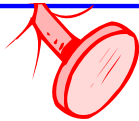


Bama Chatter

HFMA ALABAMA CHAPTER

VOLUME XXXXI, NO. 1

JULY / AUGUST 2001



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Calendar of Events

Sun & Fun & Education – All In One Great Week!

If you missed the Annual Institute at Sandestin May 29-June 1, 2001, I am sorry to say you missed a great time!! We had 195 members who were able to attend this year's meeting. As usual we kicked off the meeting with our Poolside reception — but yet again it was held indoors. Something about flying food didn't appeal to too many, so we moved inside due to the wind. But that didn't blow away the spirits of any of our members.

Wednesday the meeting opened to the changing of the tide - new officers were installed, sponsors and award winners were recognized. See all the details below. Great educational meetings followed on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday covering topics such as APCs, financing issues, web pages, and HIPAA to name a few. Keeping



Officers & Directors

in tradition, the education programming was tops. Of course, we had the Annual Institute Golf Tournament on Wednesday afternoon. Thursday afternoon there was a family beach and games event, which included a sandcastle building contest, followed by the Dinner on Thursday night. Friday at lunch we brought the meeting to a close. We each took one last look at the ocean and grabbed one more cookie before heading out the door. Well, I did. All in all, the response to the meeting was again a positive one. If you missed it and even if you didn't, I hope you will join us in Montgomery in August to do it again.

- continued on page 6 -



2001 - 2002

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Special discounts for long-term arrangements. Contact the editor for details.

Please send your ad and graphics on plain white paper or slicks. Deadline for publication is the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. *Bama Chatter* is published bimonthly and is circulated to approximately 650 recipients.

Publication Schedule

ISSUE	DEADLINE	ISSUE	DEADLINE
September/October . . .	August 20th	March/April	February 20th
November/December. .	October 20th	May/June	April 20th
January/February	December 20th	July/August	June 20th

The statements and opinions appearing in articles are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of HFMA, the Alabama Chapter, or the editor. The editor strongly encourages submission of material for publication. Articles should be typewritten and double spaced, and submitted to the editor or the awards council chairperson by the 20th of the month preceding the month of publication. The editor reserves the right to edit materials and accept or reject contributions whether solicited or not. Readers are invited to comment on any of the published material. Letters to the editor must be signed and are subject to condensation and editing. All rights reserved.

President Paul's Perspective

Greetings to you all. It has been quite a while since I have been required to contribute frequently to these pages, but I'm looking forward to getting back in the swing. For those of you who may not remember my days as Editor of the *Bama Chatter*, suffice to say that what you'll likely get out of this column is a pack of rantings on the issues of the world at large. And I have several this month:

The Senate Switch

Of course you all are aware of the recent switch in control of the U.S. Senate from a Republican majority to a Democratic one. This was all the result of the proclamation of one Senator Jim Jeffords of Vermont from the GOP to "Independent" status. Jeffords committed his support to the Democratic leadership in making his overly pompous and self-serving announcement. So what does this mean?

Well, for all intents and purposes, it means very little with regards to most business on Capitol Hill. The Senate was already up in the air as far as its direction. It still is. The same 100 people hold seats (yes, Strom Thurmond was still alive at press time). Only the Committee Chairs and leadership positions have changed. With Democrats in control, however, expect healthcare

issues to come to the forefront again. You'll recall that the last time Democrats controlled the Senate, they lost it primarily on account of their attempt to overhaul the industry. The drivers of that bus were Edward M. Kennedy (not that any of us would want to ride in anything he was driving) and Mrs. William J. Clinton. Guess who's back?

As I write this on Father's Day 2001, the Senate is scheduled to begin debate tomorrow on a concoction casually referred to as the "Patient's Bill of Rights". Senators Kennedy and John McCain, who never met an opportunity to betray his party that he wouldn't take, sponsor this legislation. This long-debated batch of seemingly silly and over-reaching new requirements will boil down to how effective the insurance industry is in outspending the trial lawyers on public lobbying regarding the issue of a patient's right to sue their HMO and just what dollar limits will apply to damages. The sponsors of the bill are proposing \$5 million while the president is more receptive to a limit of \$500K.

This should be an interesting debate that spawns a new generation of memorable television ads and ultimately boils down whether or not President Bush will get frisky with his

veto pen. Stay tuned as this will be another in a series of upcoming debates that could lead to more regulation on our already over-regulated industry.

The Environmental Mess

You've got to feel for President Bush a little these days. If there is one issue that exhibits the outright failure of the American public school system, it is that of the environment. Bush is being portrayed as nothing short of a wildcat dumper these days, and it is unjustified.

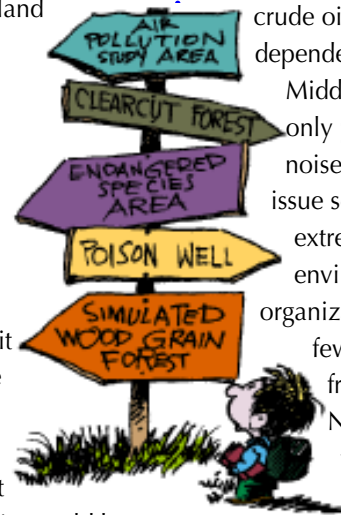
Face it folks. You want lights? You've gotta burn coal. If you don't want to burn coal, then where would you like the next nuclear plant built? And you enjoy driving? Then you've gotta drill for oil. Even if it is on a patch of land supposedly reserved for "wildlife" in Alaska.

