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Letter from the editor

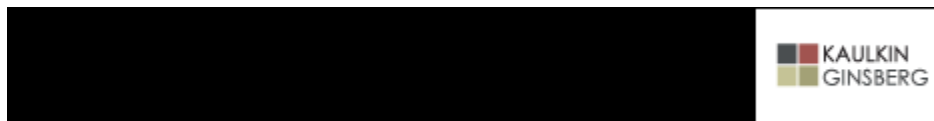
Good afternoon and welcome to CCRHealthLine. An estimated \$129 billion in bad debt generated annually by U.S. hospitals prompts some innovative thinking, both by collectors and providers. As seen in two stories this week, hospitals are increasingly likely to partner with banks to tackle their bad debt, both before and after accounts become delinquent. Collectors too are carving out new niches, as seen in this week's profile of an agency that purchases its clients' entire back-office operations, including hiring all the employees, and takes a cut of future savings. As always, we hope you enjoy CCRHealthLine and please send us your input by emailing me at Caitlin.devitt@sourcemediacom.com.

Caitlin Devitt
Editor, CCRHealthLine

HEADLINES, September 6, 2006

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Of \$129 Billion in Healthcare Bad Debt, Collectors Get \$42.6 Billion

<http://ccrmag.net/cgi-bin/readstory.pl?story=20060905CCWN958.xml>

Hospitals generate \$129 billion in bad debt a year, according to industry consultants Kaulkin Ginsberg, who say bad debt is "a big and costly headache to healthcare companies."

Exclusive: Arkansas Hospital Partners with Bank to Reduce Bad Debt

<http://ccrmag.net/cgi-bin/readstory.pl?story=20060906CCWN968.xml>

A small Arkansas hospital's inventive solution for patients who want to pay off high medical bills but lack the cash is to partner with a local bank that offers the patient a loan with a 6.5% interest rate

Exclusive: Collection Fees Not the Answer for This Healthcare Collector

<http://ccrmag.net/cgi-bin/readstory.pl?story=20060905CCWN959.xml>

One healthcare collections agency has an unusual business model: it hires all the hospital's billing and collections employees and buys all the equipment, including phone lines. Then, instead of keeping a percentage of money collected, the agency keeps a percentage of money saved in monthly department operations.

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\$35 Billion in Revenues Expected from HSAs by 2010

<http://ccrmag.net/cgi-bin/readstory.pl?story=20060906CCWN969.xml>

Within the next four years, more than 10 percent of insured Americans will hold health savings accounts, generating around \$35 billion in revenue, predict healthcare consultants speaking at a recent HSA conference.

GAO Report: Medical Privacy Breaches Top 40%

<http://ccrmag.net/cgi-bin/readstory.pl?story=20060906CCWN967.xml>

More than 40% of surveyed federal contractors and state Medicaid agencies reported to the

Government Accountability Office that they, or one of their vendors, experienced a privacy breach involving personal health information during 2004 or 2005.

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