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1. EMS Caucus Forming

On Sept. 24, Congressman Charles Boustany (La.) agreed to become the Republican EMS Caucus Co-Chairman. He joined Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger (D-Md.) and Congressman Tim Walz (D-Minn.) in leading the caucus. Advocates for EMS, which includes NASEMSO as a member, have been urging the development of the caucus. The next step is for the congressional leadership to circulate a "Dear Colleague" letter asking members to join. When that occurs, NASEMSO will ask members to contact their representatives to urge their participation. Questions on this initiative can be directed to Lisa Meyer at lmeyer@cgagroup.com.

2. STOP Stroke Act Garners More Support

The STOP Stroke Act has added additional co-sponsors of the bill in the Senate, bringing the total number of co-sponsors to 33 (17 Democrats, 14 Republicans and two Independents). On Sept. 25, *The Hill* newspaper included a special supplement focusing on health care. The issue included an op-ed on the STOP Stroke Act co-authored by Senator Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) and Dr. Dan Jones, dean of the School of Medicine at the University of Mississippi and the current president of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. The latest reports are that Chairman Kennedy would like to bring the bill before the HELP Committee before the end of this year. It appears that it may move in October or early November.

3. NHTSA Seeks Individual to Work in the Office of EMS

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has an open position in the Office of Emergency Medical Services. The closing date is October 18, 2007. This position works primarily with the Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services and the National EMS Advisory Council. To view the job announcement, visit

http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/getjob.asp?JobID=62595482&AVSDM=2007%2D09%2D19+00%3A00%3A05&Logo=0&q=National+Highway+Traffic+Safety+Administration&FedEmp=N&sort=rv&vw=d&ss=0&brd=3876&FedPub=Y&caller=/agency_search.asp&SUBMIT1.x=84&SUBMIT1.y=11.

4. FDA Issues Recall for Certain AEDs

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a Class I recall for MRL/Welch Allyn AED 20 Automatic External Defibrillators manufactured between October 2003 and January 2005, serial numbers 205787 through 207509. These devices are used by emergency or medical personnel to treat adult and pediatric patients in cardiopulmonary arrest. The recalled devices may display a “Defib Comm” error message on the device display during use that may result in a terminal failure of the device to analyze the patient’s ECG and deliver the appropriate therapy. Read more about this recall at <http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/safety/2007/safety07.htm#mrl>.

5. FEMA Releases New Guide on Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities in Disasters

The Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has released a new reference guide that outlines existing legal requirements and standards relating to access for people with disabilities. *A Reference Guide for Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities in the Provision of Disaster Mass Care, Housing and Human Services* is the first in a series of disability-related guidelines to be produced by FEMA for disaster preparedness and response planners and service providers at all levels. The guide summarizes equal access requirements for people with disabilities within disaster mass care, housing and human services functions. It explains how applicable federal laws relate to government entities and non-government, private sector and religious organizations. A full copy of the guide may be accessed at <http://www.fema.gov/oer/reference>.

6. Best Practices Database for Pandemic Flu Unveiled

PandemicPractices.org is a new Web resource designed to give local communities access to peer-reviewed best practices in pandemic flu planning, to assist them with building and improving their own plans. The site, developed by the University of Minnesota Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) and the Pew Center on the States, currently offers a database of 130 “best practices” in three key areas related to pandemic flu preparation and management: altering standards of care, effective communications, and delaying/reducing the impact of a pandemic. Each practice has been peer-reviewed by a group of 27 experts, and comments from the reviewers are included with each resource. Developers hope that the database will encourage the widespread adoption of innovative and successful approaches to pandemic planning. The database links to information on practices from four countries and 22 states, with more links and information to be added in the future. To learn more, visit the Web site at <http://www.pandemicpractices.org>.

7. IOM Recommends Strategies to Improve Pandemic Preparedness

Following a study on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) use in a pandemic flu, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) has recommended three key steps to improve the safety of healthcare workers during a pandemic. In a peer-reviewed report, the committee concluded that more research on influenza transmission, increased use of PPE by healthcare workers, and improvements in PPE design, testing and certification would result in significant improvements to the nation’s pandemic readiness. Specific recommendations include having the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) lead a global research effort to understand the transmission and prevention of seasonal and avian influenza; having institutions promote a “culture of safety” regarding PPE use by their employees; and improving the design, testing and certification process for PPE products. Although it was not the focus of their study, the committee also addressed family protection, noting that designing respirators that do not require fit testing and making them available to the public would also be beneficial. To download a copy

of *Preparing for an Influenza Pandemic: Personal Protective Equipment for Healthcare Workers*, visit <http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3740/29908/46095.aspx>.

