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Respiratory and Medical Equipment for Your Home

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Vantage® Professional Employer Organization
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Vantage Home Respiratory Services
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11031 Perry Highway
Meadville PA 16335
(814) 333-9449

3 Orthopedic Center
Greenville, PA 16125
(724) 589-5540

3580 Peach Street
Erie, PA 16508
(814) 860-8485

497 S. Hermitage Road
Hermitage, PA 16148
(724) 346-4640

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The Vantage® Point
September/ October 2004

The Next Day: What Washington Will Be Talking About After The Presidential Elections

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in most election years, healthcare is a widely discussed and debated topic. Sometimes the debates are highly partisan; sometimes, both sides of the aisle are in close agreement on the fundamental issues. At present time, polls indicate that both major presidential candidates are in a close race. One outcome, though, is certain: whoever occupies the White House for the next four years—President George W. Bush or Senator John F. Kerry—will have a broad range of important healthcare issues to address.

Healthcare is always a topic of interest in Washington. Last December, President Bush signed into law the landmark Medicare, Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003. The law provides a prescription drug benefit for millions of older Americans and people living with disabilities, and more choices and better benefits under Medicare.

Progress on a number of healthcare issues is being made. To gain some insight into which will likely be front and center after the election, we asked the experts at Premier Advocacy in Washington, D.C. for their thoughts. Premier is a leading healthcare alliance Group Purchasing Organization, (GPO), collectively owned by more than 200 independent hospitals and healthcare systems in the United States—one of which is Vantage Healthcare Network®. Premier Advocacy focuses its efforts on direct and grassroots lobbying related to key health care public policy issues such as patient safety, adequate Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement and medical liability reform. Linda Rouse, Director of Federal Affairs, and Barbara Babauta, Grassroots Manager, provided a preview of what we might expect.

Healthcare Information Technology (HIT)

“Technology is a major issue,” said Babauta, “especially the development of a national electronic health record system.” So important is this concept that, in April, President Bush created a new position—National Coordinator for Health Information Technology—and Dr. David J. Brailer was appointed to fill it.
Alternative Dictionary - Bringing new life to an ever changing world

Vantage Mobile Services…On the Move

Vic Vidoni named Director of Mobile Services. In his new position, Vic will report to Bill Henwood, Senior VP/Clinical Sales, for sales and service, and for operations and administration to Mike Moshacker Sr. VP and CFO of Finance. Vic joined Vantage in November of 1987 and began his service as a marketing representative, splitting time between the PPO and Mobile Services divisions, until July 1995. For 1 year he worked for Alliance Health Network, an organization acquired by Vantage in January of 1994, and was Director of Business Development where he reported to the CEO. Prior to accepting this new position, Vic served for two years as Director of Linen Sales for Vantage Healthcare Linens, where he worked with customers on the implementation and support of their linen programs.

Doctor joins Meadville Medical Center’s Medical/Dental Staff

Jason C. Ball, D.O., emergency medical physician has joined MMC’s Medical/Dental Staff and will be providing services in the Emergency Department. A life long Meadville resident, Dr. Ball earned his Bachelor’s degree from Grove City College and his Master’s Degree from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, (LECOM), in 2000. Dr. Ball recently completed an emergency medicine residency at St. John’s Westshore Hospital, Westlake, Ohio.

Vantage

1. Who was the political cartoonist in the late 1800’s that used the Donkey and Elephant as party symbols?    A.  Thomas Nast   B.  John J. Appel  C.  Albert Bigelow Paine  D.  Steven Becker

2. Who was the only President of the United States to remain a bachelor for his entire life? A. Harry Truman  B. James Buchanan  C. Theodore Roosevelt  D. Calvin Coolidge

3. How many Presidents have died in office (four by assassination)?  A. six  B. eight  C. ten  D. twelve

- George Washington - A. True - B. False
- John Adams - A. True - B. False
- Thomas Jefferson - A. True - B. False
- James Madison - A. True - B. False

- Jefferson - A. True - B. False
- Madison - A. True - B. False
- James Monroe - A. True - B. False
- Andrew Jackson - A. True - B. False
- Martin Van Buren - A. True - B. False
- John Tyler - A. True - B. False

- Abraham Lincoln - A. True - B. False
- Ulysses S. Grant - A. True - B. False
- Thomas Jefferson - A. True - B. False
- Abraham Lincoln - A. True - B. False

- A. George Washington  B.  Ulysses S. Grant  C.  Thomas Jefferson  D. Abraham Lincoln


- A. Abraham Lincoln  B.  Grover Cleveland  C.  John Quincy Adams  D.  Calvin Coolidge

- Who was the first president that lost the popular vote but won the election? (37 th ) Franklin Roosevelt, (40 th ) Ronald Reagan, (43 rd ) Bill Clinton, (44 th ) George W. Bush.

