



# HPCAIA Update

*Bi-weekly News for Hospice Professionals in Iowa*

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February 26, 2010

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## **President Releases New Health Care Proposal; Holds Summit**

In the days before President Obama hosted a bi-partisan health reform summit in Washington, D.C. with members of both the House and Senate, he released a revamped health care reform proposal that included several new approaches aimed at enticing House members and Republicans. [Read the president's proposal here.](#)

The president's \$950 billion proposal builds off of the Senate health reform bill that passed in late December, and the only changes to that Senate bill are the changes outlined in the president's proposal; if the president's proposal is silent about a provision included in the Senate bill, then the provision included in the Senate bill stands. Recall the Senate bill included \$6.8 billion in cuts to hospice, a reduction in the market basket update of 0.3 percent during years 2013 through 2019, and productivity adjustments beginning in 2013.

It is important to note the Senate bill is an actual bill with proposals written in statutory language, whereas the president's proposal is a conceptual proposal, not written in statutory language and is therefore less specific than the Senate bill. The president's proposal is also very fluid and likely to change as this process moves forward. Therefore, more precise descriptions of the ultimate health reform bill will be available once the entire proposal has been drafted into statutory language. At this time, it does not appear the President proposed changes to the hospice provisions that were included in the Senate bill. [Click here to see NHPCO summary of original underlying Senate bill.](#) [Click here to see Kaiser Family Foundation side-by-side summary of health reform bills and the president's new proposal.](#)

The health reform summit lasted for about seven hours on February 25 with the goal of the meeting to achieve consensus and a plan moving forward on health care reform that has stalled in Congress. Throughout the day, Congressional leaders and the president went back and forth discussing key issues, articulating general areas of agreement while also identifying the major areas of disagreement. Both Iowa Senators, Tom Harkin, chair of the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions

Committee, and Chuck Grassley, ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, attended the health reform summit. Several issues, from coverage, wellness and prevention to value-based purchasing and the overall cost of care were discussed though it is unclear at this time whether the meeting was political grandstanding or substantive progress made on health care reform.

At the end of the day, the president signaled his desire to work with Republicans to incorporate some of their ideas into the bill but also sent a clear message that health reform must move forward, and soon. Referencing the day's summit, President Obama stated, "If nothing comes of this, we're going to press forward. We just can't quit. This is a once-in-a-political-lifetime opportunity to deal with a health-care system that is really unsustainable."

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### **Still Time to Register for HPCAI Legislative Day**

The 2010 [HPCAI Legislative Day](#) will be held Tuesday, March 9. The day will begin at 11:00 am at the HPCAI offices at 100 E. Grand Avenue. Attendees will learn more about the legislative process and get an update on legislative activities impacting hospice and palliative care in Iowa. Senator Amanda Ragan (D-Mason City), chair of the Senate Human Resources Committee which has jurisdiction over health policy matters, has been invited to speak with attendees. Following a complimentary lunch, participants will head to the Capitol to visit with their own legislators.

For more information regarding HPCAI Legislative Day, please contact [Shannon Strickler](#) or [Becky Anthony](#) at 515.243.1046. A brochure for the event can be viewed [here](#). Convenient online registration is available until March 4, after the 4th please fax your registration form to [Crystal Peters](#) at 515.283.9366.

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### **Hospice Social Worker Conference Kicks Off National Social Worker Month**

Ethical issues related to boundaries are among the most challenging and problematic for social work practitioners. Amanda Randall, Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, will address these issues at the [Social Work Peer Group Conference](#) March 5 at the Bessie Meyers Auditorium at Mary Greeley Medical Center in Ames. This morning session will qualify for 3 hours of social work ethics CEUs.

During the afternoon session, Professor Randall will focus on the family of origin and how its influences can have dramatic affect on key end-of-life decisions.

A limited number of onsite registrations will be available. To view a detailed brochure, [click here](#). Contact [Stacey Nay](#), director, education services at 515.243.1046.

