

**National
Updates**

CONGRESS: Has passed legislation delaying harmful Medicaid regulations until April 1, 2009. The Senate's version also bans self-referral to new physician-owned hospitals. The Senate version now goes back to the House, and could go to the President in June. The President has threatened a veto.

CONGRESS: The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has begun an investigation into healthcare-associated infections (HAI). The Committee has selected central line-associated bloodstream infections as a place to start. Congressman Waxman, Chair of the Committee, has sent a letter to all 50 state hospital association CEOs requesting information documenting each state's efforts to address these infections. A number of ASHNHA member facilities have moved aggressively to introduce measures to reduce the incidence of these infections and that information is being tabulated by ASHNHA to provide to the Committee.

ADMINISTRATION: Announced that it will voluntarily extend for another 60 days the moratorium on the intergovernmental transfers (IGT) certified public expenditures (CPE) and graduate medical education (GME) Medicaid regulations until August 1.

COURTS: Federal District Court Judge James Robertson ruled that the Department of Health and Human Services violated a May 25, 2007 congressional moratorium preventing the department from promulgating its Medicaid cost-limit rules. The rule would have limited use of Medicaid funds for graduate medical education and care for the uninsured. In his decision, Judge Robertson said, "In this case, the Court is asked to decide whether a maneuver by the Executive Branch deliberately designed to outfox a clear directive of Congress was successful. The answer is no." In reaching his ruling, he found that on May 24, "with full knowledge that the moratorium had been passed but had not been signed by the President, the Secretary rushed a typo-ridden final rule to the Office of the Federal Register (OFR) for 'emergency display and publication.' The 'emergency' was the impending presidential signature on the legislature's moratorium."

Commissioner DHSS appointment still pending. Acting Commissioner Bill Hogan continues to do an excellent job of providing leadership pending a decision on this critical appointment by Governor Palin.

**State
Updates**

Governor Palin Vetoes Funds for Senior Medicare Clinic Project. In a surprise move Governor Palin vetoed \$50,000 from the 2008 Capital Budget that was approved by the Legislature to develop a solution to the growing medical access crisis faced by Medicare recipients in Alaska. The State funds would have been matched by a like amount from hospital and physician groups. ASHNHA and its physician partners advocated for these funds during the 2008 Legislative Session as a critical step towards solving this crisis in the absence of any state or federal initiative to address this problem.

**ASHNHA
Workforce
Activity
Updates**

Healthcare Recruitment Collaborative

Planning for the Healthcare Recruitment Collaborative continues. The Advisory Committee, consisting of numerous stakeholders throughout the state, met on Monday, April 21 to review and discuss the status of this project, the financials for the business plan, timelines, etc.

Interviews are still occurring with hospital and clinic Administrators and their HR staff; these interviews are key to identifying the need for the proposed services, business sustainability, and the like.

The business plan for the proposed organization, and its supporting financials, continues to be refined as more information about statewide needs is received.

For more information, contact Randall Burns at 907-646-1444.

Alaska Healthcare Workforce Conference

The Alaska Healthcare Workforce Conference will bring together hospital, nursing home and clinic leadership and human resource professionals and other healthcare and workforce policy makers from *March 4-6, 2009 at the Anchorage Hilton*.

The agenda will focus on building a framework for health workforce solutions in Alaska and will address student readiness, educational capacity, recruitment and retention.

For information about sponsorships, registration and exhibitor opportunities, contact Megan Wilmoth at 907-586-1790.

Upcoming ASHNHA & ASHPIN Meetings of Interest:

- **JUNE 10, 2008 - ASHNHA Executive Committee** - meeting in Anchorage at Providence Regional Offices.
- **JUNE 19-20, 2008 - ASHPIN Board** - meeting in Anchorage at the ASHNHA/ASHPIN offices.
- **SEPTEMBER 22-25, 2008 - ASHNHA 2008 Annual Meeting (TALKEETNA)** – education sessions September 22 & 23. The ASHNHA portion of the meeting will take place on September 24 and 25.
- **MARCH 4-6, 2009 - Alaska Healthcare Workforce Conference** - This ASHNHA sponsored event will be held at the Anchorage Hilton. For more information contact Megan Wilmoth at megan@ashnha.com or 586-1790.