



# AMA Alliance Advocacy Connection

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## Advocacy Resources

Find the status of legislative issues in your state in an easy-to-read format -- Health Care,

Greetings!

Welcome to the AMA Alliance Advocacy Connection, quarterly electronic newsletter for Alliance members, designed to keep you informed of reported state legislative actions that may have an impact or future impact on the medical practice in your area.

For details on specific legislative activity or help in your state or county, send an e-mail to [amaa@ama-assn.org](mailto:amaa@ama-assn.org). A member of the Legislation Committee will contact you to hear your concern or follow-up your on interest. To suggest a story for this newsletter, please e-mail [nancy.battaglia@ama-assn.org](mailto:nancy.battaglia@ama-assn.org).

Please share this e-newsletter with other Alliance members and non-members. For more information on Alliance activities, visit the [AMA Alliance](#) website.

## Alliance Encourages All Members to Become a Voice for the Uninsured

*Dianne Fenyk, AMAA President*

In August, the AMA launched a three-year campaign to spur action to cover America's uninsured. The AMA Alliance has joined the AMA in its Voice for Uninsured Campaign and encourages all Alliance members to become involved by adding their name to a supporting petition for this purpose. AMA Alliance Directors Barbara Savage, Barbara Hanas, Kathy Lariviere and Mary Shuman, Legislation Committee members, joined the AMA at the Iowa State Fair for the campaign kick-off event. The Alliance Legislation Committee is coordinating leadership state efforts to represent the view of the family of medicine on this issue and to humanize the problem with the personal stories we collect. In addition, all Alliance members are encouraged to visit and share the VoiceForTheUninsured.org website more information and to sign a petition supporting the AMA plan [click here](#).

## New Senate Bill Aims to Block SCHIP Limitations

*Congressional Quarterly HealthBeat, September 14, 2007*

Senators Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), John D. Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), and Gordon H. Smith (R-Ore.), have introduced legislation to nullify new restrictions imposed by federal officials on the ability of states to enroll children in the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). The bipartisan group of senators introduced the legislation (S 2049), and said that the rules "would essentially prevent state SCHIP programs from enrolling uninsured children from families with household incomes above 250 percent of the federal poverty level." The restrictions infuriated advocates of wider coverage of uninsured children, who say the rules set conditions that

Health Finance, Cost and Insurance, Public Health -- Visit the National Conference of State Legislators [Web site](#) for information on these topics and more.

Learn about nonprofit advocacy and lobbying basics. Visit the Center for Lobbying on the Public Interest [Web site](#). Its *Nonprofit Lobbying Guide* is available online, and explains lobbying laws and describes how to lobby effectively within the non-profit realm. It has a wonderful piece on what is legal within the nonprofit world.

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can't be met for covering children above 250 percent of the poverty level. In addition, Advocates say reaching such high enrollment percentages in government programs assisting lower-income Americans is extremely difficult, if not impossible, because of the difficulty of identifying and enrolling them all. [Click here](#) to read more.

## AMA Launches National Campaign to Stop Medicare Physician Payment Cuts

Results of an AMA Member Connect Survey illustrate the disastrous effects a scheduled 10 percent cut in Medicare physician payments for 2008 would have on Americas seniors. The survey found that 60 percent of physician respondents plan to limit the number of new Medicare patients they treat if payments are cut by 10 percent in 2008. Worse, if scheduled cuts totaling 40 percent are instituted over the next nine years, 77 percent of physician respondents would limit the number of new Medicare patients they treat. The announcement coincides with an AMA National House Call with the Arkansas Medical Society in Little Rock, Ark. the first in a series of coordinated local publicity activities in states around the country to draw public attention to this issue.

## State News on the Uninsured

***San Francisco plans to provide insurance for all uninsured adults***  
*New York Times*, September 14, 2007

San Francisco has implemented a new initiative called "Healthy San Francisco," which is the first effort by a locality to guarantee care to all of its uninsured, and it represents the latest attempt by state and local governments to patch a inadequate federal system. [Click here](#) to read more.

***Governor Schwarzenegger's health-care cuts may hinder effort to register low-income children for medical insurance***

*Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 2007

The budget signed by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (R-Calif.) last month would wipe out \$10 million allotted to Los Angeles County this fiscal year for outreach efforts to help low-income families register their children for medical insurance. Additionally, the fate of another \$10 million for the next fiscal year remains uncertain. [Click here](#) to read more.

***Maryland county proposes health care network for uninsured adults***

*Washington Post*, September 14, 2007

Howard County officials are expected to propose a health network next month that would provide comprehensive services to all uninsured adults in the county. Officials estimate that about 18,000 to 20,000 of the adults in this county of about 270,000 people are uninsured. Howard County's plan targets the working poor, whose employers often cannot afford to offer health insurance. [Click here](#) to read more.

## Consumer Advocates Advise Medicare Recipients to Scrutinize Private Plans

*Wall Street Journal*, September 9, 2007

After getting complaints about marketing abuses by some private fee-for-service (PFFS) plans, Medicare officials have imposed several new requirements. But some consumer advocates are calling for even tougher rules, and urging seniors to look carefully before signing up for any private Medicare plan. Medicare's annual open-enrollment period for health and prescription-drug plans begins Nov. 15 and runs through Dec. 31. During the period, seniors can switch from one plan to another, or opt to stay in traditional Medicare. Some advocate groups charge that PFFS use aggressive marketing techniques. In addition, seniors, congressmen and advocates have complained that some sales agents have misled

prospective PFFS enrollees by saying, for example, that they'll be able to see their favorite doctor. In fact, there's no guarantee that any particular physician will take part in the plan. [Click here](#) to read more.

## **New York representatives plan to introduce 9/11 medical bill**

*New York Times, September 9, 2007*

Several members of New York's Congressional delegation said they planned to introduce a bill on Tuesday, the sixth anniversary of the destruction of the World Trade Center, that would provide comprehensive medical coverage and financial compensation for anyone exposed to ground zero dust. Those covered would include not only firefighters and other rescue workers, but also construction workers and volunteers who pitched in during the nine-month cleanup at ground zero. In addition, residents, students, office workers and even tourists who were in Lower Manhattan on Sept. 11 would also be eligible to receive health monitoring, treatment for conditions that can be linked to dust exposure, and compensation for jobs that were lost or other financial setbacks caused by those illnesses. As part of this bill, "ground zero health programs would be included in the federal budget on a regular basis." Furthermore, the bill would reopen "the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, which provided over \$6 billion to the families of those killed and injured on 9/11." [Click here](#) to read more.

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