

the Reporter

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GUV SIGNS BILLS MODIFIED TO MEET HOSPITALS' CONCERNS

Gov. Quinn this week signed two bills – **HB976** and **HB3649** – that were opposed by IHA as originally introduced, but amended to meet the concerns raised by IHA and the hospital community.

[HB976/PA96-0669](#) requires that a postsurgical recovery care center seeking to operate as a hospital must obtain a Certificate of Need permit, obtain licensure as a hospital, meet all statutory and regulatory requirements of a hospital, and seek and use its best efforts to maintain Medicare and Medicaid certification. As originally introduced, the bill would have allowed such centers to become a hospital without a CON and without meeting all the requirements that hospitals must meet under the Hospital Licensing Act.

[HB3649/PA96-0692](#) was modified to remove vague and broad language concerning allegations of patient abuse and neglect to be reported by hospitals to the state, eliminating the term “neglect,” and to include provisions to ensure that the reporting process is workable and reasonable for hospitals.

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AUG. 31 IS NEXT IDPH CALL, DEADLINE FOR PRE-REGISTRATION FOR H1N1 VACCINE

Hospitals have the opportunity to [pre-register](#) to receive the H1N1

THIS WEEK'S MAIL

[Legislation on Health Facility Closure](#)
TO: CEOs

[Small & Rural Hospitals e-Newsletter - Summer 2009](#)

[University of Outpatient Auditing](#) (Webinar program)

[Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission \(IWCC\) Medical Fee Schedule Seminars](#)

[American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Large Customer Energy Grants](#)

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

[This Week's Mail Archive](#)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sept. (multiple dates):

[IHA/MCHC Open Forum Conference Call on H1N1](#)

Sept. 2: *IHA Management Institute 201: Self-Management and Professional Accountability*

Sept. 15: [Illinois' New Stroke Law and the Stroke Network Experience](#)

Sept. 16: *IHA Small & Rural Quality Series - Session III: Quality Counts - Implementing Quality Improvement Strategies*

Sept. 22, 23, 24, 25: [University of Outpatient Auditing](#)

Sept. 24-25: *IHA Leadership Summit: Forging Ahead - Giving Our Best in Good*

vaccine with the Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) or the Chicago Department of Public Health. While not mandatory, pre-registration is recommended, as it will help gauge interest and capacity to administer the vaccine this fall. Deadline for pre-registration is Aug. 31. All individual hospitals and other administration sites such as clinics should be included.

IDPH's next weekly [conference call](#) will focus on legal issues concerning H1N1 vaccination and will be held on Aug. 31 from 11 a.m. - Noon. Hospital attorneys are encouraged to join the call. For more information, contact [Cathy Grossi](#) at 630-276-5706.

"Protect Yourself" posters and other materials are available on IDPH's [H1N1 web site](#). Click on "H1N1 Printable Materials" in the orange bar on the web page. In addition to other resources, the federal government's [flu.gov](#) web site offers guides for businesses and employers for the fall flu season.

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IHA WEBINAR ON NEW STROKE LAW SEPT. 15

IHA, partnering with the OSF/Illinois Neurological Institute (INI) Stroke Network, is offering a [Webinar](#) on Sept. 15 to explain the impact of Illinois' new stroke law ([PA96-0514](#)) and how hospitals may use stroke networks to provide emergent stroke care. The OSF/INI Stroke Network has collaborated with area hospitals, shared expertise, and provided remote emergent stroke care as necessary since 1996. Learn from their experience and see how forming or joining a stroke network may be a viable option for both large and small communities. Faced with a nationwide shortage of neurologists, many hospitals have turned to stroke networks to assist in providing emergent stroke care.

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NATIONAL HEALTH REFORM LOSES CHAMPION

The passing this week of U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), the Senate's second most senior member, could have a significant impact on Congress' efforts toward health care reform. "His extensive knowledge of the health care system and the inner workings of Congress, and his ability to build consensus will be greatly missed as discussions continue on how to best improve health care," said AHA President Rich Umbdenstock. Kennedy was chair of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP) and said universal health insurance was "the great cause of my life." Sen. Chris Dodd (D-Conn.) is now faced with either taking over the HELP post or assigning someone else to the important chairmanship.

Meanwhile, Sen. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) has asked CEOs from the largest U.S. insurers to testify in a hearing Sept. 17 about the industry's

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Sept. 24: [Grievances and
Complaints - What Hospitals
Should Know About the CMS
and The Joint Commission
Standards](#)

Sept. 30: [Your Hospital's
Emergency Preparedness -
Taking a Closer Look](#)

[Education Programs](#)

[COMPdata Programs](#)

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"coverage, costs and claim denials." Letters were sent to Aetna, Cigna, Humana, UnitedHealth Group, WellPoint and others.

