



the Reporter

April 24, 2009

www.ihatoday.org

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

[IHA SUBMITS MEDICAID TESTIMONY TO KEY HOUSE COMMITTEE](#)
[TWO MORE ILLINOIS SIGNERS TO IME CUT LETTER MAKING FMAP INCREASE PERMANENT IS KEY ISSUE AT AHA ANNUAL MEETING](#)
[U.S. SENATORS SET DEADLINE FOR REFORM BILLS REGISTER NOW FOR NATIONAL SAFETY INITIATIVE BRIEFLY NOTED](#)
[STUDIES AND SURVEYS](#)

IHA SUBMITS MEDICAID TESTIMONY TO KEY HOUSE COMMITTEE

IHA this week submitted written testimony to the Illinois House Appropriations-Human Services Committee on the critical need to preserve and support the Medicaid program in the state budget. The testimony from Sr. Vice President Howard Peters pointed out that hospitals are major partners with the state in providing substantial funds for the Medicaid program and are vital to the fiscal health of the state's economy as major employers, purchasers, and supporters of other businesses.

Because hospitals have worked with the General Assembly to support the critical financing underpinnings of the Medicaid program, including three Hospital Assessment Programs, Peters noted, only about 25% of Medicaid payments to hospitals in fiscal year 2009 come from state general revenue funds. The Hospital Assessment Program is also generating \$735 million in non-state funding for other Medicaid needs, such as nursing homes and developmental disability services, in the current fiscal year.

Peters emphasized that the state's hospitals are providing more charity care than ever before. The latest community benefits reports filed by 109 hospitals show \$420 million in charity care for the fiscal years ending Dec. 31, 2007 through Sept. 30, 2008 – an increase of 68% since 2005 – as well as more than \$4.6 billion in overall community benefits.

THIS WEEK'S MAIL

[Targeted Quality Improvement Support: Initial Antibiotic Selection for CAP in Immunocompetent Patients](#)
TO: CEOs; Pharmacy, ER, Infection Control, and Quality Directors; CMS/QIO/Joint Commission Liaisons

[Upcoming careLearning Webinars](#)
TO: CEOs; CNEs; Health Educators

[Status of Pending Bills in General Assembly](#)

[This Week's Mail Archive](#)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 26-29: [AHA Annual Meeting/IHA Event](#)

April 28: [The Joint Commission Tracers: Preparing for the Survey](#)

April 28, 29, 30: [UB-04 Seminars](#)

April 30: [Navigate Your Way Through ESA Territory](#)

April 30: [Voyage to the Center of the World of APCs](#)

May 5: [Illinois Quality Leadership Conference](#)

May 7: [Continuous Service Readiness \(CSR\) Seminar and Workshop](#)

May 7-8: [Illinois Compensation Trust/Illinois](#)

Peters also warned against the unintended and negative consequences of drastic changes to Medicaid, such as capitated, risk-based HMO managed care or block grant approaches. [Click here](#) to see IHA's testimony.

[\(top of page\)](#)

[Risk Management Services
Workers' Compensation
Symposium](#)

[Education Programs](#)

[COMPdata Programs](#)

[Sponsorship Opportunities](#)

TWO MORE ILLINOIS SIGNERS TO IME CUT LETTER

Two more members of the Illinois Congressional delegation, U.S. Reps. Danny Davis (D-7) and Judy Biggert (R-13), have signed the Neal-Tiberi "Dear Colleague" letter urging President Obama to withdraw the Medicare capital indirect medical education (IME) payment cut. CMS' elimination of the IME adjustment payment would cost teaching hospitals in Illinois \$22 million annually.

So far, five members of the Illinois delegation have signed the House and Senate letters opposing the cut. Previous signers from Illinois were U.S. Reps. Bobby Rush (D-1), Bill Foster (D-14), and Aaron Schock (R-18). To send an email to your member of Congress asking them to sign the letters, [click here](#).

[\(top of page\)](#)

MAKING FMAP INCREASE PERMANENT IS KEY ISSUE AT AHA ANNUAL MEETING

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Illinois is receiving a temporary increase of 10% in its federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP), making the state's FMAP rate 60.48%. But that increase is in place only until the end of 2010. During AHA's Annual Meeting next week, IHA and members are urging our Congressional delegation to make this temporary increase permanent. Without it, Illinois is at the nation's lowest matching rate, 50%, even though Illinois serves 4.1% of the nation's Medicaid population, while receiving 3.3% of total Medicaid funding.

