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Insights



Tomorrow is St. Patrick's Day. In the United States, that generally means celebrating Irish heritage — whether you have it or not. We have good reason to celebrate. Although it isn't for the reasons you would think.

Most of the things we think we know about St. Patrick, and for that matter the Irish, simply aren't true. For example, St. Patrick, who was actually British by birth, didn't drive the snakes out of Ireland — there were none. And, there's scant evidence that St. Patrick used the ubiquitous shamrock as a teaching tool about the trinity. They are great stories but probably no more than that. In fact, St. Patrick doesn't even stand alone as the Patron Saint of Ireland — he shares the honor with St. Brigid and St. Columba.

That's the bad. Here's the good. St. Patrick's work in spreading Christianity throughout Ireland led to the establishment of monasteries that were essential to the protection and preservation of classic works of literature and philosophy during the dark ages. That's worth raising a glass.

Here's another common misconception — the "famine Irish" are the Irish in America. Actually, that's not so. While the potato famine era, from 1845 to 1852, did vastly increase Irish emigration, there was a significant Irish population in the U.S., and notably Missouri, prior to the famine. In fact, the Irish were well established in Missouri even prior to statehood and their contribution is especially noteworthy in the areas of health care and education. Consider this:

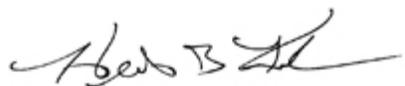
- The first hospital west of the Mississippi — known as both St. Louis Hospital and Sister Hospital — was located in the log cabin of John Mullanphy, and run by the Daughters of Charity Catholic sisters. Two of the original four sisters to staff the hospital were Irish.
- The Sisters of Mercy, founded in Ireland in 1827 by Catherine McAuley, arrived in St. Louis in 1856 and immediately began providing care to the poor. They were led to St. Louis by Dublin native Sister Mary De Pazzi Bentley.
- The first operational medical school west of the Mississippi was founded in 1840 in association with Kemper College and was founded by Dr. Joseph Nash McDowell and funded by several prominent Irish physicians. (Saint Louis University historians may dispute this based on date of charter.)

Missouri is one of the most Irish states in the nation. And, the Irish were significant contributors to the state's health care and hospital community from the very beginning. That influence remains strong. If I said "Sister Ryan" or "Sister Keehan" you would know who I was talking about. If I said "Mercy," you would likely say "which hospital?"

Ireland is an island and poor in natural resources. And, as many scholars have observed, Ireland's most important export has always been its people. Catholic or protestant, in health care and education, the Irish helped shape Missouri. And Missouri's hospital community has benefitted greatly from their contribution.

There's plenty of reason to raise a toast to Ireland tomorrow. [Sláinte](#).

Send me an [email](#) to let me know what you think.



Herb B. Kuhn
MHA President and CEO

In This Issue

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Advocate state and federal health policy developments

MedPAC Releases Medicare Payment Policy Report

MHA Staff Contact: [Andrew Wheeler](#)

The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission released its March [Report to the Congress: Medicare Payment Policy](#) update. The document includes the commission's analytical framework for assessing payment adequacy, recommendations on rate updates and related issues, updated statistics on enrollment, plan offerings and payments in Medicare Advantage plans, and updated statistics on enrollment and plan offerings for plans that provide prescription drug coverage.

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Regulatory News the latest actions of agencies monitoring health care

CMS Issues Proposed Rule On Overpayment Reporting

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The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issued a proposed rule implementing a provision in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that requires a health care provider or supplier that received an overpayment from Medicare to report and return the overpayments by the later of 60 days after the date the overpayment was identified, or the date any corresponding cost report is due. Failure to meet the deadline can result in liability under the False Claims Act. The proposed rule was [published](#) in the *Federal Register* on February 16 and comments are due April 16. The American Hospital Association posted a [Legal Advisory](#) bulletin with additional information and request for comment.

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CMS: RACs May Increase Medical Record Requests

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The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services yesterday significantly increased the number of medical records that Recovery Audit Contractors may request from hospitals and other institutional providers. The new annual limit for most providers is 2 percent of all claims submitted in the prior calendar year, divided by 8. Currently the limit is 1 percent. Additional information is available in the CMS [notice](#).

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CMS Issues Health Reform Regulations For Insurers And Medicaid Expansion

MHA Staff Contacts: [Daniel Landon](#) or [Steve Renne](#)

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has issued two final rules to implement components of the federal health reform law. One [rule](#) addresses insurance issues such as reinsurance, risk corridors and risk adjustment. The other [rule](#) concerns various topics related to the expansion of Medicaid. MHA has published an [issue brief](#) on the insurance related regulation and will publish an issue brief on the second regulation early next week.

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Did You Miss An Issue Of MHA Today?

The following articles were published in this week's issues of *MHA Today* and are available online.

[CMS Releases Final Rules On Health Insurance Exchanges](#)
[Health Care Jobs Rise In February](#)
[Missouri Hospitals To Participate In Medicaid IMD Demonstration](#)
[Grant Funding Available For 'Strong Start' Newborn Initiative](#)
[MHD Offers Provider Training For Inpatient Medicare Claims](#)
[Economic Outlook From CBO Estimates Effects Of PPACA](#)
[CMS Hosts Forum On Power Mobility Device Demonstration Project](#)
[Report Ranks Communities On Health System Performance](#)



Consider This ...

When the U.S. population is ranked by their health care expenditures, the 1 percent who spent more than \$44,000 on health care was responsible for 20 percent of health care spending in 2008.

Source: [The Kaiser Family Foundation](#)

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