



# FOCUS

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### FUTURE FOCI

Please send photos and articles of current activities of your Alliance activities to George Riesen for inclusion in future editions of The FOCUS.

## Spirit of Hermina Award presented at The 2009 Wellness Conference



Pictured are Tom Newton, head of the Iowa Department of Public Health, IMS Alliance President Maureen Lyons and Diane Handler, one of the recipients of the Spirit of Hermina Award.

Photo courtesy of Steven Fry (fryguyimages.com)

In October IMSA President Maureen Lyons presented the Spirit of Hermina Award at the inaugural Healthy Iowa Awards banquet honoring individuals, companies and organizations whose efforts improve the health of our state. Board member Dorothy Carpenter of Newton was also in attendance. The deserving recipients, Lynn Dennis and Diane Handler from Cedar Rapids, have initiated and sustained a remarkable walking program - RX for Fitness - designed to impact the long-term health of Linn County residents. The RX for Fitness kits include a walking guidebook, walking log, a guide for local trails and a pedometer. The kits are available in three versions - for adults, for teens and for kids. The booklets for kids and teens encourage decreased screen time and better eating habits, in addition to the walking program. As of this date eight thousand RX for Fitness kits have been distributed in their community. RX for Fitness is clearly impacting the health of many Linn County residents.

The Spirit of Hermina Award was initiated in 2003, in partnership with the Iowa Department of Public Health, to recognize Iowans who take extraordinary measures to impact the health of fellow Iowans. The award was named in memory of IMSA member and past state president Hermina Habak, whose personal commitment to an active and healthy lifestyle - long before it became fashionable to do so - transformed her life and inspired those of us who knew her.

## Bylaws

Proposed amendments to the IMSA bylaws are due to the Bylaws Chair by December 1, 2009. Email **Debbie McCalla**, State Bylaws Chair, by clicking on her name, or send her a note at 430 Bay Hill Circle, Dakota Dunes, SD 57049.

### IMS Alliance launches:

## Iowa Medical Spouses Offering Support

Who could possibly understand better the challenges that physician couples face - work/family life imbalance, reduced reimbursements, long hours, and fear of lawsuits? This month the Iowa Medical Society Alliance launches a new blog dedicated to supporting you - the spouse of an Iowa physician.

Physicians' spouses facing challenges like those listed above are encouraged to reach out to members of the S.O.S. Committee, who will provide nonjudgmental assistance, emotional support and help in networking with community resources and referral opportunities when needed. This network of caring and compassionate friends is easily tapped.

To talk with an S.O.S. volunteer, visit <http://iowamedicalsos.blogspot.com/> Click on the volunteer's email and ask that Alliance member to call you. All calls are confidential and your information will not be shared with others.

General topics of support may also be posted to the blog. If you would like to add a topic or need assistance with the blog, please contact the administrator at [hillhouse@fmtcs.com](mailto:hillhouse@fmtcs.com) Remember to check the blog archives for other topics of interest. Current general topics being discussed on the blog are holiday chaos and moving in midlife.

Visit today!

## Health System Reform Bulletin

Keep abreast of the AMA's input into the discussion of reforming the nation's health care system. Sign up for the AMA's **Health System Reform Bulletin** for regular updates "on efforts by the American Medical Association (AMA) to work with lawmakers in reforming the nation's health care system in a way that provides quality, affordable health care to all." (from the Bulletin)

### Links

[IMS Alliance](#)

[IMS Alliance Coordinator](#)

[AMA Alliance](#)

[Click on our name to contact us](#)

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## We need your help.

If you receive this newsletter via the post office, contact Alliance Coordinator, **Deb Whitver**, with your email address. Cost reductions in copying and postage free up resources for the Alliance's health projects.

## Youth Alcohol Prevention

The purpose of the AMAA Youth Alcohol Awareness Grants program is to provide seed money for community-based projects that enhance the AMA Alliance's and AMA's commitment to eliminating underage drinking and its health and social consequences. The Alliance leadership and the Health Promotion Committee will fund grants that encourage grassroots activities that help advance local and state environmental policies that restrict youth access to alcohol restrict alcohol advertising and encourage enforcement of existing laws.

The Youth Alcohol Awareness Grants have two goals:

To educate local elected officials, members of a community organization, or general public about the health and social consequences of underage drinking and the need to change community standards that currently accept some level of underage drinking.

To gain community members and community leader/elected official support for changing community standards by instituting environmental changes at the regulatory or legislative level.

**January 1, 2010 marks the deadline for all applications.**

A list of application guidelines is available at the **Youth Alcohol Prevention** page of the AMAA Web site. Interested but daunted? Assistance with technical questions is available for grant applicants through the AMAA and AMA.

## 2010 IMSA Opportunities

-- **January 21: IMSA Winter Board Meeting, IMS Headquarters**

-- **February (TBD): North Central Regional Alliance LDC, St Louis, MO**

-- **April 17: IMSA Annual Meeting House of Delegates, Sheraton Hotel, West Des Moines**

-- **June 13-15: AMAA Annual Meeting, Downtown Marriot, Chicago, IL**

**Get Involved -- Make a Difference**

## AMA Health System Reform Bulletin Special Alert Nov. 7, 2009

### House passes health system reform legislation

Late this evening [Nov. 7], the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 3962, the "Affordable Health Care for America Act," by a vote of **220-215**. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the legislation would raise the percentage of legal, non-elderly American residents with insurance coverage from the current 83 percent to 96 percent. It also includes insurance market reforms that would eliminate exclusions for pre-existing conditions and lifetime limits on total health care spending, and it would provide subsidies for low-income Americans to help them purchase coverage in a health insurance exchange.

The legislation was supported by the AMA and a number of other national physician organizations, including the American Academy of Dermatology, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Physicians, American College of Surgeons, American Osteopathic Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Society of Anesthesiologists, American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons, American Thoracic Society, National Medical Association and Medical Group Management Association. AARP also supported the bill.

The focus now moves to the Senate, where a draft proposal has been submitted to the CBO for review prior to scheduling consideration on the floor.

### House approves rule for considering SGR repeal bill

Earlier in the day, the House approved a rule for considering both the health system reform bill and H.R. 3961, the "Medicare Physician Payment Reform Act of 2009." The vote was 242-192, with all but 15 Democrats voting in support and all Republicans voting against. While the rule set parameters for debate on both bills, the imminent congressional recess for the Veterans Day holiday prevented a floor vote on H.R. 3961. That legislation would repeal the sustainable growth rate (SGR) physician payment formula and replace it with a new payment update system with two more generous spending targets. The House is expected to take up H.R. 3961 during the week of Nov. 16.