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technology and electronic medical record marketplace, and culture night. NIHB plans to offer plenary and workshop sessions on topics including Medicare/Medicaid and tribal health, youth health, health care reform implementation, behavioral health, health information technology and electronic medical records, and public health issues.

[VIEW THE LATEST 2011 ACC AGENDA](#)

You can register and learn more about the conference details [here](#). If you register before September 9, 2011 for the discounted rate of \$400, after September 9, 2011, registration will be \$475.

For more details, visit the [ACC's website](#) or contact NIHB Deputy Director, [Evangelyn "Angel" Dotomain](#)

NIHB UPDATES

Still Time to Register for NIHB's 28th Annual Consumer Conference

The National Indian Health Board (NIHB) invites tribal leaders, health administrators, policy makers, and area health boards to the 28th Annual Consumer Conference (ACC) in Anchorage, Alaska at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center from September 26 to 29, 2011. The theme for this year's conference, *Health, Hope, and Heroes: Using the Foundations of Tribal Values and Knowledge to Advance Native Health!*, will provide a chance for attendees to discuss successes, challenges, opportunities, and the future of health care for American Indian and Alaska Native people.

Meetings before and after the ACC will include tribal consultations conducted by federal agencies such as the Health Resources and Services Administration. The conference will also include a health information

HILL UPDATES

The House and Senate are out of session.

[Kaiser Health News: Bracing For Deficit Panel Battle Between Defense, Health Interests](#)

Meanwhile, home health advocates are launching campaigns to ward off more Medicare payment cuts when Congress returns to Capitol Hill.

[Reuters](#): U.S. Debt Super Committee Vexes Even Lobbyists

Thousands of Washington lobbyists are scrambling to influence the work of a congressional "super committee" given the



job of identifying up to \$1.5 trillion in deficit reductions, with many worried about how to gain access to its 12 members. The committee is due to report its findings by Thanksgiving and with such massive potential cuts to the U.S. federal budget being decided by just a handful of lawmakers in such a short timeframe, lobbyists say the mission to protect their clients' interests is unprecedented and potentially impossible. ... One lobbyist, speaking on the condition of anonymity, predicted "Holy War" between the health and defense industries, and their legions of lobbyists as they try to protect their budgets ahead of the potential automatic cuts (Reid, 8/29).

[The Hill](#): Nursing Homes Launch TV, Lobbying Campaign To Ward Off Medicare Cuts

The nursing-home industry is launching a multimillion-dollar ad buy and advocacy campaign this week in an effort to prevent more Medicare and Medicaid cuts once Congress comes back to Washington. The industry says previous Medicare and Medicaid cuts have already hampered nursing homes' ability to stay fully staffed and provide top-quality care. Further reductions — including cuts from the deficit-cutting super committee — would be devastating, industry groups argue (Baker, 8/29).

[Politico Pro](#): Home Care Groups Launch Ads Against Cuts

Reeling from a big hit to skilled nursing last month and facing the prospect of more cuts from the super committee, advocates of the nursing home industry will announce a national ad campaign Tuesday to protect their funding. The American Health Care Association and the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care will make an ad buy in eight states, initially targeting members of the super committee and states where Medicaid funding is at issue. The move follows a significant blow to the industry in July, when CMS announced a final rule that will trim payments to skilled nursing by 11.1 percent in the next fiscal year to make up for what CMS

calculated to be previous overpayments (Norman, 8/29).

And the AMA is expressing concern about the health law's PCORI and its research plans —

[The Hill](#): Doctors Lobby Warns Against Weighing Cost In Government-Supported Research

A new medical research body created by the health care reform law should not consider the cost of treatments when evaluating them, the nation's largest physician lobby argues. The American Medical Association has invited other groups to sign on to a comment letter regarding the type of research that should be conducted under the law's Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). The independent nonprofit began seeking public input last month, and the AMA is concerned about its proposal to "investigate ... optimizing outcomes while addressing burden to individuals, resources, and other stakeholder perspectives" (Pecquet, 8/29).