If Bush is guilty of anything with regards to the environment, it is naivete. He should have known coming in that the elitist media would be ready and willing to pounce on him at the first sign of environmental weakness. He is, however, right about this drilling proposal in



Paul T. Graham, FHFMA, CPA
President, Alabama Chapter HFMA

Alaska. The Arctic National Wildlife Reserve is supposedly a very beautiful place, but how many of us will ever see it? It just so happens to rest upon a pool of oil — a big one. The portion of the reserve, which covers an area approximately the size of the state of Maryland, that would be "disturbed" by drilling would amount to about 300 acres. The Alaskan people are for it. The nation needs to seek out new sources of crude oil to reduce its dependence upon the Middle East. The only people making noise about this issue seem to be extreme left wing environmental organizations and a few Senators from the Northeast. One would think that John Kerry would have something better to do like spend the fortune his wife inherited from her first husband upon his untimely death.



Don't hold your breath in hopes of environmental issues in America ever being debated without a bunch of shrill hysteria.

A Name Change?

So HCFA is thinking of turning a new leaf by developing a user-friendlier name. Such is the idea of Tom Scully, the new administrator of the nation's second most hated agency. Such a change would not require congressional action and could take place soon.

This is right up there with the stunt that Value Jet pulled after one of its planes did a gainer in the Florida Everglades about five or six years ago. Those of you who have the opportunity to fly AirTran Airways may not realize this. And who could forget the last such change in Washington a few years back when the city's NBA team, the Bullets, changed its name to the Wizards over concerns of the image a nickname like "Bullets" portrayed in a city with one of the highest murder rates in the country. The real question is why the hell the owners of the Utah-based NBA franchise didn't change their name from "Jazz" twenty years ago when the team left New Orleans.

Of course this isn't an important issue. A name is a name; substance is what matters. And in my opinion, Mr. Scully has a lot more pressing issues on his plate than having all of HCFA's letterhead shredded to

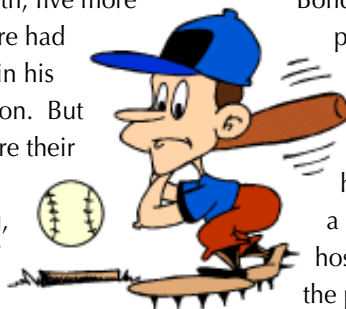
accommodate a new name. As for the most hated agency in the U.S. government, how would you all like to see the IRS change its name to the "United States Revenue Cycle Management Agency"?

Bonds Chases McGwire

Who could possibly forget the summer-long pursuit of Roger Maris' single season home run record by Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa just a couple of years ago? Well, don't look now, but Barry Bonds of the San Francisco Giants is on pace to raise the bar. He has hit 36 homers as of June 17th, five more than McGwire had at this point in his magical season. But don't compare their feats yet.

Mind you, the record of Maris deserves a special place in history due to the fact that it was accomplished under extreme pressure in the New York spotlight when everyone in the nation was rooting against him in favor of the beloved Mickey Mantle. And Babe Ruth's 60 home run season was accomplished before the days of baseball in Colorado, without a diluted pitching pool, and with a baseball that was about as springy as a cantaloupe. Bonds plays in a bandbox of a home field, the new PacBell Park. It was built to be aesthetically pleasing

against the backdrop of San Francisco Bay, but to accomplish this, it was given hitter-friendly power alleys and a short porch in right field. Not only that, but the Giants play in the National League West, which will result in Bonds' having the opportunity to play more games in Coors Field (i.e. one mile above sea level) that McGwire, Sosa, and (obviously) Maris and Ruth did. If you don't think Coors Field gives a hitter unfair advantages, ask yourself why Colorado Rockies' pitcher Mike Hampton has already launched five homers this year.



Bonds is a great player who will one day be in the Hall of Fame, but he has always been a bit aloof and hostile to fans and the press. Odds are

that, barring injury, he will keep this pace within reason and be in the running to catch and pass McGwire's 70 home run record in September. But don't expect the same lovefest we saw during the Sosa/McGwire epic. This guy's personality will not be conducive to that sort of story.

Things I'm Looking Forward To

- Only a couple of more weeks until NASCAR coverage switches for the remainder of the season to NBC & TNT. This pair of buffoons in the Fox booth (Larry McReynolds

and Darrell Waltrip) is absolutely unbearable. It has been enjoyable, however, to try to count the number of times in a five hundred-mile race McReynolds uses singular verbs with plural nouns.

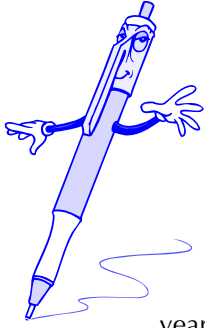
- Our Summer Institute is coming up in about eight weeks. This program is always outstanding from both an educational and entertainment standpoint. Please plan to attend and bring a co-worker. Let's really get out and support our Program Vice Presidents this year.
- I am currently in San Antonio attending the Annual National Institute. Our annual Presidents' Banquet is tomorrow night, and I am really looking forward to seeing our Chapter be awarded for its many great programming efforts of the past year.

