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Identify Theft Red Flag Rules Delayed Again

The Federal Trade Commission delayed the enforcement of the Red Flag Rules until August 1, 2009. The Red Flag Rules require creditors to institute programs to prevent identity theft. A physician is a creditor if the physician defers patient payments by billing for services or if the physician accepts the patient's co-pay and bills the insurance company.

Burnham Institute Opens

The Burnham Institute for Medical Research opened its new building in Central Florida's Medical City on May 15, 2009. The Institute will study diabetes, obesity, and heart disease at the new facility. The Institute will soon be joined in Medical City by the University of Florida College of Medicine, the MD Anderson Cancer Center, Nemours Children's Hospital and the Veterans Administration Medical Center.

Medicare Hit By Recession

The trustees of the Social Security and Medicare trusts announced that the current recession has impacted the trusts. The Social Security trust is now expected to start spending reserves in 28 years while the Medicare trust will start spending reserves in only 8 years.

New Grounds For Discipline

The Florida Legislature passed SB 1986 during the 2009 session, which allows the Board of Medicine to discipline doctors for failing to repay overpayments to the Medicaid program, being terminated by the Medicaid program or being convicted of health care fraud. The law also prohibits the Board from renewing a doctor's license if the doctor has been convicted or pleaded no contest to a felony under Chapter 409, Chapter 817, Chapter 893, 21 U.S.C. Sections 801-970, or 42 U.S.C. Sections 1395-1396 unless the sentence and period of probation ended more than 15 years earlier. SB 1986 is awaiting the Governor's signature.

Physicians Must Document Pause Before Surgery

Number 7 on the Board of Medicine's Top 10 Laws and Rules Every Physician Should Know: Physicians must pause and confirm the patient's identification, the surgical procedure and the surgical site before performing surgery. The physician must document the pause in the patient's chart. If a mistake occurs, the patient must be informed of the mistake and the physician must document in the patient's chart that the patient was informed about the mistake.