Recent News Items of Interest

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South Carolina passes trauma legislation

Congratulations to the State of South Carolina on their successful passage of trauma systems legislation. Please drop Phyllis Beasley a line to get all the news!

Pan America Health Organization publishes an Emergency Care and Treatment course for the Caribbean.

The course, which is available on CD-ROM, addresses basic medical response for disaster and emergency situations. The course includes a participant's manual, tips for the instructors, a PowerPoint presentation and review tests April 2004. A limited number of copies of both the CD-ROM and the print participant's manual can be requested from disaster-publications@paho.org. The contents of the course are also available online at http://www.disaster-info.net/carib/

“Management Information Systems: Meeting the Challenges of Managed Care.”

The topic for this webcast sponsored by the Center for Health Services Financing and Managed Care, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will be "Management Information Systems: Meeting the Challenges of Managed Care." It will deal with assessing MIS needs and capacity for encounter data collection, processing, and reporting in a managed care environment. The webcast will take place on Wednesday, June 30, 2004 from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET. There is no registration fee for the training. However pre-registration is required! Register on-line at http://www.jsi.com/hrsamctac/Conferences/indexwebcast.htm

IOM study on the Future of Emergency Care in the U.S. Health System

The expanded main committee and subcommittee membership have been appointed for the IOM study on the Future of Emergency Care in the U.S. Health System. The roster for the main committee and each of the three subcommittees (Pediatric Emergency Care, Prehospital Emergency Medical Services, and Hospital-based Emergency Care) have been posted online at www.iom.edu/emergencycare.

As a reminder, all of these groups will be holding meetings with open sessions in June. Draft agendas for the Pediatric Emergency Care and Prehospital Emergency Medical Services subcommittee meetings have been posted online. Draft agendas for the Hospital-based Emergency Care subcommittee and Main committee meetings will be posted within approximately one week.

June 9-11, 2004: Meetings of Pediatric subcommittee (June 9 & 10) and June 10-11, 2004: Pre-hospital EMS subcommittee (June 10 & 11)
June 24-25, 2004: Meetings of Hospital-based ED subcommittee and the Main Committee

If you are interested in attending any of the open sessions for our June meetings, please contact us immediately to register (emergencycare@nas.edu or 202-334-2711). Please note that space is somewhat limited; however, copies of all presentations will be posted on the project website following the meetings.

The Joint Commission seeks input on proposed standards for health care staffing services certification program

The Joint Commission is soliciting comments on the proposed standards from the ambulatory care, behavioral health care, home care, hospital, laboratory and long term care fields, as well as organizations, within the health care staffing industry. The draft standards for the Health Care Staffing Services Certification program are posted on the Joint Commission website, http://www.jcaho.org/. Organizations and individuals that wish to participate in the field evaluation are asked to complete the field review questions online. The deadline to complete the review and submit feedback electronically is June 9, 2004.
• **NHTSA repeats rollover warning to users of 15-passenger vans**

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has re-issued a warning to users of 15-passenger vans because of an increased rollover risk under certain conditions. Similar warnings were issued in 2001 and 2002. Research has shown that 15-passenger vans have a rollover risk that increases dramatically as the number of occupants increases to full capacity. The likelihood of a rollover when a van is fully loaded is about five times greater than when the vehicle contains only a driver. While an increased likelihood of rollover is present for other types of fully loaded passenger vehicles, it is most pronounced for 15-passenger vans. More information on specifics regarding the warning and safety steps to be employed may be found at:


• **CDC Report on Emergency Departments and Provision of Safety Net**

According to a new study from the CDC looking at 2000 data, 36 percent of emergency departments served a high volume of "safety-net" patients. The report designated as "high safety-net" all emergency departments that served patients who were at least 30 percent Medicaid eligible, 30 percent uninsured, or 40 percent in either category. The report is available at:


• **HHS Awards $498 Million to States to Improve Hospitals' Response to Bioterror and Other Disasters**

HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson today announced $498 million in awards to states, territories and four major metropolitan areas to strengthen the ability of hospitals and other health care facilities to respond to bioterror attacks, infectious diseases, and natural disasters that may cause mass casualties. "These grants are an important addition to national security because hospitals play such a critical role in identifying and responding to a terrorist attack, an infectious disease outbreak, and natural disasters," Secretary Thompson said. "States and communities can use these funds to improve emergency care in any health crisis, whether the source is a bioterror attack or other infectious disease outbreaks like SARS or West Nile virus, or any natural disaster like a flood or hurricane."

Health departments in the states, territories and metro areas (New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles County and Washington, DC) receiving the federal funds will use them to improve the readiness of hospitals and other health care entities in their jurisdictions in dealing with large numbers of casualties. Recipients also will use the funds to increase coordination on disease reporting among hospitals and local and state health departments, enhance such coordination between public health laboratories and hospital-based laboratories, and harmonize the communications capabilities of these entities. Other uses for these program funds include providing behavioral health services and trauma and burn care and buying communications equipment and personal protective gear.

This is the third consecutive year that HRSA has provided funding to increase hospital preparedness, totaling more than $1.5 billion. In addition, HHS' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will soon announce its latest round of grants, estimated to be at least $844 million, bringing the total HHS investment to aiding state preparedness to more than $3.7 billion since Sept. 11, 2001. "Hospitals will use the funds they receive from states to effect a rapid temporary expansion of bed capacity to accommodate mass casualties, increase isolation and decontamination capacity, identify qualified volunteer healthcare workers to augment hospital staff to deal with mass casualties, and plan for hospital-based and community ready pharmaceutical caches," noted Elizabeth M. Duke, Ph.D., administrator of HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration, which oversees the program.