And In Closing

Congratulations to Phil Cusa on a stellar Annual Institute. I can tell you from firsthand knowledge that the task of chairing that program is right on par with planning a wedding — only without your mother's input and with the luxury of using someone else's money. Having it all come together and run so smoothly is a tribute to the dedication of Phil and his staff from Thomas Hospital. Nice going, folks.



From the Editors' Desks . . .



We are excited to complete our first issue as the new editors of *Bama Chatter*. We would like to thank Dawn Walton for all of her help in completing the transition — we are sure that she is relieved to have passed on this responsibility — and we are looking forward to continuing to put out a great newsletter. Therefore, in the spirit of being the voice of the chapter, we wanted to remind everyone to contribute their ideas and to let us know of any upcoming events. Don't forget that there is monetary incentive — the top three articles printed during the year receive cash awards in the amount of \$300, \$200 and \$100. Congratulations to last years winners: Debra Gorham, Shirley Smith and co-author Gretchen Evans, and John Thrasher.

Until next issue,
Jenny and Bennett

Did You Know??!!??

We were inspired by Paul's comments in his President's Message about the happenings in D.C., so we decided to do a little investigating about the Alabama State Government and found that the followings laws are on the books in our state.

Alabama State Laws

- It is illegal for a driver to be blindfolded while operating a vehicle.
- Dominoes may not be played on Sunday.
- It is illegal to wear a fake moustache that causes laughter in church.
- Putting salt on a railroad track may be punishable by death.
- Boogers may not be flicked into the wind.
- Bear wrestling matches are prohibited.
- It is legal to drive the wrong way down a one-way street if you have a lantern attached to the front of your automobile.
- You must have windshield wipers on your car.
- You may not have an ice cream cone in your back pocket at any time.
- Masks may not be worn in public.
- Men may not spit in front of the opposite sex.
- You may not drive barefooted.
- It is illegal to maim oneself to escape duty.
- It is illegal to impersonate a person of the clergy.
- Women are able to retain all property they owned prior to marriage in the case of divorce. However, this provision does not apply to men.

: City Laws

Anniston

- You may not wear blue jeans down Noble Street.

Jasper

- It is illegal for a husband to beat his wife with a stick larger in diameter than his thumb.

Lee County


- It is illegal to sell peanuts in Lee County after sundown on Wednesday.

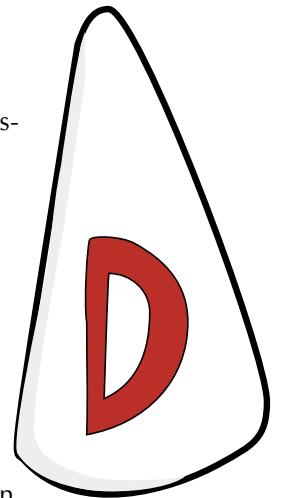
Mobile

- It is unlawful to howl at ladies inside the city limits.
- It is unlawful to wear women's pumps with sharp, high heels.

Montgomery

- It is considered an offense to open an umbrella on a street, for fear of it spooking horses. (Repealed)

Information obtained from www.dumblaws.com 



Sun & Fun & Education . . . continued

Award Winners

Dawn Walton was presented with the Robert M. Coats Outstanding Member Award for the second year in a row. Dawn has served the Alabama Chapter as *Bama Chatter* Editor for the past two years and continually contributes to the betterment and growth of the chapter.

José-Antonio Valencia was presented with the President's Award for outstanding service to the chapter during the past year. Jose' and his company, The Valencia Group, were instrumental in developing, designing and maintaining our chapter's web page, www.alfma.org. This web site will serve the chapter in many ways in the future in increased communication, improved visibility and cost containment.

The Member-Get-A-Member campaign winners were announced. This year there was a tie! Congratulations to Linda Maddox and Yolanda Rich for their recruitment successes! A new recruitment campaign was launched. Details are included on the Membership page in this issue.

Best paper/article award winners were announced and presented with checks. That's right - writing an article for *Bama Chatter* could mean money for you as well. First place and \$300 was awarded to



Annette with José Antonio Valencia

Debra Gorham of The Valencia Group for her article "T&E Before ABCs". Second place and \$200 was awarded to Shirley Smith from

Andalusia Hospital and Gretchen Evans, RN, MBA, CCS, a member of the Tennessee Chapter (not pictured) for their article "Common Issues Effecting Medicare Reimbursement and Compliance". Third place and \$100 was awarded to John Thrasher from Ernst & Young for his



Debra Gorham and John Thrasher won Best Paper Awards



Kemberly Blackledge with Annette



Our Diamond Sponsors (some are not pictured)



Chris Wylie receives special recognition for his service as the Chapter Webmaster

article "Revenues & Receivables — An Accounting and Auditing Update." Many thanks for supporting your chapter through your knowledge and writing abilities.

Kemberly Blackledge received recognition as our newest Certified

Member. Congratulations Kem on attaining that success.

Chris Wylie received a special recognition award for his service to the chapter during the past year as webmaster. Thanks, Chris, for all your hard work.

Many thanks also to our terrific sponsors. Our chapter would not be the success it is without your financial support. Look closely at the photos and the listing of our sponsors and when you see them again be sure to thank them for their continued support of our chapter.