A rising number of Americans believe their families will be worse off after health care reform (31%), but 36% continue to believe they will be better off, according to the August Kaiser Health [Tracking Poll](#). More independents now believe they personally will be worse off if health reform passes (36% vs. 30%). Respondents describe their feelings about health reform plans as "hopeful" (63%), "frustrated" (57%), "optimistic" (50%), "confused" (46%), "pessimistic" (42%) and "afraid" (41%).

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NURSES "SUPER UNION" FORMED

Adding to the environmental and political challenges for Illinois hospitals fending off the ongoing issue of prescriptive nurse-patient ratios is the recent development of a nurses "super union." National Nurses United will become the largest national nurses union as the California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee, United American Nurses and Massachusetts Nurses Association formally merge into the new 150,000 member organization later this year. As an example, California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee this week released [results](#) of a nurse survey on hospitals' lack of preparedness for the H1N1 flu in nine states, including Illinois.

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LARGE ENERGY USER GRANTS AVAILABLE

The Illinois Dept. of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Large Energy Users Energy Efficiency Grant Program offers 30% [grants](#) for larger energy efficiency projects conserving natural gas. The program is part of the federal stimulus plan for facilities (including hospitals) with an annual utility bill of more than \$500,000 (both gas and electric) that will save at least 250,000 therms of natural gas annually. [Project applications](#) are due Oct.1, 2009. For more information, contact the [Energy Resources Center](#) at 312-953-9631.

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27TH ANNUAL HEALTH LAW SYMPOSIUM IS OCT. 21

The Illinois Association of Healthcare Attorneys (IAHA) will hold its annual Health Law Symposium Oct. 21 in Chicago. The symposium is one of the premier programs in the country, featuring the latest topics, top-notch faculty, and excellent materials. IHA members receive a special rate for the full-day program. [Click here for details](#). The mission of IAHA, an affiliate society of the Illinois Hospital

Association, is to keep attorneys and health care executives abreast of the latest developments in health law.

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BRIEFLY NOTED

- | The Illinois Workers Compensation Commission will hold medical fee schedule seminars for hospitals and physicians at six locations throughout the state starting Oct. 13. [Click here](#) for detailed information.
- | The Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services issued two [informational notices](#) regarding the payment error rate measurement (PERM) audits. The first notice advises hospitals that PERM auditors have noted two specific areas of concern during sample hospital reviews -- incorrect coding of diagnosis codes and unnecessary inpatient admissions. The second notice outlines the maintenance of record requirements.
- | The National Alliance for Health Information Technology (NAHIT) will cease operations on Sept. 30, saying its mission has been accomplished and other organizations are better positioned to help providers with information technology implementation. The Chicago-based organization was formed in 2002 to develop voluntary standards for health information technology. Gary Mecklenburg, former CEO of **Northwestern Memorial HealthCare**, Chicago, and a former IHA Board Chair, was a driving force of NAHIT, along with the American Hospital Association.
- | On Aug. 20, the Consumer Product Safety Commission re-announced the recall of 900,000 Simplicity bassinets after it was discovered that 2 more infants have been killed as a result of the bassinet's defective design. Consumers who have this product should stop using it immediately and return the item to the store where it was purchased for a refund or a store credit. The Illinois Attorney General's Office continues to assist consumers who need help returning a recalled bassinet and also has issued an updated flyer on the hazards of these recalled bassinets. Hospitals are encouraged to post this [flyer](#) wherever parents and caretakers are likely to see it.

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STUDIES AND SURVEYS IN THE NEWS

- | A new report from the [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality](#) states that 39% more patients left hospitals against medical advice in 2007 compared to 1997, leaving them at greater risk for adverse health outcomes and more likely to be readmitted within 30 days than other patients. These patients also are much more likely to have mental and behavioral illnesses or substance abuse problems that impair their judgment.

- | Family health insurance premiums in Illinois jumped 30% to \$12,603, just over the national average of \$12,298, between 2003 and 2008, according to a new Commonwealth Fund [study](#). “Paying the Price: How Health Insurance Premiums Are Eating Up Middle-Class Incomes” says to “ensure that coverage is more affordable now and in the future, it is critical that any reforms enacted address long-term growth in health care costs.”
- | Researchers at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center reported this week that calls to poison control centers for teenagers who have overdosed on attention deficit drugs rose 76% over eight years. They took data from the American Assn. of Poison Control Centers for 1998 to 2005 for all cases of ADHD drug misuse involving 13- to 19-year-olds showed that amphetamine prescriptions rose 133% from 1998 to 2003. "We're seeing a disproportionate rise in the calls related to amphetamines," said G. Randall Bond, M.D., director of the hospital's Drug and Poison Information Center. The National Institute on Drug Abuse has been investigating reports suggesting that more than 7 million people in the U.S. have abused methylphenidate to get high or to improve academic performance.

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