Other key issues to be addressed at the meeting include withdrawing the Medicare capital IME cut, protecting Medicare and Medicaid, preserving secret ballot union elections, investing in the health care workforce, helping hospitals with access to capital, addressing specific needs of rural hospitals, and exercising caution on health care reforms.

[\(top of page\)](#)

U.S. SENATORS SET DEADLINE FOR REFORM BILLS

U.S. Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.), chair of the Finance Committee, and Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), chair of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, told President Obama in a letter this week that their committees would complete legislation on health care reform to “provide coverage to all Americans” by early June. “Our intention is for that legislation to be very similar, and to reflect a shared approach to reform, so that the measures that our two committees report can be quickly merged into a single bill for consideration on the Senate floor,” the senators wrote.

[\(top of page\)](#)

REGISTER NOW FOR NATIONAL SAFETY INITIATIVE

Join your colleagues from around the state and the country for a proven, nationally recognized initiative in partnership with The Johns Hopkins University and IHA’s Patient Safety Collaborative, “Stop Blood Stream Infections.” This unique opportunity dovetails with current procedures, and no extra data reporting is required.

U.S. Congressman Henry Waxman, after holding hearings on this issue, strongly urged state hospital associations to take the lead in a voluntary effort to address blood stream infections by replicating the Johns Hopkins program used by the Michigan Hospital Association. If this voluntary effort is unsuccessful, a mandatory approach may be pursued by the federal government.

The minimal cost of participating in this exceptional program will be offset many times over by preventing just one blood stream infection.

To register or for more information, [click here](#) or contact [Becky Steward](#) at 630-276-5585.

[\(top of page\)](#)

BRIEFLY NOTED

- After the U.S. Senate Finance Committee voted 15–8 early this week to approve Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius as Secretary of the Dept. of Health and Human Services, Republican Senators blocked a move to confirm her nomination.
- Dr. Quentin Young has withdrawn from consideration as chair of the Illinois Health Facilities Planning Board, citing a potential conflict of interest. A new chair has not yet been proposed.
- The Illinois Dept. of Public Health sent the 2008 Annual Hospital Questionnaire to hospitals on April 9. The last page of the questionnaire is an Expense of Charity Care Worksheet,

which was sent in error and should be disregarded. Questions regarding charity care and instructions for completion are addressed on page 14 of the questionnaire.

- The nonprofit X Prize Foundation is offering a \$10 million prize to the winner of a contest to improve the health of people in a small community. The foundation [invites](#) written ideas for the “Healthcare X Prize,” and will choose five for a three-year trial run in rural communities. The winner will be chosen based on a “community health index” of measures such as reductions in visits to emergency rooms and health costs.
- As a reminder, IHA memos can be viewed by clicking on the links on the right hand side of the *Reporter* under “This Week’s Mail.” Memos are also posted on [IHA’s web site](#).

[\(top of page\)](#)

STUDIES AND SURVEYS

- The seventh annual [report](#) from the Gilead Outreach and Referral Center indicates a slight drop in the number of uninsured in Illinois from 1.75 million in 2006 to 1.68 million in 2007. The report says expansion of government health programs such as AllKids and FamilyCare and the outreach and enrollment efforts by organizations like Gilead were factors in the decrease in the number of uninsured children in 2007 (by nearly 90,000). But the report acknowledges that with the declining economy and the state now at its highest unemployment level in 25 years, future reports will likely show that the uninsured population increased significantly in 2008 and 2009.
- Six in ten Americans say they or a family member have delayed or skipped health care in the past year, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation’s April [health tracking poll](#). At the same time, 59% say they believe health care reform is more important than ever compared with 37% who say the nation cannot afford health reform because of economic problems.
- A new report by Moody’s Investors Service shows credit ratings downgrades for nonprofit hospitals outpacing upgrades by nearly four to one in the first quarter of this year. Declining patient demand, higher expenses from bad debt and free or discounted care, as well as poor investment returns continue to drive the downgrades.

[\(top of page\)](#)

[Reporter Archives](#)