- A. George Washington  B. Grover Cleveland C. John Quincy Adams D. Calvin Coolidge

- A. True - B. False
- B. True - C. False
- C. True - D. False
- D. True - E. False

- The only regret shared by those attending was that several of them had to choose which to attend.

- The Vantage

- Miles Tuttle, Mattson, Martin Hoebel, Crawford County Development Corp., Charlie Anderson, Meadville-Wareham Crawford County Chamber of Commerce.

- The Vantage

- Donald Tuttle, Pharm. D., will be the Dean of the School of Pharmacy. Dr. Tuttle succeeds Diane S. Swaffar, Ph. D., R.Ph., who leaves LECOM on September 10.

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Employee Recipes & Wine Tips

SALMON SALAD (serves 4 generous lunch salads)

1 - 1/2 lb. Salmon Fillet (deboned, skin on, tail bones removed, cooked)
2 lbs. Romaine Lettuce (salad in a bag saves time)
3 Tablespoons Horseradish
dressing and pepper (to taste) until
served.  Serve & Enjoy.

Serve & Enjoy.

for solutions. “Washington wants to help, but hasn’t yet figured out an effective way to do that in the long term,” said Rouse. “Both parties have explored the issue in bits and pieces, but each has recommended different approaches for how to best solve the crisis.”

Due to the rising cost of health care and the increasing numbers of Americans without health insurance, hospital billing practices has come under congressional scrutiny and is likely to continue.

Medical Liability Insurance and Tort Reform

This issue continues to be evenly split along party lines. “On Capitol Hill, most Republicans support tort reform and most Democrats don’t,” said Babauta.

The evidence supporting the need for tort reform is extremely compelling. We’ve become a litigious society, and as malpractice cases have become commonplace, unlimited and unpredictable liability awards have driven up the cost of insurance premiums for all Americans. Hospitals, physicians and nurses are now faced with skyrocketing liability premiums, the cost of which threatens access to healthcare.

Many doctors are now said to be practicing “defensive medicine,” as a result, and some are weighing the benefits of practicing medicine in Pennsylvania against the investment they need to make to continue doing so.

Earlier this year, Bush proposed the national adoption of proven standards to make the medical liability system more fair, predictable and timely. His contention was that it would reduce federal government costs by more than $28 billion a year and reduce the cost to Americans by more than $60 billion a year, while improving access to quality care. In his proposal, he said that litigation reform would also lead to improvements in healthcare quality and patient safety.

Prescription Drug Reimportation

Just a few years ago, a group of American senior citizens took a trip across the border into Canada where they were able to purchase prescription drugs at a fraction of the cost they were required to pay in the U.S. Others soon followed. This practice, although illegal, has become commonplace as Canadian pharmacies gladly sell products to American customers who need them but have a difficult time affording them back home. An estimated two million Americans now engage in the practice.

Because of this, Washington leaders have been exploring how the lower-cost drugs can be made available to their constituents.

“A bill was passed by the House that would allow wholesale reimportation of Canadian drugs,” said Rouse, adding that, “many senators also support prescription drug reimportation. However, some legislators continue to be concerned about the ability of the FDA to guarantee the efficacy and safety of the products.”

The new Medicare law permits reimportation, but only if the Secretary of Health and Human Services will certify to Congress that there’s no additional risk to the consumer, and that there is a significant reduction in cost.

The presidential election is still several weeks away, and we don’t know yet whether President Bush or President Kerry will be the oath of office in January. Nor do we know who will comprise the House and Senate. We do know, however, that the months ahead will present numerous opportunities to the hospital and medical community to propose, debate, discuss and lobby members of Congress on a number of issues, many of which will have a profound impact on how we do business.

Premier’s next Federal Affairs Network (FAN) meeting is scheduled for Dec. 6-7, 2004 at the St. Regis Hotel in Washington, DC. Premier’s FAN meetings offer an opportunity for healthcare managers to network with government affairs officials. For more information contact Tom Surman 814-336-1781 ext. 124 or tomsurman@vhc.com

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Cover Story continued

Cover Story continued

Doctor of the Month

John Michael Ferretti, II, D.O.

