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Region to Receive Homeland Security Grants

The National Capital Region (NCR) is slated to receive \$59.8 million in fiscal year 2008 from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Urban Areas Security Initiative Program – approximately \$40 million short of what officials requested. The region will pick up another \$11.5 million from the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program. The District and the NCR received \$352.2 million in homeland security grant funding between 2002 and 2007, according to DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency. Specific plans for the 2008 funds haven't been released, but many hope the focus will be on improving the capacity to provide mass medical treatment in the event of a major emergency. Other targets include law enforcement upgrades and improvised explosive device prevention and protection.

CMS Releases FY2009 Final Rules & Adverse Events Payment Policies

The Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) released its fiscal year inpatient prospective payment system (IPPS) final rule. The rule scales back the proposed increase of 43 new quality measures hospitals must report to 13 and include two measures of surgical site infection prevention and one measure of 20-day mortality rates for pneumonia. CMS expects two new readmission measures for heart attack and pneumonia to be endorsed by the National Quality Forum this fall and included in the IPPS rule.

The fiscal year 2009 final rules for inpatient rehabilitations facilities (IRF), skilled nursing facilities (SNF) and the hospice wage index were also released. The IRF final rule includes three congressionally mandated changes, two of which pertain to the 75% rule, a new, permanent 60% threshold and the permanent inclusion of selected comorbidities. The SNF final rule includes a 3.4% market basket increase for FY2009, an increase of \$780 million from FY2008 payments. CMS will also postpone its proposed reduction of \$770 million to adjust for higher-than-expected utilization of the nine, higher paid payment categories added to the system in 2006.

CMS is also encouraging states to coordinate their Medicaid payment policies with Medicare's hospital-acquired condition payment policy in an effort to ensure that states do not pay for adverse events. Beginning October 1, 2008 CMS will no longer pay hospitals a higher diagnosis-related group rate for 10 conditions if they were not reported as present on admission as part of their fiscal year 2009 inpatient prospective released earlier this month. The District has just begun reporting adverse events and does not currently have a payment policy regarding adverse events.

House Subcommittee Passes Bill to Ease Nursing Shortages

A subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee voted 7-2 to approve legislation that would allow more foreign-educated nurses to work in the U.S. and help nursing schools expand the domestic supply of nurses. The bill would reserve 20,000 employment-based visas in each of the next three years for foreign-educated registered nurses and physical therapists. It would also provide funds to expand nursing schools and create a pilot program aimed at keeping nurses in the workforce. Currently, the U.S. has a waiting list for employment-based visas for nurses, and its nurse education programs have turned away more than 150,000 qualified applicants last year due to lack of faculty and clinical space.

Final Instructions for Form 990, Schedule H Expected Soon

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) have announced that it will release the final instructions for the new Form 990 and related schedules, including Schedule H for hospitals, later this month and will include significant changes from the previously released instructions. For Schedule H, IRS removed specific limitations on what could be reported as subsidized services, including expenses related to physician clinics and skilled nursing facilities, and limited reporting under Part V "Facility Information" to facilities that are licensed, certified or similarly recognized by a state as a health care facility. IRS also placed a cap of 20 on the number of "key employees" to be reported and increased the management threshold from 5% to 10% of the organization's income, assets or the like. Schedule K, the form for reporting on tax exempt bonds, was improved by eliminating the requirement for filers to complete Part III of the schedule.

DOES Workforce Investment Focus Group

The Department of Employment Services is hosting a One-Stop Non-Users Employer Focus Group for Tuesday, August 12th from 9:00 am – 10:30 am at the DC Chamber of Commerce at 1213 K Street, NW. The purpose of this One-Stop Non-Users Focus Group is to discuss how the District's One-Stop Centers can improve its services to employers and our business community while also providing job seekers with the much needed job preparation, training and employment assistance. If you would like to attend, please contact Amelia Lofton at 202-698-5826.

DCHA 30th Annual Banquet Sponsorship Opportunities

Please join DCHA in celebrating its 30th Annual Banquet. This year's banquet will be held on **Thursday, October 16, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hilton Washington, 1919 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC.** Sponsorship provides numerous opportunities to showcase your company. DCHA offers three sponsorship levels: Platinum (\$10,000), Chairman's Circle (\$5,000) and Patron (\$2,500). Sponsorship forms can be found on the DCHA website at www.dcha.org.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Malow".

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