

March 5, 2010

IHA/LarsonAllen Gold Standard Report Available

IHA and LarsonAllen presented on and distributed the IHA Gold Standard Performance Summary at district meetings this winter. The IHA Council on Health Information and the Gold Standard Report Steering Committee, comprised of multi-disciplinary hospital representatives, oversaw this program to address the IHA strategic plan direction to complete a benchmarking report on financial and quality performance specific to Iowa hospitals.

Iowa is nationally recognized as providing high-quality and efficient health care, as reported by both the Dartmouth Atlas and the Commonwealth Fund. IHA partnered with LarsonAllen, an IHA Associate Member and certified public accounting, consulting and advisory firm, on this very important project. Key goals are to identify, measure and learn from the best practices and results at Iowa hospitals, then press those practices into service across the state so more hospitals can join the best.

LarsonAllen is nationally known for its long-standing experience in developing gold standard reports for Critical Access Hospitals, but this marks the first time the project includes Prospective Payment System hospitals. And the IHA Gold Standard Report also breaks new ground by including quality metrics and relating them to financial performance.

Using IHA's vast collection of hospital data sets, including the AHA Annual Survey's audited financial information and balance sheet data, in addition to the publicly available quality data sets, LarsonAllen and IHA worked with the steering committee to identify key measures to be included in this report package. These measures were used to identify characteristics of top-performing facilities in Iowa based on financial, quality and patient satisfaction measures.

Additional copies of the report are available to Iowa hospitals and health systems. Contact [Kathy Trytten](#) or [Perry Meyer](#) at IHA with any questions or to request additional copies.

Several Hospital Nurse Leaders Among 100 Great Iowa Nurses

This year's "100 Great Iowa Nurses" will be honored at a May 2 celebration in Des Moines at Hy-Vee Hall in the Iowa Events Center. Nurses selected for this honor represent many sectors of health care, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools and medical offices. More than 80 of this year's honorees are nurses at Iowa hospitals or health systems and 15 of those are members of the Iowa Organization of Nurse Leaders, IHA's affiliate group for nurse managers and executives:

- Peg Bradke, St. Luke's Hospital, Cedar Rapids
- Mary Hagen, St. Luke's Hospital, Cedar Rapids

- Rebecca Jacobs, Mercy Medical Center-Cedar Rapids
- Amy Berentes, Mercy Medical Center-Clinton
- Linda Fennelly, Genesis Medical Center, Davenport
- Christine Lynn, Genesis Medical Center, Davenport
- Sally Werner, Genesis Medical Center, Davenport
- Peggy Black, Iowa Health-Des Moines
- Chris Blair, Iowa Health-Des Moines
- Cecelia Kirvin, Blank Children's Hospital, Des Moines
- De Shawn Schmidt, Genesis Medical Center-DeWitt
- Marylynne Lillie, Fort Madison Community Hospital
- Darlene Keuning, Mahaska Health Partnership, Oskaloosa
- Ronda Reimer, Pella Regional Health Center
- Paula Geise, Allen Memorial Hospital, Waterloo

[To see the complete list of the 100 nurses, click here.](#)

Tickets for the celebration are \$5 each and must be bought in advance by April 17; no tickets will be sold at the door. [To download a ticket ordering form, click here.](#)

Now in its sixth year, the 100 Great Iowa Nurses program not only recognizes outstanding nurses, it also awards scholarships. Scholarship applicants may be full- or part-time students attending an approved program leading to a graduate or undergraduate degree in nursing or a related field, such as education. [For more information about the scholarship program, click here.](#)

IHA and Hospital Execs Talk Economic Impact on Radio Program

IHA President and CEO Kirk Norris discussed the economic impact of hospitals and health care in Iowa, among other topics, during an appearance this week on the Iowa Public Radio news show "The Exchange." Norris was joined by Ken Fisher, vice president for finance at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City, and Joe LeValley, senior vice president for planning and advocacy at Mercy Medical Center-Des Moines.

Besides the multi-billion-dollar impact of Iowa's health care sector, the panel also covered health care reform, geographic payment disparity in Medicare and value-based purchasing; Medicaid and expanding IowaCare; and the increasing cost of charity care.

