

# Health Law Newsletter



Beazley Institute for Health Law and Policy | Loyola University Chicago School of Law

November 2009

## Health Law in the News

### State of the Health Care Debate - by Eddie Mazur

The topic of health care reform has involved the competing elements of excitement, contention, optimism, and frustration over the past year; becoming one of the great policy debates of our time. Though there is recognition that the status quo will not suffice, the means employed to reach a more amenable solution have been, and continue to be, hotly contested. Recently, Senator Harkin (D-IA, Chairman of the Senate Health Committee) projected that Congress would be able to institute immense reforms in the health care system before Christmas—including a public insurance option.

Across the aisle, while moderate Republicans acknowledge the need for some measure of reform, they remain wary of a model that includes a public option. Some large health insurers also have contended that a pure public option will force them out of the market. It is this issue of whether to include a public option that has, in part, delayed the promulgation of a comprehensive reform package. The myriad of interests have truly tested the limits of our democratic processes. Though uncertainty has complicated projections in one respect, it has also created a space for a middle ground. For instance, some recent proposals suggest models with a public option but allow a state to either opt-in or opt-out of the program. Such bipartisan agreement is a necessary predicate to a successful reform bill, and bipartisan discussions are imperative in order to meaningfully discuss the efficacy of the public option.

Additionally, opinions of everyday Americans are part and parcel to this debate. Recent national polls suggest that more than half of Americans remain in support of a public option. Despite this encouraging statistic, the dispute over how to finance this \$900 billion overhaul lingers. Though it has also provided some structure, weighing the various funding mechanisms (increased taxes, reductions in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement, additional fraud and abuse oversight) has in many ways slowed the discourse. Nevertheless, in the coming weeks, if Senator Harkin's projection is true, one of the largest expansions of public health programs since the 1960's could come to fruition by way of the democratic process, and this is by itself worthy of celebration.

## Past and Future Health Law Society Events

HLS had a busy October!

Team Healthy Loyola participated in the AIDS Chicago 5K and hosted speakers including dietician Gina Bucciferro, *Do No Harm* documentary filmmakers Rebecca Schanberg & Susanne Sufredin, and Dr. James Galloway & Barbara Altman who presented on prevention and policy matters related to H1N1.

On **November 2nd-4th**, the American Health Lawyers Association is hosting its Annual Symposium. If you'd like to attend, email [healthlaw@luc.edu](mailto:healthlaw@luc.edu) for further information.

Join us for the Third Annual Beazley Symposium on Access to Health Care on **November 6th** from 8:15 am - 2:45 pm at 25 E. Pearson. This year's topic is "Health Care Disparities: Effectiveness, Rationing, and the Road to the Future." For more information and to register, see the [Beazley website](http://www.beazley.luc.edu).

Join HLS for Hunger Week activities **November 8th-13th** including: the Hunger Week 5K Run/Walk with proceeds going towards Hunger Week 2009 beneficiaries, and Elizabeth Jarvis from the Office of the Regional Health Administrator

who will speak about nutritional deficits and obesity prevention in Chicago and the initiative "Building a Healthier Chicago."

Finally, we are pleased to announce our first annual Mental Health Week on **November 16th-20th**. Joe Monahan of Monahan & Cohen will present about mental health law and Connie Ritzman, a nurse and mental health professor at Loyola's School of Nursing, will present on mental illness and the role of nurses in health law. Look out for more information about these and other Mental Health Week events!

## Upcoming Events at a Glance

Event	Date	Time	Location
<b>Health Care Disparities: Effectiveness, Rationing and the Road to the Future</b>	11/06	8:15am-2:45pm	Power Rogers & Smith Ceremonial Courtroom
<b>Hunger Week Presentation: Building a Healthier Chicago Initiative with Liz Jarvis, HHS</b>	11/10	12:00-1:00pm	Room 602, Corboy Law Center
<b>Mental Health Week Presentation: Joe Monahan, Monahan &amp; Cohen</b>	11/16	12:00-1:00pm	Room 1001, Corboy Law Center
<b>Mental Health Week Presentation: Connie Ritzman, RN, Loyola University Chicago School of Nursing</b>	11/17	4:00-5:00pm	Room 1103, Corboy Law Center

For all things Health Law, visit <http://www.luc.edu/healthlaw/>.

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## Healthy Loyola

*Got D? Vitamin D helps the immune system fight off infection and strengthens our teeth and bones. Insufficient Vitamin D can have a deleterious affect on mental health, among other things. For more information about Vitamin D and to make sure you're getting yours, visit <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/edis/FY/FY20700.pdf>.*

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