Our Gold Sponsors (some are not pictured)



Our Silver Sponsors (some are not pictured)

HFMA Annual Meeting Sponsors

(Confirmed as of 5/24/01)

Chairman's Level

Kaufman Hall & Associates

Diamond

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 Chamberlin, Edmunds & Associates, Inc.
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 CareMedic Systems, Inc.
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 Medical Management Plus
 Ontario Systems
 Shared Services Healthcare, Inc.
 The SSI Group
 VALIC
 Williford & Associates

Special Thanks to The Sandestin Hilton
 and to Thomas Hospital.





Hear ye, Hear ye . . .
By order of the Board,
The Winners
of



The 2000-2001 TOP Recruiter Campaign
And the 3 day/2 night stay in San Destin
ARE . . .



*Pollyanna Brannan with Member-Get-A-Member Campaign winners,
Linda Maddox (left) and Yolanda Rich (right)*

HEY, IT'S A TIE!!

Congratulations to Linda Maddox and Yolanda Rich for being such great recruiters!! Linda is Director of the Business Office at Baptist Medical Center, and Yolanda is Director of Compliance, Monitoring & Education for Baptist Health System, Inc.

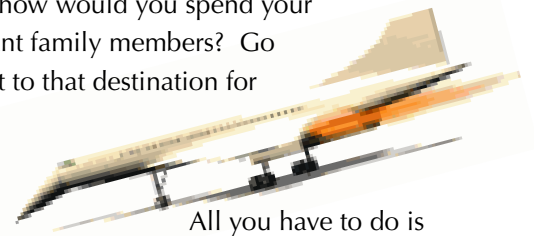
Are you disappointed you didn't win? Well don't let it get you down! We have a brand new campaign starting with loads of prizes to be won. The grand prize is going to knock your socks off!

Just keep reading to discover what it is!!!

Announcing A New Look To An Old Idea . . .

The 2001 - 2002 B.E.S.T. Recruiter Campaign "Being Exceptional Starts Today"

If you could fly anywhere within the Continental United States for free[†], how would you spend your time? Would you lounge on the beach? Climb a mountain? Visit distant family members? Go gambling in Vegas? Whatever you decide to do, wouldn't it be nice to get to that destination for FREE?!



"Sign me up!" You said? Well great!!! Here's what you need to do...

Get more people to join HFMA! Sounds easy enough, right? Sure it does! All you have to do is recruit people into HFMA and you increase your chance of winning a free pair of airline tickets. Not only that, but you also increase your chances of winning prizes in each edition of the Bama Chatter!

"Prizes?" You say? "This just keeps getting better!"

Well of course it does!!! We are bound and determined to make this year the B.E.S.T. year yet! But in order to do that, we need your help! Increase your chances of winning one of these great prizes:

* Free Gas for a month* (a \$60 value)

* Dinner for Two* (a \$50 value)

* 4 Movie Tickets*

* One month tanning package or golfing package* (a \$50 value)

* Gift Certificate to one of your favorite stores*

(Bath & Body Works, Sam's, Sears, Circuit City, just to name a few)

Do you love HFMA? Spread the word and start winning today!

Deadlines for recruiting members will be the 12th of the month prior to the next issue. For example, the deadline for the first prize will be August 12th, in order to be announced in the September/October 2001 Bama Chatter. The grand prize winner ~ the B.E.S.T. Recruiter ~ will be announced at the Annual Institute in San Destin.

It is important that you start recruiting early. Because of this extreme Grand Prize, we can only have one winner, so in the event of a tie, the Member who has recruited the most new members FIRST will be awarded the Grand Prize.

The end of the campaign is April 30th, 2002, so don't delay! Start recruiting today!

Prize awards are based on a bi-monthly recruitment total. Totals are not cumulative for bi-monthly prizes. Only Grand Prize drawing is a cumulative total. In order to be eligible for prizes, new members must list your sponsor information on their application.

[†]Travel is within the 48 contiguous States excluding Alaska and Hawaii. Tickets may not be redeemed for cash.

To receive applications for new members or any information, please call (800) 264-2700 ext. 213. If I am not able to receive your call at that time, please leave your name, company name, phone number, address, email address and/or fax number on my voice mail. You can also email me at: Pollyanna@cbmontgomery.com. This will give me the opportunity to have your application to you ASAP! Or click on the link below to download an application.

Pollyanna

Pollyanna Brannan, Membership Chairman



Page 9

For a New Member Application, Click Here
<http://www.alhfma.org/Join.asp?Page=4>



**It's the first
Tailgate Party
of the Year!!**

Alabama Chapter Summer Institute

Embassy Suites Hotel
Montgomery, Alabama
August 16 - 17, 2001

This year's Summer Institute is not to be missed! In addition to the great speakers and topics (listed below), we have a Wednesday afternoon golf outing at the RTJ Capital Hill in Prattville. (Each golfer will pay at the facility.) Thursday evening, join us for the first tailgate party of the year.

OUR FEATURED SPEAKER BILL FELKEY INTERNET & TECHNOLOGY GURU

Bill will be answering your specific questions and will also cover:

***How to Buy and Use a Palm Pilot
Building a Power Point Presentation***

***How To Do Research On the Internet
What's Happening Online in the Healthcare Industry***

Our meeting topics will include:

- Alternative Bad Debt Recovery Strategies
presented by Adam Holzhauer, Premium Asset Recovery Corp.
- Financial Planning for Healthcare Executives
presented by Paul Fields, VALIC

- Creating The Devoted Employee
presented by Greg Smith, Integrated Psychiatric Care
- Business Office Innovations
presented by Ben Zarzaur, Zarzaur & Schwartz, P.C.

