

OSTEOFAX

A Membership Publication of the Ohio Osteopathic Association

- In his weekly radio address, June 12, President Barack Obama **called on Congress to avert a 21 percent cut in payments to physicians** who treat Medicare patients. He also reiterated his commitment to permanent reform of the Medicare physician payment formula. The U.S. Senate failed Wednesday to override a budget point of order against HR 4213. The measure was defeated 45-52 as moderate Democrats joined every Republican in voting against the current version of the bill, meaning that the bill could not advance through the Senate. HR 4213 would have helped preserve access to physicians for millions of Americans in Medicare by preventing the impending 21.2% Medicare physician payment cut and replacing it with at least 1% positive updates until a permanent fix to the Sustainable Growth Rate formula could be found. Following this failed action, Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) introduced a scaled-back version of the bill that includes a positive physician update of 2.2% through November 2010. “While we do not want the cut to be implemented, the continued reliance upon short-term patches is simply not consistent with AOA policies or objectives,” writes AOA Executive Director John Crosby in his daily report. As President Obama said last Saturday in his nationwide radio address, the Senate must fix this mess now.
- The **Ohio Health Information Partnership (OHIP)** sent a survey to all primary care physicians in the state. If your practice is considering taking advantage of the financial incentives being offered by Medicare and Medicaid to reward early adoption of electronic health records (EHRs), then **completing this survey is an important first step**. The survey, sent via fax and e-mail on June 11, is available at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OHIP_EHR_Survey
- The profession continues to be involved in efforts **intended to stop prescription drug abuse** in Ohio. An interested party meeting was held, June 15, to discuss HB 547, sponsored by State Reps. Nancy Garland (D-New Albany) and Raymond A. Pryor (D-Chillicothe). The bill establishes licensing requirements for pain clinics and requires the State Medical Board to develop rules related to physician use of the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS).
- Ohio ACOFP President **Ioanna Z. Giatis, DO**, of Cleveland, attended the Ohio Coalition of Primary Care Physicians meeting, June 4, in Columbus. The group discussed legislation, federal health care reform effects on Ohio, the new Medicaid project called Implement Medicaid Programs for the Reduction of Avoidable Visits to the Emergency Department (IMPROVE), Gov. Ted Strickland’s Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force, and more common issues.
- The **Ohio Supreme Court** will hear arguments, July 6, as to whether the Ohio Court of Appeals of Franklin County, Tenth Appellate District was correct in reversing a lower court’s order permanently enjoining the State from dissolving the **Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Endowment Fund**. Funds were used by the Governor and the Ohio General Assembly to help balance the last biennial budget but have been escrowed until the Supreme Court decides the issue. If the Supreme Court rules against the state, the decision will leave another \$230 million hole in the state budget.
- The OOA has been invited to join the **Coalition for Universal Vision Screening for Young Children**. The effort is led by Prevent Blindness America, who was awarded a \$900,000 grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services to establish a national center to promote and ensure a continuum of eye care for young children within the health care system. The ultimate goal is to create national standards for pediatric vision screening. Ohio serves as one of five national pilot sites.
- Physicians and practice administrators in Columbus and surrounding areas are invited to join the **Primary Care Improvement Collaborative of Central Ohio**. The first gathering is a breakfast meeting on July 16 at the Fawcett Center. To register and for more information, go to <http://www.accesshealthcolumbus.org>.

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