



# The Collector Beat

April 2010

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## In This Edition:

Healthcare  
Finance News

Healthcare IT  
News

Healthcare IT  
News cont.

Collector U.  
Updates

## Top 100 Hospitals Thrive Even in Economic Downturn

By Bernie Monegain

ANN ARBOR, MI – Thomson Reuters has released its annual study identifying the 100 top U.S. hospitals based on overall organizational performance. The study reveals that even in tough economic times, top hospitals show a profit while raising the bar on patient care.

The "Thomson Reuters 100 Top Hospital: National Benchmarks" study, released Monday, evaluates performance in 10 areas: mortality, medical complications, patient safety, average length of stay, expenses, profitability, patient satisfaction, adherence to clinical standards of care and post-discharge mortality and readmission rates for acute myocardial infarction, heart failure and pneumonia. The study has been conducted annually since 1993.

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## Family Medicine Physicians Increased in 2010

From Chelsey Ledue

WASHINGTON – Family medicine residency training programs attracted 101 more U.S. medical school graduates to the specialty in 2010 than in 2009, according to the National Residency Match Program.

In total, 1,184 U.S. graduates were recruited this year.

The number of students choosing family medicine, which includes U.S. medical school graduates and international medical graduates, was 2,404, putting this year's "fill rate" at 91.4% – a record for family medicine, according to program officials. Family medicine residency programs offered an additional 75 positions this year.

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## Hospital CEOs Weigh In on Healthcare Debate

By Deborah Huso

With the U.S. House of Representatives poised to vote on health-care reform in days, the battle over how to fix the nation's health-care system has reached the boiling point.

Meanwhile, most Americans haven't the slightest clue what the 2,400-page H.R. 3590 bill will mean for them if it indeed passes with the help of Congress' controversial budget reconciliation rules. While politicians claim the ultimate goal of healthcare reform is to contain the rising cost of health care for families and small businesses while not increasing the national deficit, how to accomplish that goal is anybody's guess.

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## WebMD Launches Social Media

By Diana Manos

NEW YORK – WebMD Health Corp. announced Tuesday the launch of WebMD Health Exchange, a new health social networking platform.

The new platform will enable consumers to connect with health experts and other WebMD members to exchange experiences, discuss personal challenges, and receive direct answers and support, according to WebMD.

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## Dell Announces New Data Archiving System

By Mike Milliard

ROUND ROCK, TX – Healthcare IT is booming. But one of the biggest challenges facing hospitals in the adoption of new technology is finding storage capabilities for the growing profusion of data from EMRs and ever more sophisticated medical imaging. Not to mention meeting regulatory requirements that dictate how that data is managed and archived.

"Hospitals expect a 20 to 50 percent growth in storage [needs] over the next two years," says James Coffin, VP and GM of Dell Global Healthcare, in an interview with *Healthcare IT News*.

On Wednesday, Dell announced a solution to enable hospitals to better manage this flood of data that, Coffin says, is a "new storage model for healthcare."

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## Verizon Launches Platform to Digitally Share Notes

By Molly Merrill

ATLANTA – Verizon Business launched a new platform Wednesday at HIMSS that will allow more than 350,000 physicians to digitally share patient notes by the end of the summer.

Called the The Verizon Medical Data Exchange, the platform provides a way for medical transcriptionists to share notes detailing patients' care and treatment with doctors, hospitals and other healthcare providers.

Verizon Business developed the platform for the Medical Transcription Service Consortium under an agreement announced in Nov. 2009. The consortium was formed by ICSA Labs, an independent division of Verizon Business...

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## Next: Handheld Healthcare

By Mike Milliard

ATLANTA – Sprint Nextel CEO Dan Hesse took the stage to deliver the opening keynote address of HIMSS10 on Monday morning. His core message: It is absolutely essential that healthcare providers embrace and make full use of the technological advances of the 21st century - especially wireless communication technology.

And while it was the "unsung heroes" comprising the packed audience who will be key to making that happen, Hesse said his company was happy to help facilitate the change.

In discussing "the evolving role of mobile and handheld applications in healthcare," Hesse joked that one of his acquaintances once said that "when you walk in a hospital, it's like, 'whoa, I'm back in the '70s.'" It was imperative for the healthcare industry, he said, to move "out of the 70s, and into the 21st century and beyond."

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**“The only man who sticks closer to you in adversity than a friend is a creditor”  
-author unknown**

## **AHA Offers 10 Tips on how to Deal with Workforce Shortages**

By Bernie Montegain

CHICAGO – In a recently released report, the American Hospital Association discussed findings on hospital workforce issues explored by its Long-Range Policy Committee, and offered a 10-point plan for dealing with a tight labor market.

The committee looked ahead to the next decade and identified recommendations that hospitals and their associations might use to develop successful strategies to ensure an adequate workforce.

Using as background the latest research on workforce demographics and trends, as well as presentations by health care experts, the committee found that while hospitals generally face low vacancies today, serious shortages and a tight labor market overall are looming.

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## **Eligible Hospital and Provider “Meaningful Use” Criteria**

By Jack Beaudoin

WASHINGTON – On December 30, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued a notice of proposed rulemaking that outlines provisions governing the Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs, including a proposed definition for the central concept of “meaningful use” of EHR technology. In order for professionals and hospitals to be eligible to receive payments under the incentive programs, provided through the Recovery Act, they must be able to demonstrate meaningful use of a certified EHR system.

The following list of 23 Stage 1 Meaningful Use criteria for eligible hospitals was taken from the proposed rule: “Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Electronic Health Record Incentive Program.”

[Click Here to see the Hospital Criteria List](#)

[Click Here to see the Provider Criteria List](#)

## **Tip of the Month**

Just like we, as a collection agency, need to stay as up-to-date as possible on the ever-changing laws and medical policies, it is equally as imperative that you also stay updated with collection training. Be proactive in your education - look for a variety of training seminars to make sure you are learning an array of information, find training that will give you CEU credits for a specific department, and NEVER over-pay for training. Education in your field is a gift not an obligation. Be sure to price compare, and never be afraid to ask questions. For more information on our FREE seminar and luncheon, visit [www.collectoru.com](http://www.collectoru.com) or page 4 for our dates and locations.

## Upcoming Seminars:

April:

13—Charlotte, NC  
14—Cary, NC  
15—Richmond, VA

May:

11—Rockville, MD  
12—King of Prussia, PA  
13—Harrisburg, PA

June:

15—Cuyahoga Falls, OH  
16—Pittsburgh, PA

July:

13—Hunt Valley, MD  
14—Wilmington, DE  
15—Allentown, PA

September:

14—Cincinnati, OH/N. KY  
15—Columbus, OH

October:

12—Indianapolis, IN  
13—Oak Brook, IL  
13—Oak Brook, IL

November:

9—Scranton, PA  
10—Eatontown, NJ  
11—Voorhees, NJ



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