

MedPAC Commissioners Named

Two Long-Time Health Professionals Join Group

Robert Berenson, MD, and Herb Kuhn are the latest appointments to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC), an organization created by Congress to examine cost and quality-of-care issues affecting Medicare.

MedPAC makes recommendations to Congress on payment rates for health plans participating in the Medicare Advantage program and providers in Medicare's traditional fee-for-service programs.

MedPAC has historically recommended a zero market basket increase for skilled nursing facilities.

Kuhn, who will complete the remaining year of Jack Ebeler's three-

year term that began in 2007, is an independent health care consultant specializing in Medicare and Medicaid issues. Ebeler resigned from MedPAC in March.



Kuhn

Kuhn served as deputy administrator to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) from 2006 to 2009 and as director of the agency's Center for Medicare Management from 2004 to 2006. The Missouri Hospital Association said Kuhn would be the association's fifth

president and chief executive officer (CEO), effective Sept. 1. Kuhn, 52, is replacing Marc Smith, who is retiring from the job he has held since January 1998.

From 2000 to 2004, Kuhn was cor-

porate vice president for the Premier health care alliance. That position followed a long stint working on federal advocacy for the American Hospital Association, from 1987 to 2000.

Kuhn also serves on the board of the Health Policy Institute at the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences.

Berenson, who will serve a three-year term through 2012, is senior fellow at the Urban Institute and an independent health care consultant specializing in Medicare and Medicaid issues. He worked from 1998 to 2000 as the director of the Center for Health Plans and Providers at CMS, then known as the Health Care Financing Administration. Prior to that, he was founder and medical director of the National Capital Preferred Provider Organization for a decade.

Berenson has authored many articles and books, including "Medicare Payment Policy and the Shaping of U.S. Health Care" with Rick Mayes. Berenson is a board-certified internist who practiced for 20 years.

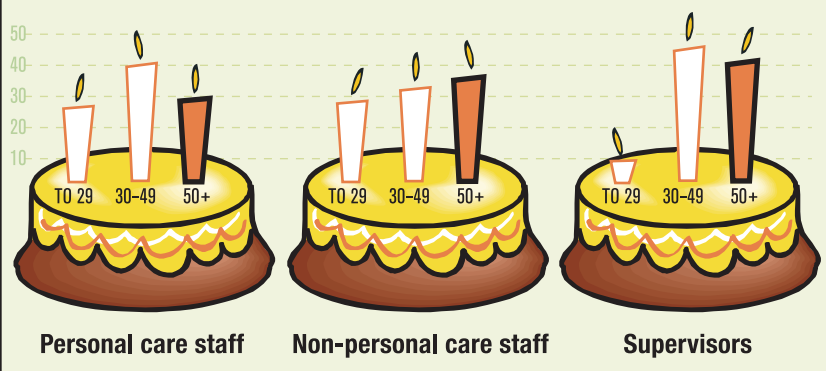
The American Health Care Association (AHCA) wants the two new appointees to pay attention to the increasing interdependence between Medicare and Medicaid funding.

"We look forward to working with Mr. Kuhn, Dr. Berenson, and the entire commission to discuss issues to ensure quality care for our nation's frail, elderly, and disabled, including a site-neutral Medicare payment system and other reforms to the Medicare system that would promote choice and preserve quality in America's nursing homes," said Bruce Yarwood, president and CEO of AHCA. Yarwood said Kuhn and Berenson "have been champions for health care for many years."

—Suzanne Struglinski

By The Numbers

Almost one in three assisted living employees 50 years or older



Based on employee responses to "What is your age?" and "What is your job category?"

Source: Assisted Living Employee Satisfaction Surveys conducted in 2008 by My InnerView.