Doctor and Professor John Ferretti is considered by many as one of the outstanding medical leaders in Western Pennsylvania. He is the Clinical Professor of Internal Medicine and President/CEO of LECOM, the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Dr. Ferretti’s roots are firmly planted in Erie where he attended Strong Vincent High School with continued education at Gannon University. He obtained his Masters of Science Degree at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and returned to Erie for his Internship with St. Vincent’s Hospital in 1975 to 1977 where he served as the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine as Chief Medical Resident. From 1987 to 1995 Dr. Ferretti was the Medical Director/Director of Medical Education at Millcreek Community Hospital. During most of that time he also was Director, Internal Medicine Residency at Millcreek. Concomitant to his work at Millcreek Community Hospital he continues to serve as a Professor at LECOM in the Department of Internal Medicine. Dr. Ferretti’s Appointments, Honors, and Awards are extensive. As a visionary, however, he considers one of his most current and notable achievements to be the expansion of LECOM.

Dr. Ferretti is the driving force behind LECOM and its expansion into launching a new and innovative branch campus in Bradenton, Florida. The new Lakewood Ranch campus is scheduled to open this month. This new 100,000 square foot Florida Campus facility will use the latest in smart-lecture hall technology with all A/V controls at the professor’s leisure. For more information on LECOM, please go to www.lecom.edu

Over this past summer, Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary, Tommy G. Thompson, released an outline of a 10-year plan to computerize health care. According to Brazier, up to 100,000 people each year die from medical errors. A national electronic system would reduce medical errors and costs, and provide hospitals, physicians, insurers and other necessary users with immediate access to medical records.

“It’s a complicated issue and many privacy and security issues need to be addressed, but it is a topic both democrats and republicans are discussing,” said Rouse. President Bush budgeted $50 million for electronic health record demonstration projects. President Bush and President Kerry has proposed establishing a technology bonus for insurers and providers who convert their systems to electronic records. However, some critics contend that these sums would only cover part of the cost, and that incentives need to be introduced to persuade the healthcare industry to invest in the technology.

Medicaid is another perennial issue that maintains a prominent place on the front-burner, as states’ budget problems continue to worsen and negatively impact health care spending and beneficiaries. In July, a federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) bill was introduced by Senators John D. Rockefeller (D-WV) and Gordon Smith (R-OR) that would temporarily increase the federal matching rate to states by 1.5 percent over a three-year period, with special consideration given to states that have particularly high unemployment rates.

“We are hopeful FMAP will be addressed before Congress adjourns,” said Rouse. “However, some congressmen are not in favor of the bill, because the original FMAP increase, passed last year, was supposed to be temporary.”

Growing Number of Uninsured People

More and more people continue to find themselves in the position of not being able to afford health insurance. Unemployment is still a major national problem, and many of those who are self-employed, including farmers and ranchers, continue to contact their congressmen and women looking for solutions. “Washington wants to help, but hasn’t yet figured out an effective way to do that in the long term,” said Rouse. “Both parties have explored the issue in bits and pieces, but each has recommended different approaches for how to best solve the crisis.”

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To see what the FAN meetings are all about go to: http://www.premierinc.com/all/aboutacvity/about/events/index.html. To sign up for Premier Advocacy’s e-mail publications, go to: http://www.premierinc.com/advocacy/publications/index.html

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Cover Story continued
**Quotable**

“The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the Universe about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction.”
- Rachel Carson

“No human investigation can be called true science without passing through mathematical tests.”
- Leonardo da Vinci

“Mistakes are part of being human. Appreciate your mistakes for what they are: precious life lessons that can only be learned the hard way, unless it's a fatal mistake, which at least, others can learn from.”
- Al Franken

“Somewhere deep down we know that in the final analysis, we do decide things and that even our decisions to let someone else decide are really our decisions, however pusillanimous.”
- Harvey G. Cox

“Some problems are so complex that you have to be highly intelligent and well-informed just to be undecided about them.”
- Laurence J. Peter

“Again and again, the impossible decision is solved when we see that the problem is only a tough decision waiting to be made.”
- Dr. Robert Schuller

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This year’s Vantage Golf Invitational was held on July 21 at the Sharon Country Club with over 140 hospital executives, doctors, and healthcare service suppliers taking part in a great day of golf and camaraderie. John Papalia, Warren General Hospital’s President/CEO, also hosted another successful Summer Sizzler golf event on August 16th. Earlier this summer, Mary LeRowe, President/CEO of Westfield Memorial Hospital, an affiliate of Saint Vincent Health System, hosted their second annual outing at the Chautauqua Club in New York. Here are a few pictures from those events.

**Warren Summer Sizzler**

**Westfield Golf Outing**