Registration Information

Name _____

Title _____ Organization _____

Address _____ City/State/ Zip _____

Phone () _____ **REGISTRATION FEE: \$100.00 per person**

Please check the applicable boxes:

- Alabama Chapter: Member New Member
 Non-Member
- Yes, I plan to attend: Wednesday Afternoon Golf Outing
 *Thursday Lunch
 *Thursday's Tailgate Party

Make checks payable to: Alabama Chapter-HFMA

Mail to: **Richard Byerly - Controller**
East Alabama Medical Center
2000 Pepperell Parkway
Opelika, AL 36801
(334) 705-2107 • Fax (334) 705-1828

Hotel Information

The meeting will be held at the Embassy Suites in Montgomery. (Phone: 334-269-5055.) When making reservations, please mention HFMA to receive the room rate of \$109. Please don't delay in making your reservations as the block of rooms being held for this event will be released on July 16. Dress code for all events is casual.

Healthcare Financial Management Association

Alabama Chapter 2001 Member Survey Results

A requirement of the Davis Chapter Management System is to annually survey the membership to ascertain member satisfaction regarding chapter products and services, priorities, direction and management practices. The survey, conducted in last month's *Bama Chatter*, was tallied and the results are as follows:

1. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of education programs and services sponsored by the HFMA Alabama Chapter?

	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	DON'T KNOW
a. Education programs overall	44%	50%	1%		5%
b. Topics addressed	41%	54%		1%	4%
c. Speakers at education programs	37%	58%	1%		4%
d. Location of programs	46%	50%			4%
e. Cost of programs	37%	59%			4%
f. Frequency of programs	37%	55%	3%		5%
g. Social activities overall	42%	46%			12%
h. Opportunity for involvement	41%	50%	1%		8%
2. Please rank the top three most important factors in your decision to attend chapter meetings. (Write one through three)

<p>2 Location of meetings</p> <p>1 Topics offered</p> <p>_____ Time of month meeting held</p> <p>_____ Cost of hotel accommodations</p> <p>_____ Registration costs</p>	<p>3 Speakers</p> <p>_____ Family activities offered</p> <p>_____ Social events</p> <p>_____ Networking opportunities</p> <p>_____ Type of site (hotel, resort, hospital meeting facility, etc.)</p>
---	---
3. Does the HFMA Alabama Chapter need to improve those factors that you ranked 1 through 3? (Check one response for each item.)

	NO IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	IF NEEDS IMPROVEMENT PLEASE OFFER SUGGESTION
a. Item ranked #1	78%	22%	_____
b. Item ranked #2	81%	19%	_____
c. Item ranked #3	89%	11%	_____
4. Concerning educational programs in general, should more time be allotted per speaker so that the speakers can (check one):

a. Go more in depth in their topic?	32% - Yes	68% - No
b. Offer more time for discussion/question & answer?	33% - Yes	67% - No
5. If you have not attended any chapter programs this year, please check each item that has prevented you from attending (select as many as apply):

a. Inconvenient timing of programs: can timing be improved?	33%
b. Work obligations	46%
c. Program locations: suggest locations?	
d. Program costs	4%
e. Lack of relevant programming: what topic would be relevant?	17%
6. How interested would you be in attending an HFMA chapter education program on the following topics? (Please check one response for each item):

	VERY INTERESTED	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED	NOT INTERESTED
a. Patient Financial Services	38%	47%	15%
b. Managed Care	24%	59%	17%
c. Integrated and other forms of complex delivery systems	26%	54%	20%
- d. Government and other Third Party Reimbursement

	VERY INTERESTED	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED	NOT INTERESTED
e. Strategic Planning and Budgeting	65%	35%	
f. Capitation Accounting	43%	43%	14%
g. Accounting and financial reporting	10%	26%	64%
h. Professional and personal development	42%	50%	8%
i. Long Term Care	59%	37%	4%
j. Ambulatory Care	28%	43%	29%
k. Physician Relations/Medical Groups	17%	46%	37%
l. Policy and legislative issues (HC reform)	21%	36%	43%
m. Utilization/Quality Management	51%	48%	1%
n. Case Management	21%	52%	27%
o. Medical Ethics	14%	56%	30%
p. Re-engineering	20%	46%	34%
q. Education toward certification	25%	55%	20%
r. Compliance	37%	49%	14%
s. Rural Health Issues	49%	49%	2%
t. Leadership development	35%	44%	21%
u. Other Specify: Fraud & Abuse; APC's; Outsourcing; Internet Opportunities; HIPAA	43%	54%	3%
7. Please indicate your level of awareness and satisfaction with each of the following services of the HFMA Alabama Chapter:

CHAPTER SERVICE	NOT AWARE OF	AWARE OF DISSATISFIED	AWARE OF NO OPINION	AWARE OF SATISFIED
a. Newsletter	1%	1%	5%	93%
b. Directory	4%	4%	5%	87%
c. AL Chapter Website	1%	4%	18%	77%
d. Employment Referral	31%	1%	34%	34%
8. How interested would you be in an electronic, rather than printed, version of the following: ? (Please respond once for each item.)

