

Critical Issues for Incumbents...

POST-ELECTION (Lame Duck Session)

*The AHA is fighting to ensure that hospitals have the resources needed to care for their communities **and** that new proposals do not get in the way of coverage expansion.*

- ▶ The **CODING OFFSET** contained in the IPPS rule is too large. Hospitals are underpaid by Medicare and Medicaid and cannot continue to do more with less.
- ▶ The IT rule does not reflect congressional intent to treat hospitals equitably. Most immediately, **MULTI-CAMPUS SYSTEMS** will not be eligible for payments that reflect their size.
- ▶ **PHYSICIAN SUPERVISION** in the proposed outpatient rule should use an approach that provides high-quality, safe patient care without unnecessary and onerous requirements. It should not jeopardize access to outpatient therapeutic services in small, rural and critical access hospitals.
- ▶ CMS disallowed provider taxes as legitimate expenses that Medicare should pay, that could jeopardize **CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITALS'** financial sustainability.
- ▶ When the **"PHYSICIAN FIX"** expires in November, Medicare payments will drop 20%; Congress must prevent this from happening.
- ▶ Congress should pass **"EXTENDERS"** legislation that includes 340B inpatient expansion to certain uninsured populations, 340B coverage of orphan drugs for children's hospitals and Section 508 extensions.

ELECTION 2010

What to Ask Candidates ...

As the November election approaches, there is no better time for hospital leaders to engage candidates in a dialogue on key health care issues. Please use the following questions as tools for starting a discussion with your candidates.

THE ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF HOSPITALS

Share information on how many individuals your hospital employs and how much you contribute to your local economy. Explain how your hospital relies on the Medicare and Medicaid programs to support your workforce and provide care for the community.

ASK: How would you vote on proposals to cut Medicare and Medicaid payments to hospitals?

THE CHANGING HEALTH CARE LANDSCAPE

Explain the steps your hospital is taking to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality care, such as expanding information technology and adopting new payment mechanisms. Emphasize the magnitude of the changes that hospitals must contemplate when it comes to delivery system reform.

ASK: Do you think further changes to the health care system are needed? If so, what type of changes do you believe are necessary?

HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

Describe the consequences of the lack of health care coverage in your community — how it impacts individual and community health status. Explain how health care costs cannot be brought under control unless all individuals have access to affordable coverage and describe the consequences of no coverage.

ASK: How would you respond to proposals to scale back existing health care coverage requirements?