

Alaska Chapter Update

A Newsletter for the Members of Alaska ACEP



Spring 2012

From the President

Carlton Heine, MD, PhD, FACEP, FAWM

3 EMS Bills in Congress: Medicare Rural Bonus Payment, Volunteer EMS Death Benefit, and Establishing a Lead Federal Agency for EMS

Please help emergency medical services in our nation by supporting passage of The Medicare Ambulance Access Preservation Act (H.R. 1005), Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act (H.R. 4018), and Field EMS Quality, Innovation, and Cost Effectiveness Improvements Act (H.R. 3144). These bills are vital to the existence of all Alaskan community emergency medical systems and our ability to provide quality patient care. Our Alaskan EMS system is very dependent on volunteers and these bills are essential game-changers to improving response and access to emergency medical care.

The Medicare Ambulance Access Preservation Act (H.R. 1005)

This legislation would provide extended Medicare reimbursement relief for ambulance services consistent with the 1997 GAO report that determined that they are paid significantly below cost. It would provide a 6 percent increase for ambulance transports originating in urban or rural areas and add a bonus payment for transports originating in super rural areas.

Continued underfunding by Medicare is forcing us to scale down services and personnel which could ultimately jeopardize access to prehospital emergency medical care for all Alaskans.

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act (H.R. 4018)

This legislation would improve the effectiveness of the Public Safety Officers' Benefits program and extend the program's benefits, which currently only apply to those employed by a federal, state or local government entity, to nonprofit and volunteer ground and air ambulance crew members and first responders.

Congress established the PSOB program to provide assistance to police officers, firefighters, paramedics and emergency medical technicians in the event of their death in the line of duty. The death benefit for 2012 is approximately \$320,000.

Field EMS Quality, Innovation, and Cost Effectiveness Improvements Act (H.R. 3144)

This legislation would provide for improvement of field emergency medical services to address many of the challenges impeding the ability of EMS to fulfill public expectations that all who need emergency medical care in the field can depend upon the highest quality of care and transport to the most appropriate clinical setting.

The landmark 2006 Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report, "Emergency Medical Services: At the Crossroads", identified systemic problems plaguing our nation's emergency medical services (EMS) system. Systemic problems identified by the IOM include: insufficient coordination among EMS providers, disparities in response times, uncertain quality of care, lack of readiness and inadequate federal funding for disaster preparedness, divided professional identification of EMS personnel, and a limited evidence base of emergency medical interventions.

Alaska Chapter ACEP



Carlton E. Heine, MD, PhD, FACEP,
FAWM, President

Contact us:

ak.chapter@acep.org

Phone: 800-798-1822 Fax: 972-767-0056



Clinical News

Dengue Underreported in U.S. Travelers

The risk of dengue remains a concern for residents of the United States who travel to the tropics, and the disease burden may be underestimated, surveillance data suggest.

[Read the entire article](#)

Side Effects Challenge Opioid Therapy for Acute Pain

Balancing pain relief against gastrointestinal side effects of opioid analgesics in treating acute pain is a major challenge, a nationwide survey of nearly 6,000 physicians suggests.

[Read the entire article](#)

Trial Supports Cardiac CT in the ED for Acute Chest Pain

Low- to intermediate-risk patients who receive cardiac computed tomographic angiography (CCTA) were more likely to be discharged directly from the emergency department (ED), to have shorter hospital stays, and to have more than double the coronary artery disease (CAD) diagnosed than were those receiving a traditional evaluation.

[Read the entire article](#)



Adriana's Corner

As the Administrative Assistant to the chapter, I would like to briefly update you on what's new.

The chapter web site is www.alaskaacep.org and I am working with ACEP's consultant to keep the website updated. Please take a few minutes to look at the chapter website to see how it looks.

Also, in order to continue receiving the chapter newsletter, information about future chapter meetings, teleconferences, educational courses, or any other chapter communication, please be sure to notify me via e-mail of any changes you may have to your contact information.

If there is anything I can help you with or if you have any questions regarding the chapter, please don't hesitate to contact me via [e-mail](#) or via the Alaska chapter 800 number at: (800) 798-1822 Extension 3312.



ACEP'S Leadership and Advocacy Conference

Don't miss the Leadership and Advocacy Conference May 20-23 in Washington, DC. A great program is planned for this year, plus don't miss out on the visits to the Hill to visit with your Congressional representatives.

Click on the [link](#) to see the conference brochure and to register online.

Alaska Chapter ACEP

2986 Foster Avenue

Juneau, AK 99801

Copyright © 2009 Alaska Chapter ACEP. All rights reserved.

[Unsubscribe](#)