

# IMS Advocate

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## Key legislation

**HF 781** – Establishes a direct-entry lay midwife scope of practice review committee. IMS opposes.

**HF 234** – Requires insurance coverage for mental health conditions. IMS supports.

**HF 795** – Relates to the choice of doctor in Workers' Compensation cases. IMS is monitoring.

**SF 3** – Sets a .08 blood alcohol limit for boat operating. IMS supports.

**SF 153** – Allows physician assistants to form PCs. IMS opposes.

**HF 478** – Requires coverage for diabetes education. IMS supports.

**HF 758** – Modifies damages recoverable for negligent or wrongful injury/death. IMS opposes.

**SF 394** – Requires a circulating nurse in operating rooms during surgical procedures. IMS opposes.

## CMS hosting RAC ODF call

CMS will host a Special Open Door Forum (ODF) teleconference regarding the new Medicare Recovery Audit Contractors (RACs). The ODF for Part B providers will be April 14 from 1-2:30 p.m. The call will introduce providers to the new RAC contractors and give more information. Iowa is in RAC Region D and is scheduled to be phased in August 1, 2009, or later. HealthDataInsights, Inc., is Region D's RAC; PRG-Schultz, Inc., will serve as a subcontractor. To participate in the call, dial (800) 837-1935 and use Conference ID: 92489480. For more information, visit [www.cms.hhs.gov/RAC](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/RAC).

## IBM elects new chair, proposes pain management policy

At this week's meeting of the Iowa Board of Medicine (IBM), members elected as their new chair Siroos Shirazi, MD, a surgeon and educator at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics and IMS member. Dr. Shirazi was recently reappointed to a second three-year term on the IBM and will succeed Yasyn Lee, MD, of Dubuque, as chair.

Also at the meeting, the IBM proposed a policy statement consistent with IMS policy on chronic interventional pain management. The board will receive public comment on the statement before considering its approval. IMS has been a strong proponent of a policy statement in this arena as a result of a 2007 IMS House of Delegates resolution. For more information, contact Heidi Goodman at [hgoodman@iowamedical.org](mailto:hgoodman@iowamedical.org).

## Legislature continues to tackle many issues

Legislators continue to move forward on health-related issues. **HF 380**, a bill relating to various programs of the Iowa Department of Public Health, has been passed by both the House and Senate and awaits the Governor's signature. It contains a provision that defines an Emergency Medical Services Medical Director.

Meanwhile, **SF 389**, the health reform bill, continues to be contentious. Before passing the bill, a House committee removed problematic provisions related to pharmacists' "medication therapy management" activities. The Iowa Pharmacy Association is attempting to reinsert these provisions, which could subvert the physician-led, patient-centered medical home model of care in the future. It's not too late to show your support of IMS on this issue – visit [www.iowamedical.org](http://www.iowamedical.org) to act now!

## Quad City physicians meet with Rep. Braley

On Friday, March 27, members of the Rock Island and Scott County Medical Societies met with Rep. Bruce Braley. Their discussion focused on geographic practice cost disparities, the flawed SGR formula, and the need of a more permanent fix of physician reimbursement systems. Rep. Braley noted that increased reimbursement was necessary under both Medicare and Medicaid to ensure better access to care for Iowans.

## IMS Annual Meeting two weeks away!

Planning to attend the IMS Annual Meeting in Iowa City April 18 & 19? Please visit [www.iowamedical.org](http://www.iowamedical.org) to register, purchase meal tickets, and download meeting materials. On the Web site, members can also express thoughts on submitted resolutions.

At the Annual Meeting, members will elect IMS leadership. The following slate of candidates has been announced: **President-elect:** Timothy Kresowik, MD, Iowa City; **At-large Directors:** Joseph Hart, MD, Waterloo; Robert Lee, MD, Johnston; **House Speaker:** Peter Reiter, MD, Ottumwa; **Vice Speaker:** Robert Anderson, MD, Bettendorf; **AMA Delegate:** Harold Miller, MD, Davenport; **AMA Alternate Delegates:** Mariannette Miller-Meeks, MD, Ottumwa; Stephen Richards, DO, Algona; **Nominating Committee:** Thaddeus Anderson, MD, Dubuque; Beth Bruening, MD, Sioux City.



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## Federal stimulus bill's COBRA subsidy program may affect you

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), the federal economic stimulus bill, includes a temporary subsidy program to assist employees involuntarily terminated from employment between September 1, 2008, through December 31, 2009, to purchase health insurance coverage as part of their former employer's group health plan.

This subsidy program is broader in reach than either regular federal or Iowa COBRA. For instance, an employer not required to comply with regular COBRA because it has fewer than 20 employees is subject to this temporary COBRA subsidy program if the employer offers group health insurance to its employees. Dates, payment, and notice responsibilities are important. The Iowa Insurance Division has posted an information piece for groups with fewer than 20 employees regarding the COBRA subsidy program at [www.iid.state.ia.us/docs/stimbill.pdf](http://www.iid.state.ia.us/docs/stimbill.pdf). Additional information is available from: 1) the Department of Labor at [www.dol.gov/ebsa/cobra.html](http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/cobra.html); 2) CMS at [www.cms.hhs.gov/cobracontinuationofcov/](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/cobracontinuationofcov/); and 3) the IRS at [www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=204335,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=204335,00.html).

## UHC releases Premium designations on April 1

UnitedHealthcare (UHC) will publicly display its updated Premium designation results as of April 1 in 138 markets nationwide, including Iowa. A physician's designation is displayed on UHC's member Web site at [www.myuhc.com](http://www.myuhc.com). A physician who meets UHC's quality criteria receives one star; a physician meeting UHC's quality and efficiency (Q&E) criteria receives two stars. Physicians with two stars are exempt from UHC's mandatory notification protocol for selective outpatient advanced imaging (CT, MRI, PET, Nuclear Medicine/Cardiology) procedures. Physicians who no longer enjoy two-star designation must comply with the notification procedures. *Please note:* UnitedHealthcare of the River Valley is "out-of-scope," meaning it does not participate in the radiology notification program. To determine if a physician has Premium designation, visit [www.unitedhealthcareonline.com](http://www.unitedhealthcareonline.com), then "Physician Directory," then "General Physician Directory," then "Search for a Physician," and then "Search for a UHC Premium Physician."

## Begin use of new Form I-9

Employers are now required by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) to use the new Form I-9 for all Form I-9 verifications and re-verifications on or after April 3, 2009. Older versions of the I-9 are no longer valid and use of them subjects the employer to potential fines and penalties. For more information, go to [www.uscis.gov/i-9](http://www.uscis.gov/i-9).

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