Healthcare Acquired Infections (HAI) – Moving to the forefront of health policy decisions in the US and maybe in Kentucky.

Courier Journal: In an editorial, David Hawpe, editorial director at the Courier Journal, reported on the public reporting legislation in the State of Washington and the call for public reporting by major medical organizations dealing with healthcare infections and epidemiology.   In addition, he calls for action from the Kentucky Legislature. HW USA agrees with these recommendations.   Read Editorial Below:

http://www.healthwatchusa.org/downloads/20090727-CJ-MRSA.pdf

This echoes the call from Health Watch USA for Kentucky to address this issue. Currently, HAI is being addressed in the national healthcare reform bill. The bill however is struggling and passage is uncertain.   Many are calling on the State to act.
(Read MRSA HW USA Op-Ed Published in the Courier Journal on July 9th, 2009)

House's Healthcare Reform Bill Addresses Healthcare Acquired Infections (HAI): HR 3200 has a large section requiring the public reporting of hospital acquired infections.   In addition, there is a requirement for Medicaid to adopt Medicare regulations for non-payment of never events.

Both of these sections support two major policy initiatives of Health Watch USA.   The section on Medicaid no longer paying for never events, may have some of its origins at the HW USA 2008 conference where this policy was strongly advocated.   Consumer Union (Publisher of Consumer Reports) who also attended the conference, actively supported this initiative in 2009.   Also, a member of HW USA made several trips to Washington to network with other patient advocacy organizations and Consumer Union; along with advocating for these initiatives.

Although passing a US House Committee to be voted on by the full House nowhere guarantee these sections will become law, it is rewarding to see movement and agreement by many legislators on these initiatives.

> To view the entire bill: Go To: http://thomas.loc.gov/   and search on HR 3200.
>
> To view section on healthcare acquired infections:
> http://www.healthwatchusa.org/publications/200908-downloads/HR3200-S1461-S1138A-HAI.pdf
>
> To view section on Medicaid non-payment of never events:
> http://www.healthwatchusa.org/publications/200908-downloads/HR3200-S1751-Medicaid-NeverEvents.pdf

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Health Care Reform is a hot topic, newly released and compiled data suggests that the current system is high cost with RN's under considerable job stress and insurance premiums and the uninsured climbing.   Critics counter, do you want the long wait times of a socialized system. – See points below.

High Registered Nurse Turnover Rate: A recent study funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that 26.2% of nurses leave their job within two years.   Comments indicated dissatisfaction in primary hospital-based environments.   Comments mentioned in the survey were the need for higher nurse-to-patient ratios and decreases in mandatory overtime.   This has financial implications, since a high nurse turnover is very costly to institutions. More importantly, it raises serious concerns regarding patient safety.

http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=46437

AHRQ News and Numbers In 2008, the cost of employer-sponsored heath insurance rose to $12,298 for a family of four. For an individual policy this averaged $4,386 per year.

http://www.meps.ahrq.gov/mepsweb/data_files/publications/st251/stat251.pdf

In Kentucky, it has been reported by the US Dept. HHS that 15% of the population is uninsured and that employer health insurance coverage decreased from the year 2000 to 2007 from 65% to 58%. http://www.healthwatchusa.org/publications/200908-downloads/20090806-KentuckyHealthCare-Stats.pdf

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Long wait times in UK Healthcare System:

NHS waiting time 'underestimated' (BBC May 27 2009)
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/3749801.stm
Current waiting times in England and Scotland:

> Cataract Surgery - 8 months
> Hip Replacement – 11 months
> Knee Replacement – 12 months
> Slipped Disk – 5 months
> Hernia Repair - 5 months

2009 Conference on Healthcare Transparency and Patient Advocacy

The Nov. 13th 2009 healthcare conference has a preliminary agenda posted on www.healthconference.org . A large array of nationally renowned speakers will present at the

conference whose main theme is healthcare reform.

A few of the speakers for this year's event:

Keynote: Dr Regina Herzlinger**:** Professor and Chairwoman of the Harvard School for Business. Best selling author of " Who Killed Health Care in America ? "

Lt Gov. Daniel Mongiardo, MD**:** Lieutenant Governor State of Kentucky

Dr. Joycelyn Elders**:** Past U.S. Surgeon General. Presenting on the need for health care reform.

Dr. L.D. Britt**:** Chairman of the Board of Regents, the American College of Surgeons. presenting on the physician shortage.

Nadeem Esmail**:** Director of Health System Performance Studies and Manager of the Alberta Policy Research Centre at the Fraser Institute.   Presenting on the Canadian Health Care System.

Dr Garret Adams**:** Kentucky State Coordinator of Physicians for a National Health Care Program. Presenting on the single-payer system.

For more information download the conference's brochure at:
http://www.healthconference.org/2009conference_downloads/HCTPA_Brochure.pdf

The importance of this topic is exemplified by the new AHRQ report which found that fewer families who are not covered by group policies can afford health insurance.
http://www.ahrq.gov/news/press/pr2009/faminspr.htm

Register now for the Nov. 13th, 2009 Conference at www.healthconference.org

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