	VERY INTERESTED	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED	NOT INTERESTED
a. <i>Bama Chatter</i> Newsletter	69%	22%	9%
b. AL Chapter Membership Directory	64%	22%	14%
9. What is the maximum price for accommodations you would be willing to pay in order to attend a chapter meeting?

\$ 250.00 per night (resort)	\$ 175 per night (non resort)
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------
10. Which day of the week is most convenient for you to attend a chapter education program? (Check two):

3% Monday	37% Thursday
8% Tuesday	38% Friday
10% Wednesday	4% Weekend
11. How many education programs will your employer pay for each year?

12%-as necessary	9%-varies	44%-0-3	32%-4 or more	3%-40 hours
------------------	-----------	---------	---------------	-------------
12. Total number of education programs you attended in the past year?

0-3	4-6	7 or more	40 hours
48%	39%	12%	1%

Member Survey Results, continued

13. How many of the education programs you attended were HFMA activities?
- | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------------|
| <u>0</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4 or more</u> |
| 9% | 23% | 27% | 19% | 22% |
14. How many years have you been an HFMA member?
- | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| <u>0-5</u> | <u>6-10</u> | <u>11-15</u> | <u>16-20</u> | <u>>20</u> |
| 37% | 20% | 14% | 19% | 10% |
15. Are you more or less involved in chapter activities than in prior years?
- | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 32%-More | 41%-Same | 27%-Less |
|----------|----------|----------|
16. In the following list of matrix committees, please check those that you would be interested in serving on:
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Council on Projects | 8% |
| Council on Publications | 6% |
| Council on Programs | 6% |
| Council on Directory | |
| Council on Membership | 9% |
| Council on Professional Excellence | 8% |
| Past Presidents Advisory Council | |
| Patient Financial Services Council | 15% |
| CFO Forum | 15% |
| Awards Council | 6% |
| Pro-Action Council | 4% |
| Quality Council | 1% |
| Corporate Compliance Officers Council | 11% |
| Information and Technology Council | 11% |
17. Would you be interested in becoming certified (CHFP or FHFMA)?
- | | | |
|-----------|----------|-----------------------------|
| 39% - Yes | 35% - No | 26% - Need More Information |
|-----------|----------|-----------------------------|
18. Which one of the following best describes your job title?
- | | |
|--|-----|
| Executive Officer, including CEO, COO or Administrator | 4% |
| Financial Officer, including CFO or VP for Finance | 26% |
| Financial Director, including Director, Assistant Director or controller | 21% |
| Operational Staff, including Accountant, Internal Auditor, or Financial Analyst | 5% |
| Business Office Mgr. or Patient Financial Services Manager | 13% |
| Other manager/supervisor: (specify) _____ | 9% |
| Consultant, including staff of an accounting firm, attorney, or independent consultant | 8% |
| Other : | 14% |
17. Which one of the following best describes your employer?:
- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 53% - Hospital | 5% - Consulting Firm |
| ___ - Ambulatory Care Facility | 7% - Accounting Firm |
| ___ - Home Health Agency | 9% - Insurance Company |
| 1% - Long Term Care Facility | ___ - Healthcare Equip. Dealer |
| 4% - Physicians Group Practice | 1% - Law Firm |
| 11% - Multi-facility Corporate Headquarters | ___ - Sub-acute Care Facility |
| ___ - Managed Care Org. | ___ - Bank or Brokerage Firm |
| 3% - Integrated Delivery System | 6% - Other |



HFMA Certification Exam

Eastern Health System, Inc. and Medical Center East, Birmingham is pleased to host the upcoming **2001-2002 HFMA Certification Exam**. Plans are underway to schedule exam dates. When the dates are finalized, we will post notification on HFMA's Alabama Chapter web site (www.alhfma.org) and in upcoming issues of *Bama Chatter* as well.

Any candidate interested in taking the Certification Exam, please call Bryan Karson, Eastern Health System, Inc. at (205) 838-3267 or e-mail at bekarson@ehs-inc.com. 

2001 Health Law Seminar

September 7, 2001 · HealthSouth Conference Center · Birmingham, Alabama

Make plans to attend the **2001 Health Law Seminar** on September 7, sponsored by Cumberland School of Law and Co-Sponsored by HFMA. Watch your mail for complete registration information, coming in July.

Tentative Agenda

8:30 - 9:30	HIPAA - Basic Requirements
9:30 - 10:15	Practical Application of HIPAA: "How Can the Healthcare Provider Utilize Electronic Records & Comply with HIPAA"
10:15 - 10:30	Break
10:30 - 11:15	"Handling Requests for Discovery of Electronic Records"
11:15 - 12:00	"Stark: Final Regulations"
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 1:45	"Intermediate Sanctions"
1:45 - 2:00	Break
2:00 - 3:00	"EMTALA"
3:00 - 3:30	"Representing the Impaired Physician"
3:30 - 4:00	State Law Update

CPE & CLE CREDITS APPLIED FOR • ALL INTERESTED MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND!

A Short Concise Primer on Interest Rates

by Sanford Kahn

First, what interest rates are we talking about and why is it important to both the economy and business decisions?

There is an old saying that money makes the world go around. In economic parlance this is not quite correct. Actually, it is the cost of money that makes the world go around, and this cost of money is

reflected in the level of interest rates. As the level of interest rates rise, business people and investors demand a higher rate-of-return on their capital investment to justify the expenditure. The result is similar to “walking up a pyramid” — fewer and fewer capital expenditures can justify the targeted rate-of-return. As productive investment decreases, so does the speed at which money circulates (its velocity). With some lag time the economy begins to slow and unemployment starts to increase.