HEALTH REFORM UPDATES

HHS Announces \$11.9 million to Implement Health Information Technology in Rural Areas

Rural health networks across the nation have been selected receive more than \$11.9 million to support their adoption of Health Information Technology (HIT) and certified Electronic Health Records (EHR). The funding announced today by HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius will also help these rural health networks' participating eligible providers qualify for Medicare and Medicaid [EHR incentive payments](#), administered by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Each of 40 grantee organizations will receive about \$300,000 to purchase equipment, install broadband networks and provide training for staff. The pilot program was developed as a result of the President's [Rural Health Initiative](#), which identifies HIT as a priority area, and the Secretary's [Rural HIT](#)



[Taskforce](#). Funding is distributed through HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and comes from existing appropriations and authorization for the Rural Health Care Services Outreach and Rural Health Network Development Program.

For more information and to view a list of grantees, visit:
<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2011pres/09/20110902a.html>

HHS, Treasury Release Proposed Rules on Medicaid Expansion and Premium Tax Credits Under Exchanges

The Department of Health and Human Services and Treasury released three new proposed rules concerning State Insurance Exchanges, one-stop marketplaces where consumers can choose an affordable private health insurance plan suited to their needs.

The three proposed rules released by HHS and Treasury focus on the following:

- **Health Insurance Premium Tax Credit:** Individuals and families will receive premium tax credits to help defray insurance costs, increasing access to health coverage for millions of middle class American families.
- **Medicaid Eligibility:** Coordinating the Exchange with Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program eligibility will make enrollment seamless for qualified Americans and reduce the administrative burden on states.
- **Easy, Simple Access to Coverage for Consumers and Small Businesses:** New rules will make it easy for consumers to enroll in high-quality health plans and get help paying for health coverage through premium tax credits and cost sharing reductions. Small employers participating in the Small Business Health Options Program will be able to offer their employees a choice of

health plans and cut their costs with new tax credits.

In the weeks ahead, the Administration will conduct an aggressive outreach campaign and ask for public comment on the three proposed rules from employers, consumers, state leaders, health care providers and insurers, and the American people. In addition to accepting written public comments for the next 75 days, the departments will hold forums. These forums will help ensure more Americans have the opportunity to share their views regarding the establishment of Affordable Insurance Exchanges. Invitation-only forums will be held in:

- Atlanta, GA: September 13th
- New York, NY: September 21st
- Sacramento, CA: September 22nd
- Chicago, IL: September 26th

For more information about the proposed rules, visit:

- Overview:
www.HealthCare.gov/news/factsheets/exchanges08122011a.html;
- Easy, Simple Access to Coverage for Consumers and Small Businesses:
www.HealthCare.gov/news/factsheets/exchanges08122011b.html
- Health Insurance Premium Tax Credit: www.treasury.gov/press-center/Documents/36BFactSheet.PDF
- Medicaid Eligibility:
www.HealthCare.gov/news/factsheets/exchanges08122011c.html

HHS Tribal Consultation on Exchanges Proposed Rulemaking Continues

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) invites Tribes to participate in an upcoming Tribal consultation on the Affordable Insurance Exchanges Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) as well as



other provisions in the Affordable Care Act. HHS is working hard to implement policies that will improve the quality and accessibility of health services for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people. The consultation sessions will provide a general overview of the Affordable Care Act and the specific provision mentioned above, including an educational session on each topic, followed by a consultation for that topic. Consultation sessions will be held in three cities so that you may select the most convenient consultation to attend. The remaining dates and locations are listed below:

SEPTEMBER 7, 2011

Denver, Colorado

9:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Embassy Suites: Downtown 1420 Stout St.
Denver, CO 80202

SEPTEMBER 15-16, 2011

Washington, DC

HHH Building: Great Hall
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

HHS will provide agendas for these consultations, as well as a letter from Secretary Kathleen Sebelius in the near future.



NEXT WEEK IN WASHINGTON

CONGRESS IS BACK IN SESSION

**HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
HEARING ON, "HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY
CONSOLIDATION"**

WHEN: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2011

START TIME 9:30 AM EST

LOCATION: 1100 LONGWORTH HOUSE
OFFICE BUILDING

Sign Up for Washington Report, at:

http://www.nihb.org/legislative/washington_report.php

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