Senate Passes Supplemental with Medicaid Moratoria—President Expected to Sign Into Law

Last night the Senate passed the fiscal year (FY) 2008 supplemental appropriations bill that includes moratoria on the Medicaid public provider cost limit and graduate medical education (GME) rules through April 1, 2009. The bill was approved by a vote of 92 to 6. The House voted overwhelmingly in favor of the same package last week after negotiations between congressional leadership and the White House produced a compromise that members of both parties could support. The legislation now moves to the President for his signature. Unfortunately, in a last minute concession to the Administration, the outpatient rule was not included in the final version of the supplemental approved by both chambers. NAPH will continue to pursue options for addressing the outpatient regulation when Congress returns after the Independence Day recess, which lasts until July 7. [Source: NAPH ActionAlert—June 27, 2008].

HFMA Releases Report on Payment System Reform

Recently HFMA released the first in a series of reports that will collectively address building a new healthcare payment system, Healthcare Payment Reform: From Principles to Action. The report was the result of significant input from representatives of a variety of key stakeholders—consumers, providers, payers, and employers—who took time to contribute to this critical topic. According to the report, the current healthcare payment system blocks true reform by inadequately rewarding wellness, high-quality care, and efficiency, and by driving up costs through the system’s complexity. Effective payment system reform must take place within a set of principles that support the nation’s health goals, as well as the needs of all key stakeholder groups. HFMA has worked with healthcare thought leaders around the country to identify the following principles, as well as actions needed to make those principles a reality:

⇒ Quality: Payments should encourage and reward high-quality care and discourage medical errors and ineffective care.
⇒ Alignment: Payments should align incentives among all stakeholders to maximize the efficiency and coordination of health services.
⇒ Fairness: Payment systems should sufficiently balance the needs and concerns of all stakeholders.
⇒ Simplification: Payment processes should be simplified, standard, and transparent.
⇒ Societal benefit: The resources needed to support broad societal benefits such as medical and public education, medical research, and care for disenfranchised or uninsured persons should be identified and paid for explicitly.

[Source: HFMA’S Weekly News—June 27, 2008].

News from Medicare & Medicaid Services—New Staff Member

We are pleased to announce that our department has recently added a new staff member. His name is Frank Burns and he comes to us highly qualified from Noridian Administrative Services (our current Medicare Administrative Contractor [MAC]). As an introduction here are some of Frank’s qualifications and achievements:

⇒ B.S. degree in Management and Accounting from Park University
⇒ A.S. degree in Aircraft Maintenance
⇒ Team Leader at Blue Cross Blue Shield/Noridian
⇒ Specializing in auditing hospital Medicare cost reports
⇒ Supervised field audits and desk reviews in accordance with CMS procedures
⇒ Knowledge of Medicare reimbursement methodology
⇒ Department Manager at Hill Air Force Base with 38 personnel

We are excited to have Frank as part of our team and we welcome him aboard.

News from Medicare & Medicaid Services—FY 2007 Cost Report

We are pleased to announce that Noridian Administrative Services will not be conducting a field audit of our 2007 Medicare cost report. Since completing the cost report is such a collaborative effort the net benefit of not having an audit will have far reaching implications. Work flow processes will not be interrupted and our staff will experience less disruption. We congratulate those of you who have added significantly to the accuracy of filing a timely Medicare cost report.

News from Medicare & Medicaid Services—FY 2008 Cost Report

Data requests for the FY 2008 Medicare cost report will be forthcoming. Please be sure to respond as soon as your data is available. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

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