8. Pandemic Influenza Hospital Preparedness Drills Conducted in Louisiana

On Sept. 7, 2007, ten hospitals in Louisiana participated in drills to test if hospitals in the state are ready to respond should an influenza pandemic occur. Nursing students played the roles of individuals presenting flu-like symptoms, while evaluators gathered information, observed and interviewed players and staff. Lessons learned from the drills will assist both the state and hospitals to adjust their emergency preparedness plans. To read more about the drills, visit <http://www.theadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070908/NEWS01/709080312/1002>.

9. GAO Releases New Report on Pandemic Flu

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently released the report *Influenza Pandemic: Further Efforts are Needed to Ensure Clearer Federal Leadership Roles and an Effective National Strategy*. This report assesses how clearly federal leadership roles and responsibilities are defined and the extent to which the "Strategy and Plan" addresses six characteristics of an effective national strategy. GAO analyzed key emergency and pandemic-specific plans, interviewed agency officials, and compared the "Strategy and Plan" with the six characteristics GAO identified. The report provides recommendations. To view the report, visit <http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-781>. Highlights of the report are available at <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d07781high.pdf>.

10. Seasonal Flu Vaccine in Large Supply

On Sept. 19, 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that 132 million doses of this year's flu vaccine have been produced to protect America's population against the flu season that usually starts in November with a peak in February. The government is urging everyone, including those at high risk, to get vaccinated as the seasonal flu infects up to 20 percent of the population every year, hospitalizing 200,000 and killing 36,000. People over the age of 50 or under 5 years old, anyone with asthma, heart disease, weakened immune systems or other chronic illnesses, and pregnant women are considered high risk for seasonal flu. For more information on the flu from the CDC, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/FLU/>.

11. CDC and ARC Provide Internet Guidance on Emergency Preparedness

The possibility of public health emergencies arising in the United States concerns many people in the wake of recent hurricanes, tsunamis, acts of terrorism, and the threat of pandemic influenza. Though some people feel it is impossible to be prepared for unexpected events, the truth is that taking preparedness actions helps people deal with disasters of all sorts much more effectively when they do occur. To help, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Red Cross (ARC) have teamed up to answer common questions and provide step-by-step guidance that can be taken now to protect ourselves. To view the guidance, visit <http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/>.

12. New and Updated Data on Children's Health Added to Statehealthfacts.org

Statehealthfacts.org recently has added new and updated data on children's health, including the following customized (by state) fact sheets through its Children's Health Fact Sheet tool: Children's Health Coverage and Children's Demographics. Children's Health Coverage includes the most recent coverage and uninsured rates for all children, poor children, and children in low-income families for all states and the nation. The percentage point change in health coverage among children by coverage type from 2004 to 2006 and from 2005 to 2006 also is available for all states and the nation. Children's Demographics provides data for 2005-2006 for all states and the nation. Updated children's demographic topics include total population, citizenship status, poverty rates, and race/ethnicity. Statehealthfacts.org is a project of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and is designed to provide

free, up-to-date, and easy-to-use health data on all 50 states. Statehealthfacts.org provides data on more than 500 health topics. For more information, visit <http://www.statehealthfacts.org>.

13. Upcoming Events (*denotes event is newly added)

PSIC Grant Program Investment Justification Workshop, October 1, 2007, Los Angeles, CA. For more information, visit <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/psic/news.html>.

EMS Expo and NAEMT Annual Meeting, October 9-13, 2007, Orlando, FL. Information is available at <http://www.naemt.org/PHTLS/resourceLibrary/ConferenceExpo.htm>.

Third Annual Emergency Preparedness Conference: Preparing for the Unknown: "Are You Ready?", October 10-11, 2007, Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, Alexandria, VA. Information is available at <http://www.jcrinc.com/24835/>.

NAEMSO Annual Meeting, October 28-November 2, 2007, Hyatt Regency Minneapolis, Minneapolis, MN. Information is available at <http://www.nasemso.org/Meetings/Annual/>.

135th APHA Annual Meeting, November 3-7, 2007, Washington, DC. Information is available at <http://www.apha.org/meetings/>.

"Quality of Health Information on the Internet: 10 Years On," a Health Improvement Institute Workshop, November 12, 2007, Hyatt Regency Bethesda, MD. Information is available at <http://www.hii.org>.

International Association of Emergency Managers 55th Annual Conference & EMEX 2007, November 17-19, 2007, The Silver Legacy, Reno, NV. Information is available at <http://www.iaem.com>.

Prehospital Pediatric Education Symposium, November 27-28, 2007, Orlando, FL. Information is available at <http://www.emlrc.org/preped2007.htm>.

NAEMSP Annual Meeting, January 10-12, 2008, Pointe Hilton at Squaw Peak Resort, Phoenix, AZ. Information is available at <http://www.naemsp.org>.

12th International Conference on Emergency Medicine, April 3-6, 2008, San Francisco, CA. Information is available at <http://meetings.acep.org/2008icem/EducationalPrograms/abstractprogram.htm>.

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