To hear a recording of the program, [click here.](#)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In early spring, the regional vacation catalogs start showing up in mailboxes and particularly this year, they offer a brief but welcome escape for the mind as one flips through the pages. They tout respites in cottages, walks along miles of sandy beaches beside the Great Lakes and capture the physics of the fly line rolling out through the air just before it lands gracefully in the water. All of these images evoke a simplicity, the best of the natural world in a seemingly uncomplicated environment.

But if one actually steps off the porch of that rustic cottage or spends anytime studying the flora, fauna and creatures that inhabit the natural world, it's quickly revealed that the biodiversity, even in a manicured landscape like the upper Midwest, is anything but simple. Much the same can be said for the individual and institutional relationships that exist to serve a diverse population of Iowans.

As Iowans watched the tragedy of a murder trial unfold in north-central Iowa over the past two weeks, two things should have become apparent even to the casual observer: 1) proof of the elements of an insanity defense is extremely difficult; and 2) the man convicted of murder suffered from severe mental illness.

The wound of the permanent loss of a community leader who dedicated his life to the development of character and discipline in young people was reopened for the entire community and the empathy of others for those standing in that chasm is palpable. Legislators, feeling that empathy, errantly tabbed a piece of legislation with the name of the slain educator. Using this simple and over-used political tactic didn't do anything to gain another vote as the legislation, after months of discussions, deliberation and consideration, had all 50 votes of the Iowa Senate.

Although likely extended to offer solace and goodwill, naming the legislation also served to place ownership of the legislation in one family and as publicly reported, the family believes the legislation should be simplified. However, mental illness, let alone the rights of those who suffer from it and the protection of those who may be imperiled by it, is not a simple paradigm.

The real solution to the tragedy that unfolded is not found in any notification or process. If that were the case, domestic, child and sexual abuse would have been eradicated long ago. The real solution is in the development of community-based services that meet the needs of the mentally ill and accept the fact that with mental illness often comes the need to treat substance abuse.

Some communities are successfully addressing their population of the mentally ill. It comes in providing all levels of service for this population and hospitals certainly have a role to play in that continuum. The missing element today as recognized by hospital directors of behavioral health is the absence of sub-acute and "drop-in" services that help people manage their illnesses and often-related substance abuse.

By all public accounts, Coach Thomas was an extremely successful professional educator and football coach and his legacy is testimony to his understanding the importance of building a winning system for student achievement. Successful systems rarely have one simple element; football certainly doesn't and responding to the needs of mentally ill Iowans doesn't either.

The Legislature maintained one piece of the system by preserving all four of Iowa's mental health institutes. It should do much more.

– *Kirk Norris*

Nurse Leaders Meeting to Feature Connie Curran and Ginny Beeson

Nurse leaders are no longer measured on just the process of care being delivered, but on the outcome of that care. At this year's Iowa Organization of Nurse Leaders Spring Conference and Trade Show, Dr. Connie Curran, CEO of Best on Board, will summarize the relationship between safety, quality and financial issues in today's economic environment as well as examine approaches to recruitment, development and retention of talent.

Ginny Beeson, a nurse executive, consultant and educator with more than 30 years of experience in nursing, will round out the day by challenging nurse leaders to develop courageous leadership skills, eliminate victim cultures and build a more professional future for nursing.

Curran and Beeson will share more of their nationally recognized expertise at the IONL Spring Conference and Trade Show, which will be held **May 7** in Des Moines at Hy-Vee Hall in the Iowa Events Center. A block of sleeping rooms is available at the [Des Moines Marriott Downtown](#). To reserve a room, call 800/514-4681 and request the IHA room block.

For more information and to register for this program, [click here](#).

IHA to Hold Annual Spring Program for Home Health Care

IHA is sponsoring the Iowa Hospital Home Care Council (IHHCC) Spring Conference at Prairie Meadows in Altoona on **April 16**. In response to IHHCC's focus on home health care issues for 2010, representatives from Cahaba, the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals and IHA staff will serve as faculty. Program topics will include:

- Cahaba GBA updates
- OASIS-C: payment and process measures
- Legislative update

For more information and to register, [click here](#). Questions about the IHHCC Spring Conference can be directed to [Kara Dickey](#) at IHA.