With such importance

attached to interest rates, does the Federal Reserve Board (FED) really control their level? To simplify, we must differentiate between short-term and long-term rates. Interest rates on securities that mature in less than a year would be considered short-term, while interest rates on securities that

mature in over 10 years would denote long-term rates.

The FED through its open market policies does have a powerful impact on short-term interest rates, namely the federal funds rate and its brother, the three-month Treasury bill rate. The federal funds rate is an overnight rate at which banks lend to each other.

Long-term interest rates, however, are set more by the market than by the FED. These rates

reflect peoples’ expectations of economic growth, both real and inflationary. When a businessman issues a 20-year bond yielding 10% interest per year, he is assuming the funds can be profitably invested in an enterprise earning significantly better than 10%. If this isn’t so, why borrow the money at 10%?

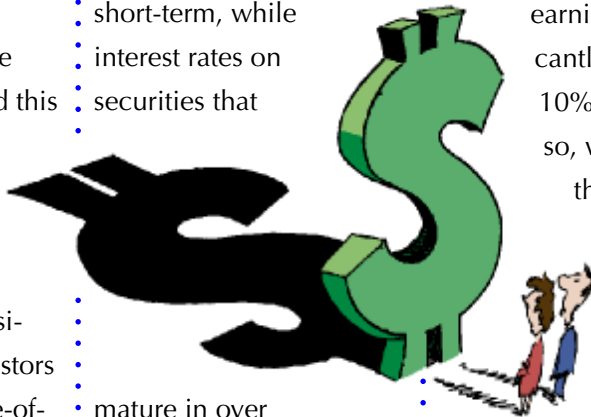
The movement of interest rates can give us a clue as to the future direction of the economy. It is not the absolute level of short-term or long-term rates that is important — it is the spread between them. For example, if long-term Treasury bonds are yielding 7% and the 90-day Treasury bills are yielding 5%, then the spread is two percentage points.

As the FED tightens-up on the money supply,

short-term rates will climb faster than long-term rates. If short-term interest rates start to climb above long-term rates (as happened in 1979, 1980, 1981, and in year 2000), this is an early warning sign that the economy will be slowing significantly — possibly entering a business recession.

As this happens, it would be best to reduce your short-term debt levels and start to rebuild liquidity. Business slowdowns or recessions can be times of great opportunities, but only for those who have the resources. The future belongs to the swift—liquidity is King!

(Sanford Kahn is a Business Author/Speaker on the business impact of economic trends. He can be contacted at sanford16@yahoo.com or call (562) 434-4695. For more information please visit his web page at: www.speakers.com/skahn.html.)



Health Insurance for Alabama's Children

by Dawn Walton, CPA

As you know, many Americans today are without health insurance. The reasons are many but the number one factor is cost. In Alabama, 69% of those without health insurance say it is because it costs too much or because they are no longer eligible for Medicaid. When adults lack health insurance, their children generally do as well. But today in Alabama, there is no reason why a child or teen should go without health coverage. Alabama has three programs, Medicaid, All Kid's, and Alabama Child Caring Foundation, that coordinate to provide health insurance coverage for low and moderate income families with children up to age 19. The determination of eligibility is based on family size and income.

Knoxye Williams, Marketing & Outreach consultant for Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) spoke at the Annual Institute in SanDestin. CHIP is desperately trying to get all eligible Alabama children enrolled in the program. Knoxye shared some important information that all hospitals will find valuable if they treat children and want payment.

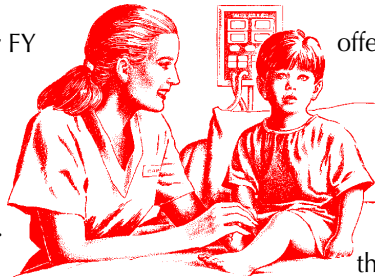
What Can This Program Mean For Your Hospital?

Money. There is \$76.4 million allotted for the state

of Alabama for FY 2002 to pay claims for children enrolled in the CHIP program. Projected medical services under the program for FY 2001 (as of the date of her presentation) is only \$32.7 million, with a funding level of \$61.8 million. That means some of our state allotment will be allocated to someone else. The problem is hospitals are treating our children without payment, but the money is available. However, money is not going to come into our state and be paid for these services unless the eligible children are enrolled.

How Many qualified Children Are Not Enrolled? Why Aren't They Enrolled?

That is hard to pinpoint because family situations are always changing. The baseline estimate of uninsured children was originally 141,000. Since All Kid's inception, there have been increases in enrollment in all CHIP programs. However, it is estimated that 39,000 and 19,000 eligible children in the less than 100% of the FPL category and in the 100-200% of the FPL category, respectively, remain uninsured. Most children are not enrolled in a program because either they are not aware of the



offerings, do not understand how it works or the coverage

or have let their coverage lapse. This program is a free or limited fee program for eligible families, depending on family size and income. The free program is just that, free - no co-pays and no annual premium. The limited fee program is very affordable, only \$50 annual premium per child with a maximum of \$150. The highest co-pay under the limited fee program is \$5, but most are \$0. The coverage is outstanding!

How Can My Hospital Help?

