POLICY BEAT
Weekly Digest
October 18th – October 22nd, 2010

This Week in Health Policy…
• Health IT and Disparities
• Implementing Reform in the States
• Marketing Rx to Physicians
• CER and Minority Health

Office of Health Policy and Government Relations
The Latest from OMH and ONC: Health IT and Disparities

Co-signed by Dr. David Blumenthal (ONC) and Dr. Garth Graham (OMH), an open letter to Health IT vendors expresses the concern that vendors could unwittingly contribute to the creation of a new “digital divide”.

Click here to read the letter.

Potential Benefits of HIT:
• Reduced Medical Errors
• Increased coordination of care
• Decreased morbidity and mortality.

• Image credit: The White House
The 2010 midterm elections will cast a long shadow on the Affordable Care Act. Governors, legislatures, and insurance commissioners will, by law, wield enormous influence on the implementation process at the state level. Hence the importance of your vote on November 2nd. For more details, click here.

At stake:
• Medicaid expansion – how many will remain uninsured?
• Individual Mandate – is it unconstitutional?
• Insurance exchanges – more consumer choice?
• Medical Loss Ratio – more money for patient care?
Section 6002 of the Affordable Care Act requires pharmaceutical companies to report payments made to physicians. The law further requires that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) make this information public, beginning in 2013. Several companies have decided to comply ahead of time however, as reported by ProPublica. For important details, click here.

These marketing and promotional arrangements will remain legal, but willful failure to report will be punishable by steep fines. The provision covers all cash honoraria and ‘in-kind’ gifts.

Image credit: ProPublica
In a recent online issue of *Health Affairs*, researchers discuss what Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER) could mean for vulnerable populations. In sum, they conclude that CER done right would empower minority patients.

**Key Recommendations**

- Incent subgroup analyses
- Increase minority participation in clinical trials
- Recruit more minority investigators.

Click [here](#) to review the abstract.

Email us: healthpolicy@nmanet.org
What You Can Do

• **Vote November 2\textsuperscript{nd}!** Effective implementation of health reform is at stake.

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Resources


- Ibid. http://projects.propublica.org/docdollars/top_earners