Recovery Audit Contractor Process Subject of Audioconference

An audioconference scheduled for March 25 will present a description of the federal administrative appeals process applicable when a Medicare contractor denies a claim for reimbursement. This presentation will include a description of the process used by Medicare contractors, fiscal intermediaries, Medicare administrative contractors and recovery audit contractors (RACs) to make determinations of improper payments, including their procedures for making additional document requests.

The rights of hospitals in this process will be discussed. The procedures for appealing RAC determinations will be explained and practice tips will be offered on avoiding pitfalls in the process, preventing recoupment of alleged overpayments before the appeal is decided and persuasively addressing “medical necessity” issues.

For more information and to register for this audioconference, [click here](#).

6th Annual IHA Tee Off Golf Classic: April 14

The 6th Annual IHA Tee Off Golf Classic will be held April 14 with a shot-gun start and, yes, the snow will be melted with great weather! The format will be four-person best shot, with prizes awarded. Sponsors of the event are CMA-An Ideacom Partner, Graham Construction, The MMIC Group, Farm Bureau Financial Services, ServiShare and UMB Bank.

The event will be held at [Copper Creek Golf Club](#) in Pleasant Hill (just a few miles east of downtown Des Moines off Highway 163/East University Avenue). Golfers will enjoy this beautiful 18-hole championship golf course and recently updated club house.

A box lunch will be provided at 11 a.m., with golf to follow at 11:15 a.m. For this IHA golf event, registration will only be available to Iowa hospital and health system CEOs and their invited guests.

[Click here](#) to register for this event. Contact [Perry Meyer](#) at IHA with any questions.

Hospital Marketing and Public Relations Conference is April 26-27

The Iowa Society for Healthcare Marketing and Public Relations Spring Conference is the only education event designed by and for Iowa hospital marketing and public relations professionals. This year’s conference will be held April 26-27 at the [Holiday Inn-Jordan Creek](#) in West Des Moines.

At this year’s conference, branding will take center stage. Branding is a science that matters to hospitals. No matter its shape, colors or fonts, the hospital brand means something –

something that transcends design and has the potential to embrace human emotions while creating and solidifying relationships. Simply put, people think differently about their hospitals, so they react differently to the brand and what it represents.

This year's conference will target re-branding as a case-study that will outline the decisions and challenges one hospital experienced. Another session will provide strategies for recruiting and growing an army of effective "branding ambassadors."

There's more: Presentations will also cover how to more effectively communicate health care information (and get others to do the same) and how to make yellow page advertising pay off. As always, time will be set aside for attendees to share their latest PR and marketing "bright ideas" and there will be plenty of time to network with colleagues from all over the state.

For more information and to register, [click here](#).

Final Days to Apply for IHA Health Care Careers Scholarship

The deadline to apply for IHA's scholarship program for college students studying for careers in health care is **March 10**. The program, administered through the Iowa Hospital Education and Research Foundation (IHERF), awards scholarships of \$3,000 per year for a maximum of two years to students enrolled in an accredited program leading to registration, licensure or a clinical laboratory science graduate or undergraduate degree. In exchange for that financial support, students who accept the funds agree to work one year in an Iowa hospital for each year they receive a scholarship.

Since 2005, when the first scholarships were awarded, 136 students have received IHERF Health Care Careers Scholarships, with a total value of \$408,000. Scholarship recipients are now working for Iowa hospitals throughout the state, helping to bolster and stabilize Iowa's hospital work force.

Scholarship application packets are available at hospital human resources departments and at financial aid departments at all Iowa colleges. [Scholarship information and application materials are also available on the IHA Web site](#).

IHA Financial Management Audioconferences Continue

Bill Ward, the highest rated speaker in IHA's Health Care Leadership Series, continues with his financial management audioconference series this month. Sessions in the series focus on performance reports, managing a budget and complying with financial constraints and a simplified method of predicting future departmental expenditures.

Ward is the director of the master of health science degree program in health finance and management at the Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health. He also heads Healthcare Management Resources Inc., a Maryland-based consulting firm.

Remaining topics and dates for the audioconferences (all programs will be held from 10-11 a.m.) include “Analyzing Performance Using Volume Adjusted Variance Analysis” on **March 18** and “Performance Management: Forecasting, Performance Mapping, Process Analysis” on **April 22**.