Sign up these eligible children! There are many avenues for getting this done. These children are your patients and will continue to be seen at your hospital. Signing them up today will mean payment for their care in the future. CHIP recommends focusing on these areas:

- Business Office
- Hospital Admissions Office
- Emergency Department
- Social Services Department
- Maternity Discharge
- Prenatal education sites
- Physician Office Managers
- Hospital Volunteer Programs

One thing CHIP stresses is to look internally. Many hospitals may have employ-

ees on staff that qualify for the program. Be sure to get the message to hospital staff and physician's staff, as well. Many of your employees may have dependents that are not covered because coverage is too high. Make sure your employees are aware that this plan helps working families, too.

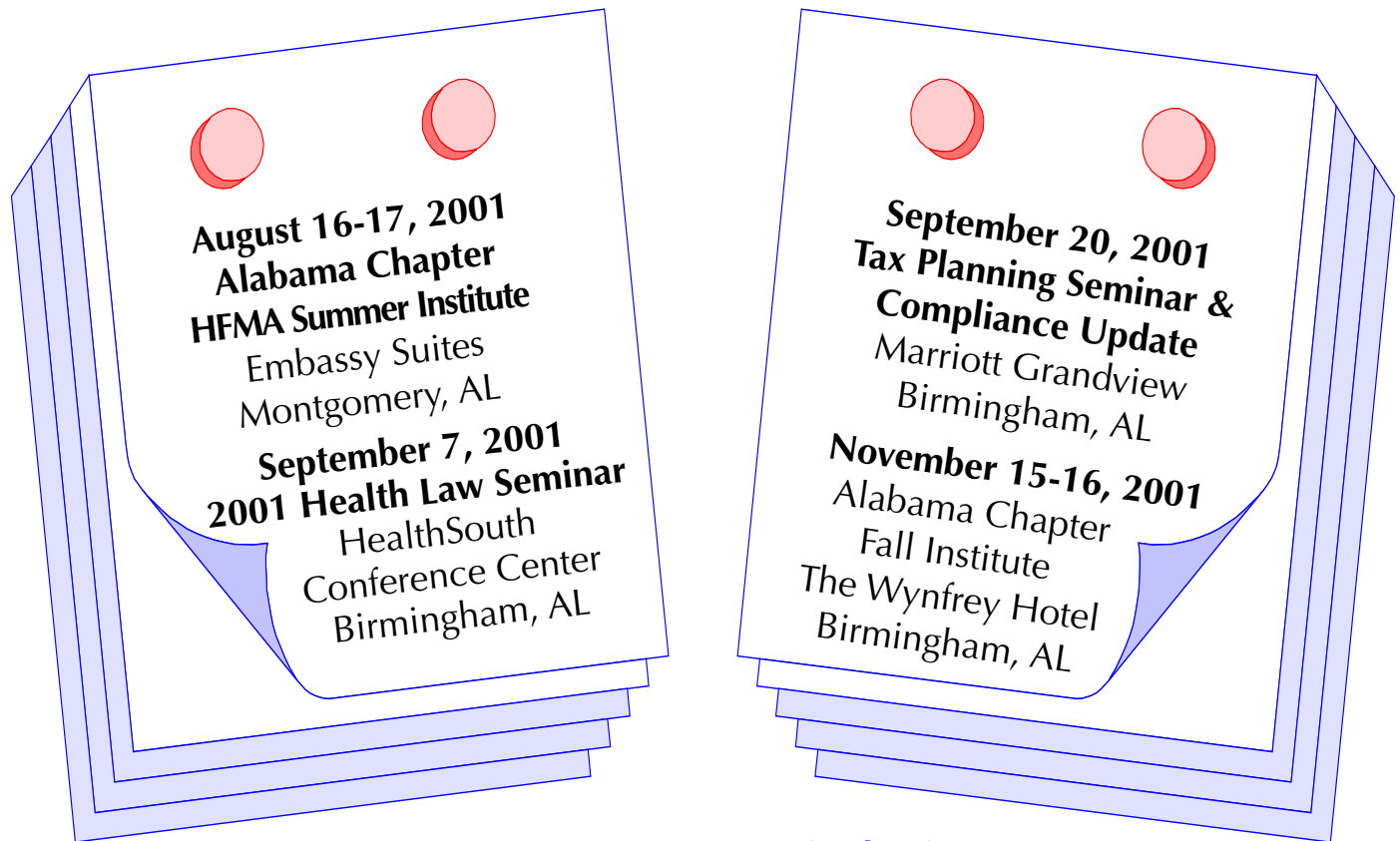
Where Can We Get More Information?

Complete hospital outreach packets are available from the Alabama Hospital Association. Call 1-800 849-2542 (Rosemary Blackmon). These packets include enrollment applications and eligibility requirements for each program. The process has improved and now there is one application for all three programs. This eliminates the guesswork for which program a child falls in, the agencies take care of that.

Last year, Alabama hospitals absorbed millions in bad debt and unpaid medical services provided for children. We know that children with health coverage are more likely to be healthy babies, receive routine check-ups, get medical attention quicker and stay healthier. This program is a win-win situation for all of Alabama. Help the program - get the uninsured children in your area enrolled today.



Mark Your Calendars Now & Make Plans To Attend ...



LOOKING AHEAD

In the next issue of *Bama Chatter* we will have complete coverage of the events at the Annual National Institute.

Jenny Wakeford, CPA
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Editors

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