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Hospital CEO makes plea to the community for assistance

Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital's top official made a plea Friday for help from the community to help the hospital during a difficult financial time.

Gov. George Ryan plans to decrease funding for Medicaid outpatient and emergency room care, a measure that CEO Frank Caruso said Friday could cost the facility \$100,000 yearly. Another measure would tie nursing home reimbursement rates to annual inspections of care which could result in a five to 10 percent reduction in those Medicare rates, or a loss of as much as \$200,000.

The potential loss of revenue is "one of the most severe threats our organization has faced in about 11 years," Caruso said.



CARUSO

More than 20 percent of the hospital's Medicaid patients use the emergency room or outpatient services, totaling about \$1.2 million annually. On the nursing home side, 63 percent, or roughly 47 of the home's 75 residents are on Medicaid.

Additionally, to receive a better reimbursement rate and to receive payments in a more timely manner, the nursing home pays an Illinois Department of Public Health bed tax of \$41,000 per year, he said.

"We do not have control over those rates," Caruso said, adding Illinois, with a reimbursement rate of 70 cents per dollar

See PLEA on other side

Briefly

Music Booster winners

Winners in this week's Hoopeston Area Music Booster calendar drawing are: Dec. 10, Diane Field; Dec. 11, Connie and Wilbur Warner; Dec. 12, Dean Walter; Dec. 13, Janet's Curl Up and Dye; Dec. 14, M&N Pallet (donated back).

Multi Agency van schedule

This week's schedule for the Hoopeston Multi Agency transportation project is: Monday, Hoopeston shuttle; Tuesday, Kankakee. (leave at 9 a.m.); Wednesday, Danville; Thursday, Hoopeston shuttle; Friday, Danville.

For more information or to arrange a ride, call the Multi Agency at (217) 283-5544.

Community center activities include: Monday, ladies bridge, noon; Tuesday, ladies euchre, noon; Thursday,

men's coffee, 9:30 a.m., community potluck and men's euchre, noon; Friday, ladies cards, noon.

Teen Reach activities for the week are: Monday, Dan Bolton, assertiveness; Tuesday, arts & crafts; Wednesday, life skills, Casey Smith, careers; Thursday bowling 4/6:30 Friday, movies/karaoke.

Meetings

- Rossville-Alvin School Board communications committee, 7:30 a.m. Monday, grade school library.
- Rossville-Alvin School Board negotiations committee, 6 p.m. Monday, grade school library.
- Hoopeston City Council ambulance committee, 4:30 p.m. Monday, city hall.
- Hoopeston City Council civic improvement committee, 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, city hall.

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Talk Time with Teresa



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WHPO

This week, Rep. Bill Black and Frank Caruso will discuss hospital funding cuts

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And on the Internet at
www.justthefacts.fm



Police News



A 16-year-old Hoopeston boy was arrested at 12:29 a.m. Friday at West Honeywell and Rt. 1. The boy was cited for no valid driver's license and disobeying a stop sign.

He was released to his parents.

A 44-year-old man reported Saturday that he lost his black tri-fold wallet in the 800 block of North Market or the downtown area.

If found, please turn it in at the police department.

Michael Carswell, 21, of 327 N. Market, was ticketed

at 12:25 a.m. Sunday at West Thompson and North Seventh Ave.

He was cited for driving on suspension and was released on a notice to appear.



Bowling Scores



Senior YABA Standings 12/1/01

1. Lopsotpy	21	9
2. Lil Bowlers	19	11
3. Hot Shots	18	12
4. Shibby	17½	12½
5. No Limit Soljuz	16	14
6. Pin Snappers	14	16

7. The Simpsons	7	23
8. Shibby 2	6½	23½

Team Scratch Game: Pin Snappers 721, No Limit Soljuz 680, Shibby 604; **Team Scratch Series:** No Limit Soljuz 1,975, Pin Snappers 1,970, Shibby, 1,758; **Team Handicap Game:** Pin Snappers 873, No Limit Soljuz 837, Hot Shots 820; **Team Handicap Series:** No Limit Soljuz 2,446, Pin Snappers 2,426, Shibby 2,352. **Boys Scratch Game:** Curtis Warner 235, Corey Inman 225, Arik Bruens 214; **Scratch Series:** Curtis Warner 649, Corey Inman 518, Chris Huddelston/Anthony Cappellano 511; **Handicap Game:** Curtis Warner 269, Corey Inman 265, Brad Garner 246; **Handicap Series:** Curtis Warner 751, Brad Garner 678, Jeremy Dobkins 645. **Girls Scratch Game:** Michelle Garner 135, Brittany Rowe 109, Ashley Simpson 106; **Scratch Series:** Michelle Garner 354, Brittany Rowe 293, Ashley Simpson 289; **Handicap Game:** Brittany Rowe 208, Ashley Simpson 208, Michelle Garner 204; **Handicap Series:** Ashley Simpson 595, Brittany Rowe 590, Michelle Garner 561.

Plea continued from other side

of cost, is among the lowest five states in the nation for Medicaid reimbursement.

Since hospital officials cannot increase what Medicaid pays, the only way to offset the loss is to increase the number of patients, especially in the skilled nursing or swing bed area.

Swing beds are those nursing home beds in which skilled care, including such things as physical therapy, receive a higher rate of reimbursement.

Adding just two such patients per day would net \$270,000 for the hospital and nursing home, Caruso said. "We have to create an awareness in the community that you have a choice of where you receive or rehabilitation or post hospital stay care," he said.

Hoopeston's hospital is not the only one to face severe funding cuts and, as a result, services. "It becomes an issue not of 'you can't get it here,' but that you'll have a difficult time getting it anywhere within 30 miles of here," Caruso said.

While the cuts will certainly hurt the hospital, "the key message to the community is we're not closing," he said. Whether that will be true after two or three years of reduced funding remains to be seen, he added.

For more information on how the cuts will affect the hospital, residents may contact Caruso at (217) 283-5531.

Obituaries

LAWSON—Walter H. Lawson, 80, of Rossville, died at 1 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 8, 2001 at Veterans Affairs Illiana Health Care System, Danville. Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday at Wolfe Funeral Home and Cremation Center, Rossville. Burial with military graveside rites by the Hoopeston American Legion, will be in Rossville Cemetery. Visitation will be 4-8 p.m. Monday at the funeral home. Memorials are suggested to the Veterans of Danville.

Weather



Sunny today. High 45. Tonight, mostly clear. Low 30. Tomorrow, partly sunny, chance of rain late. High 50, low 32.

For current weather conditions, call the **Hoopeston Weather Line** at (217) 283-6221.

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