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### **Hospice Whistleblower Lawsuits Examined – Learn How to Manage Your Risks**

In an ongoing effort to bring current hospice legal and regulatory issues to the attention of members, HPCAI provides access to the work of attorney Mary Michal through the *Reinhart Headlines in Hospice and Palliative Care*.

The most recent articles have examined the False Claims Act (FCA). The [first article](#) in the two-part

series looked at the increasing trend of hospice whistleblower lawsuits under the FCA. The [second article](#) recognizes that hospices cannot entirely eliminate the possibility of FCA lawsuits and provides several steps hospices can take to help manage whistleblower risks.

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## Why are Fewer Patients Enrolling in Hospice?

Suddenly, many hospices are admitting fewer patients. Others are increasingly caring for people for just days or hours before they die. The result: cash-strapped hospices are cutting back on nurses and aides, and patients are missing out on critical end-of-life care. It is not clear why it's happening, but some hospice officials blame both a bad economy and Medicare rules that unintentionally discourage doctors from referring all but those who are about to die. A recent column by Howard Gleckman, Senior Research Associate at the Urban Institute, addresses these issues. [Click here to read the column.](#)

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## Cahaba Education

### Hospice Clinician Alert: Top Denials in 2009

March 11, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Registration Deadline: March 8

During this webinar, participants will learn what the top Medical Review denials were in 2009, and how to avoid them. We will look at the nuances of terminal prognosis, and capturing symptoms in documentation, based on the Hospice LCD.

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

Cahaba also has a *Hospice Billing Part II* Webinar scheduled for March 9. For more information and to register to participate, please [click here](#).

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## Member Updates

- Linda Todd, director, Hospice of Siouxland, has been named to the Board of Directors of [The Foundation for Hospices in Sub-Saharan Africa](#). Linda helped establish a FHSSA partnership between Hospice of Siouxland and Howick Hospice in South Africa.
- Note this address change in your HPCAI Membership Directory:  
Hospice of Southwest Iowa  
427 E Kaneshville, Suite 100  
Council Bluffs, IA 51503  
The phone and fax numbers will remain the same.

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## Education Opportunities Across the State

### Palliative Care Conference

An April 9 conference will focus on several palliative care topics, including conducting a family conference, symptom management at the end of life and pediatric palliative care.

The conference will be held at Iowa Methodist Medical Center. Conference sponsors include: Iowa Health Home Care, Iowa Health-Des Moines, Hospice of Central Iowa, Mercy Medical Center Des Moines and Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield.

[Click here](#) to review the program brochure. Contact [Dia Gross](#) at 515.633.1118 for more information.

### CHPN Certification Review Classes

Iowa Hospice is sponsoring CHPN certification exam review classes March 10 in Cedar Rapids and March 23 in Fort Dodge.

A registration fee of \$150 includes a textbook, lunch and 0.7 CEUs. A study guide is available for an additional fee. For more information about the review classes or to register, contact Brooke Gritzner at 712.790.3013.

### Hospice of Jasper County Annual Conference

Hospice of Jasper County will hold its Annual Conference May 14 at the Newton Country Club. Jackson Rainer, PhD, will present *Life and Loss – Living and Dying in the Family System*. For more information on the conference, call 641.787.3146.

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## HPCAI Calendar

- **March 5**  
**Social Work Peer Group Conference**  
Bessie Myers Auditorium, Mary Greeley Medical Center
- **March 9**  
**HPCAI Board Meeting**  
Board Room, HPCAI Office, *Board Members Only*
- **March 9, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**  
**HPCAI Legislative Day**  
HPCAI Offices and Capitol
- **March 23**  
[Hospice Residence Networking Group](#)  
Board Room, HPCAI Office, *Register in advance*  
Lunch: 12:30 p.m.; Meeting: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- **November 2 – 3**  
**HPCAI Fall Conference**  
Scheman Building, Iowa State Center, Ames

To add items to the HPCAI Calendar, send information to [Stacey Nay](#).

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