

IMS Advocate

published by the Iowa Medical Society

February 13, 2009

Key legislation

HF 35 – Requires certain new school buses to be equipped with seat belts. IMS supports.

HF 56 – Prohibits the use of thimerosal in pediatric influenza vaccinations. IMS opposes.

HF 65 – Creates a shaken baby syndrome prevention program in the Iowa Department of Public Health. IMS supports.

HF 234/SSB 1002 – Requires insurance coverage for mental health conditions, including substance abuse treatment. IMS supports.

HF 227/SF 3 – Provides a .08 blood alcohol limit for motorboat or sailboat operating. IMS supports.

SSB 1092 – Allows physician assistants to form a professional corporation. IMS opposes.

HSB 92/SSB 1061 – Creates a state False Claims Act. IMS opposes.

SSB 1082 – Provides for a private cause of action for certain consumer fraud violations. IMS opposes.

SSB 1189/HSB 172 – Modifies damages recoverable for negligent or wrongful injury/death. IMS opposes.

HF 38 – Requires schools to develop policies regarding emergency epinephrine use. IMS supports.

HF 6/SF 57 – Prohibits smoking on gaming floors. IMS supports.

HF 84 – Prohibits cell phone use while operating a motor vehicle. IMS is monitoring.

SF 56 – Appropriates funds for expansion of the elder abuse prevention program. IMS is monitoring.

Support IMS advocacy efforts!

The 2009 Iowa Legislature is now in full swing, and IMS is working on a variety of advocacy issues important to our physician members. Only a sampling of important bills is included in the sidebar. As we continue with our efforts, it is crucial that we have your voice at the Capitol. If you haven't already registered with our VoterVoice system, **sign up now** to stay in touch with us and receive e-mail Advocacy Alerts letting you know when we need you to show support for an issue. Signing up is quick and easy – simply visit the IMS Web site, www.iowamedical.org, click on the “Legislative Advocacy” tab to the left, and then click on “Sign up for VoterVoice.”

To be completely effective, IMS needs physician members and friends of medicine to timely respond to Advocacy Alerts. When Iowa's physician community shares a strong voice, it is difficult for legislators to ignore! Currently, you can contact your Representative to show support of **HF 234**, the mental health parity bill. You will soon see an alert on **SSB 1092**, which passed out of committee this week, that would allow physician assistants to form corporations. Other alerts may involve scope of practice, public health, and medical liability. Stay tuned, and thank you for your advocacy!

Some mental health drugs may move to Medicaid PDL

At a meeting of the Iowa Medicaid Drug Utilization Review Commission's (DUR) Mental Health Advisory Group (MHAG), members voted to support inclusion of select mental health drugs to the Medicaid preferred drug list (PDL). This vote followed recommendation from Iowa Medicaid's Pharmaceutical & Therapeutics Committee and extensive discussions with the Iowa Psychiatric Society. Cost savings is the primary reason for this move. Discussions will continue with the MHAG and the full DUR before a decision is finalized. Expect further notifications on this issue from Iowa Medicaid in the coming months. For a preview of some of the mental health drugs considered for inclusion on the PDL, visit the IMS Web site, www.iowamedical.org.

Ruling states no connection between vaccines and autism

Recent rulings from the Special Masters of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims provides even more support that there is no association between vaccines and autism spectrum disorders. In a statement released by the AMA, Board Chair Joseph Heyman, MD, commented that, “We need ongoing research into the causes of autism, but cannot let unfounded myths keep us from giving our children the proven protection they need.”

This ruling also supports IMS efforts to oppose **HF 56** in the Iowa Legislature. This bill would ban the preservative thimerosal in childhood immunizations. Advocates of this legislation cite unfounded connections between thimerosal and autism. IMS supports scientific studies proving the safety of immunizations with thimerosal. Without this preservative, IMS believes necessary immunizations would be less readily available.



Iowa Medical Society legislative staff

Michael Abrams

Executive Vice President
mabrams@iowamedical.org

Jeanine Freeman, JD

Senior Vice President of Legal Affairs
jfreeman@iowamedical.org

Karla Fultz McHenry

Vice President of Public Policy & Advocacy
kmchenry@iowamedical.org

Eric Nemmers, JD, MHA

Legislative Counsel
enemmers@iowamedical.org

Heidi Goodman, BSN, JD

Policy Counsel
hgoodman@iowamedical.org

Sandy Nelson

Manager of Health Care Economics
snelson@iowamedical.org

Cheryl Peers

Legislative Coordinator
cpeers@iowamedical.org

IMS Headquarters

1001 Grand Avenue
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265
(800) 747-3070 or (515) 223-1401
Fax (515) 223-0590
www.iowamedical.org

Iowa health insurance markets remain highly concentrated

The AMA has released its 7th edition report on the concentration of U.S. health insurance markets and once again, Iowa's market shows little competition on the HHI scale used by antitrust regulators to measure competition. In highly concentrated markets like Iowa's, dominant insurers threaten competition in both output (premiums, cost-sharing, and benefit design) and input (fee schedules and policies regarding payment and care). The report shows the following for Iowa's combined PPO/HMO market (based on January 2006 data):

Region	HHI*	% Share
<i>Statewide</i>	<i>5916</i>	<i>Wellmark 76% UnitedHealthcare (UHC) 13%</i>
Ames	6747	Wellmark 81% UHC 11%
Cedar Rapids	6370	Wellmark 79% UHC 12
Davenport/RI/Moline	2167	Wellmark 37% UHC 17%
Des Moines	6229	Wellmark 76% UHC 21%
Dubuque	7010	Wellmark 83% UHC 11%
Iowa City	7128	Wellmark 84% UHC 11%
Sioux City/NE South Dakota	4820	Wellmark 67% UHC 18%
Waterloo/Cedar Falls	4005	Coventry 48% Wellmark 41%

*Note: An HHI score greater than 1800 indicates a market that is highly concentrated.

The statewide HHI for only the PPO market is 7165 (Wellmark – 84% share) and for only the HMO market is 2951 (Wellmark – 37% share, UnitedHealthcare – 34% share). For additional information from the report, including information on how to order the full report, go to the IMS Web site, www.iowamedical.org, click the “Office of Legal Affairs” tab, and then go to “Private Sector Advocacy.”

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 9901
Des Moines, Iowa

Iowa Medical Society
1001 Grand Avenue
West Des Moines, IA 50265