For more information and to register for these audioconferences, [click here](#).

More Audioconferences Scheduled on Coding Topics

IHA is cosponsoring a series of audioconferences on coding that will review specific CPT and ICD-9-CM coding hot topics and issues. In addition, one of the audioconferences will provide an introduction to the new ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS coding systems.

The schedule of remaining audioconferences is as follows (all programs will be held noon-1 p.m.):

- ICD-10-CM and ICD 10-PCS Overview (March 17)
- ICD-9-CM Coding Series: Cardiology and Respiratory Diagnosis Coding (April 14)
- ICD-9-CM Coding Series: Coding for Neoplasms (May 19)
- ICD-9-CM Coding Series: Injuries and Poisonings, E Codes (June 16)

For more information and to register for these audioconferences, [click here](#).

Awards Recognize Health Care Leadership Teams

HealthLeaders Media is once again looking for the next story of great hospital leadership for its annual awards program. The stories may vary in their circumstances – from the teamwork that Ochsner Health System in Louisiana showed as it led through the devastation of Katrina in 2005, to Denver Health in Colorado overcoming the challenges facing a public, safety-net hospital system last year – but whatever form the stories take, the awards will recognize the value of outstanding leadership teamwork.

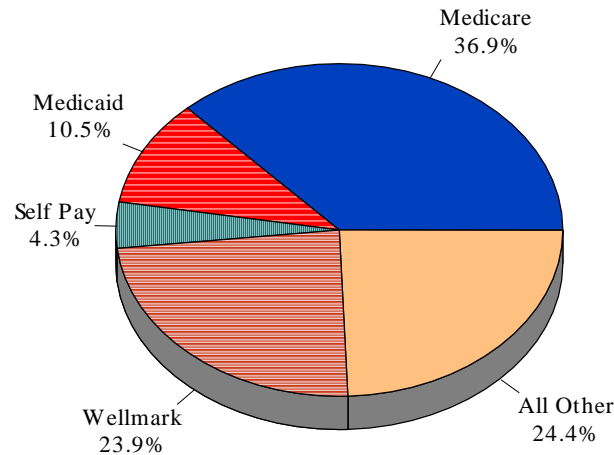
The goal of the program is always to discover new “best practices” in teamwork and share them with the health care industry. Iowa hospitals of all sizes are encouraged to share their stories of leadership making a difference.

The deadline to apply for the HealthLeaders Media Top Leadership Teams in Health Care Awards is **April 30**. HealthLeaders notes that while every year brings a new set of winning stories, over the years award-winning teams have consistently demonstrated a culture of accountable, measurable teamwork among a group of committed leaders. Winners have been able to show demonstrable results, not merely vague statements about teamwork.

For more information and to access the official entry form, [click here](#).

Distribution of Outpatient Revenue by Payer

Medicare recipients accounted for 36.9 percent of the total outpatient charges in Iowa hospitals during January-October 2009, according to data from the IHA DATABANK Program. Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield subscribers accounted for 23.9 percent. People with Medicaid and all other insurance coverage accounted for 10.5 percent and 24.4 percent of outpatient charges, respectively. The uninsured accounted for 4.3 percent of the total outpatient charges. Contact [Perry Meyer](#) IHA with any questions.



Member-Abilia

CEO Pat Markham recently celebrated her 25th anniversary at **Cass County Health System** in Atlantic. After training as a nurse in eastern Nebraska and working at **Jennie Edmundson Hospital** in Council Bluffs, Markham earned her master's degree in health care administration from the University of Iowa and was hired as assistant administrator at CCHS in 1984. She was promoted to CEO in 1988. Markham served on the IHA Board from 1991-1997.

Links:

1. [Newsstand](#)
 2. [Employment Opportunities \(IowaHealthJobs.net\)](#)
 3. [Friday Mailing Archive](#)
 4. [IHA Blog](#)
 5. [IHA Education Program Calendar](#)
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“Other countries...go by the assumption that the bulk of providers of care are honest and then merely go after the statistical outliers. Far less money is spent on billing in those countries.”

– Uwe Reinhardt, health care economist