



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

December 15, 2006



**Karleen
Jackson
Reappointed
as DHSS
Commissioner
by Governor
Palin!**

At the annual YWCA Women of Achievement Awards luncheon where Karleen Jackson was being recognized as a recipient of this Award, Governor Sarah Palin chose the occasion to announce that Karleen Jackson will continue to lead the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services as its Commissioner under her Administration. Karleen has been Commissioner of DHSS since October 2005.

Upon learning of her reappointment Karleen Jackson commented that "I am excited – and honored – to be asked to continue to serve the people of the state of Alaska by promoting and protecting the health and well-being of Alaskans. I look forward to the challenges we face and opportunities to be discovered working on the tough issues of poverty and hunger, child and adult protection, services for seniors, and health care for Alaskans in need."

ASHNHA President Rod Betit sent a congratulatory note to Commissioner Jackson on behalf of ASHNHA's members. Rod wrote 'What a terrific piece of news about your reappointment. It says a great deal about your ability to connect with the statewide community and to establish credibility across a wide range of DHSS disciplines in a relatively short period of time.'

Commissioner Jackson will be attending ASHNHA's Juneau Staff Christmas Party on Saturday, December 16. We look forward to the opportunity to visit more with her at this event.

**IHI President
Announces
5 Million Lives
Campaign**

On December 12, 2006 the *Institute for Healthcare Improvement* (IHI) announced the **5 Million Lives Campaign** which asks hospitals to adopt proven medical practices that could prevent 5 million incidents of medical harm over a 24-month period, ending December 9, 2008.

The Campaign was announced by IHI President and CEO Donald Berwick, MD, speaking before thousands of health care professionals attending the organization's 18th National Forum, held in Orlando. Joining Dr. Berwick at his announcement were leaders of America's Blue Cross and Blue Shield health plans, the **American Hospital Association (AHA)**, the American Nurses Association (ANA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare

Organizations (JCAHO), each pledging that their organization will act as national champions and clinical advisors for the critical work ahead.

The new Campaign builds upon the success of the 100,000 Lives Campaign, in which 3,100 participating hospitals reduced inpatient deaths by an estimated 122,000 in 18 months through overall improvement in care, including improvement associated with six interventions recommended by the initiative.

The 5 Million Lives Campaign will promote the adoption of 12 improvements in care that can save lives and reduce patient injuries, and it aims to enroll even more hospitals than participated in the previous Campaign.

A number of Alaska hospitals currently participate in the IHI initiative.

Last month the Alaska State Supreme Court issued its ruling in Smallwood v. Central Peninsula General Hospital. This case is important for all Alaska Medicaid Providers because the Supreme Court **held that Medicaid recipients have a private right of action against Medicaid Providers** to enforce the provisions of the Alaska Medicaid statutes and regulations based on the Medicaid Provider Agreement between the State Medicaid Program and Medicaid Providers. Further, the Supreme Court held that if a Medicaid Provider overcharges a Medicaid recipient, the Medicaid recipient may have a separate claim against the Medicaid Provider pursuant to the Alaska Unfair Trade Practices Act (“UTPA”), which contains severe penalties for anyone found in violation of it.

Alaska
Supreme
Court Issues
Decision
with Far
Reaching
Implications
for Alaska
Medical
Providers

Stephen Rose of Preston|Gates|Ellis advises all ASHNHA members that they would be well advised to review their billing practices and computerized billing systems to ensure that they do not incorrectly bill Medicaid recipients as this case seems to indicate that any incorrect billing, even an accidental over billing, could be treated by the Courts as grounds for legal action against the Provider. Providers should consider what safeguards are necessary to ensure that Medicaid recipients are only billed for those items (such as co-pays) allowed under the Alaska Medicaid Program.

ASHNHA sent each CEO an email containing a more detailed analysis of this decision and its implications to ASHNHA members. If you did not receive that analysis and desire a copy please contact Rod at rbetit@ashnha.com.

**ASHNHA
Executive
Committee
Meeting
Summary**

The ASHNHA Executive Committee met on December 14, 2006 to address a number of pending member related issues. These actions included:

- Reviewing proposed testimony by ASHNHA representative Jennifer Grogg to the Legislative Hospital Acquired Infection Task Force scheduled for today, December 15.
 - Developing legislative strategy to address the current rate freeze for Workers Compensation related medical services that expires on August 1, 2007. The EC directed ASHNHA to make it a priority to insure that this freeze is not extended without some adjustment for rising medical care costs during the 2 years it has been in existence.
 - Reviewed pending CON developments in Juneau and Fairbanks that appear to conflict with current law and regulations.
 - Considering a special dues request from one of the members and approved it. This request has been subsequently withdrawn by the member.
 - Reviewing and accepting ASHNHA President Rod Betit's latest financial report.
 - Directing ASHNHA to change the March 8-9, 2007 Spring Meeting dates due to a break in the legislative session that has been scheduled for this same week. Alternate dates will be identified and circulated to members to make the best accommodation for Board members' schedules possible.
 - Established a delegation consisting of Rod Betit, John Bringhurst ASHNHA Board Chair, and James Shill ASHNHA Secretary/Treasurer to make an introductory meeting with Governor Sarah Palin.
 - Approved a recommendation from Rod Betit, ASHNHA President, to make a contribution of \$2500 from ASHNHA's PAC balance to the American Hospital Association PAC. This contribution would bring ASHNHA's total contribution to AHA for 2006 to \$3000. AHA's 2006 PAC goal for 2006 is \$6000.
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Upcoming Meetings of Interest:

- ASHNHA 2007 Winter Meeting (Juneau) - **NEW DATES COMING**, 2007. A room block has been reserved at the Gold Belt Hotel for the nights of March 7 and 8. Rates are \$104.00 Mountain View (weather permitting) and \$109.00 Water view (there is always water). The phone numbers are - toll-free: 888-478-6909 or 907-586-6900. Meetings will be held at the Centennial Hall adjacent to the Hotel. The ASHNHA Board meeting will occur on March 9.
- AHA Annual Meeting (D.C.) - May 6 through 9, 2007 in Washington, D.C.
- National Rural Health Association Meeting (Anchorage) - May 14 through 17, 2007 in Anchorage, Alaska.
- ASHNHA 2007 Annual Meeting (Petersburg) - to be held in conjunction with education sessions August 6 through August 9, 2007 in Petersburg. The ASHNHA meeting will take place on August 8 & 9.

If there are other meetings you would like posted please let Rod know at rbetit@ashnha.com