLEMENTAL GOES TO GOVERNOR

The Illinois House voted 106-0 March 6 to approve **SB1863**, a \$1.2 billion supplemental appropriation for the hospital assessment program to enable the State to make FY2008 assessment payments to hospitals. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Jeff Schoenberg (D-Evanston), was quickly moved through the House by Majority Leader Barbara Flynn Currie (D-Chicago). The bill now goes to Gov. Blagojevich for his signature.

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NURSE STAFFING RATIO BILL SURFACES AGAIN

State Rep. Mary Flowers (D-Chicago) is again pushing **HB392**, the Nursing Staffing Standards for Patient Safety and Quality Care Act, a one-size-fits-all bill strongly backed by several unions. The bill could be voted on by the full House at any time.

The proposed ratios are more stringent than those now required

[THIS WEEK'S MAIL](#)

[IHA Management Institute](#)
TO: CEOs; CFOs; CNEs;
Human Resource Directors;
V.P. of Support Services;
Director of Business Office;
Director of Marketing &
Planning

[Illinois Society of
Healthcare Risk
Management Program:
Never Events - The Lion or
the Lamb](#)
TO: Risk Managers; Quality
Management

[Illinois Healthcare Law -
February Issue \(password
required\)](#)
TO: Members, Illinois
Association of Healthcare
Attorneys

[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

in California; the bill would let IDPH order even more stringent ratios in the future. You can register your strong opposition by sending an email to your state representatives from IHA's web site.

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STATEWIDE HEARINGS ON BUDGET BEGIN

The first two of 19 regional hearings on the state budget held by House Speaker Michael Madigan will be held March 10 in Marion and Decatur. IHA will submit written testimony emphasizing the need to put Medicaid at the top of budget funding priorities and to continue the Hospital Assessment Program.

We strongly urge individual hospital leaders to strengthen the hospital voice by telling lawmakers how Medicaid underfunding and late payments are affecting their hospitals. If you are interested in testifying at a hearing in your area, contact your local state representative, who will arrange for you to participate. The full schedule of the budget hearings and sample member testimony are on our web site. For further assistance and information, contact [Kathleen Dunn](#) or [Nichole Magalis](#) at 217-541-1150.

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MENTAL HEALTH PARITY BILL PASSED BY HOUSE

U.S. Representatives approved **HR1424**, an expansion of the Mental Health Parity Act of 1996, which would prevent group health plans that offer mental health benefits from imposing treatment or financial limitations for mental health that differ from those set for medical/surgical services. In addition, the bill would ban physician self-referral to hospitals in which the physician has a financial interest. The Senate passed its version (**S558**) of parity legislation last fall. The House bill would require more conditions to be covered by insurers than the Senate bill, sparking opposition by some insurance and business groups. The two chambers need to work out the differences in conference committee.

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CONGRESSIONAL LETTERS OPPOSE BUDGET CUTS

A substantial majority in the U.S. Congress - 261 U. S. Representatives and 69 Senators, including 18 members of the Illinois delegation - responded to hospitals' concerns by signing

[Joanne Steriotti.](#)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 12: [IHA-IHI Action Initiative March Conference Call](#)

March 13: [Continuous Service Readiness \(CSR\) Seminar & Workshop](#)

March 19: [Illinois Society of Healthcare Risk Management: Never Events - The Lion or the Lamb](#)

March 20: [Illinois Advance Directives Education \(Webinar program\)](#)

March 25: [2008 Radiology Revenue Cycle Updates \(Webinar program\)](#)

March 26: [IHA Management Institute - Session I: Performance Management](#)

[Education Calendar](#)

[2008 Sponsorship Opportunities](#)

[COMPdata Programs](#)

letters urging Senate and House budget committee leaders to protect access to care for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries by rejecting proposed cuts to hospital services in the FY2009 budget resolution. To see the letters and all those who signed, see our web site.

IHA thanks these legislators for their support and urges them to continue their support for Medicare and Medicaid throughout the budget process.

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CMS RULES WOULD COST ILLINOIS \$2.5 BILLION

If the current moratorium on CMS Medicaid rules is not extended, states would receive roughly \$49.7 billion less in Medicaid payments over the next five years, not the \$15 billion noted by the Bush administration, according to a report by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. For Illinois, that would mean \$2.5 billion in reductions, including \$1.3 billion to public providers (including the Cook County Bureau of Health Services) and \$74 million for graduate medical education. CMS officials have disputed the higher numbers in the report.

Ask your U.S. Representative to co-sponsor **HB3533** to extend the moratorium to block the CMS rules.

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COUNTY ISSUES REFUND TO PROVENA COVENANT

The Champaign County treasurer has issued a \$6.1 million refund check to **Provena Covenant Medical Center**, Urbana, for property taxes paid under protest by the hospital since 2002. The check included interest and is the latest move in the ongoing conflict regarding Provena's tax-exempt status. A circuit court judge advised the county to repay the taxes at a hearing last week, citing an order last year by a Sangamon County judge that restored the hospital's tax-exempt status. The Dept. of Revenue has filed an appeal. A spokesperson for Provena said, "We welcome news of the Treasurer's effort to provide Provena Covenant the taxes and interest that are due our ministry. Important outstanding issues with other County officials remain unresolved, and we are hopeful they, too, will move quickly to carry out their duties and end this needless legal action."

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ILLINOIS GOVERNMENT RANKS LOW

With a range of grades from C- to C+ for the state government's management and performance, Illinois ranks as one of the eight lowest states in the country in a report released this week by the Government Performance Project of the Pew Center on the States. Weaknesses were found in 9 of 20 areas studied, and the only strength was in online public services and information. Five neighboring Midwest states all received grades of B- or better, at the national average or higher. The full report may be seen by [clicking here](#).

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BRIEFLY NOTED

P The Service International Employees Union (SEIU) Healthcare Illinois and Indiana Union will become the Midwest's largest health care labor union in April. Three locals - hospital and social service workers, nursing home workers and home health and child care workers - will merge into the new 90,000-member unit.

P *Register now for IHA events at AHA Meeting!* Join your colleagues from Illinois and around the country at AHA's Annual Membership Meeting, April 6-9 in Washington, D.C. To register for IHA events, contact Barbara Filliung at 630-276-5482.

P A new Medicare spending report from the Congressional Budget Office shows that Illinois ranks 27th in Medicare spending per capita and 13th in the number of physicians per capita. The report can be seen by [clicking here](#).

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