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Digital health records incentive challenged by Rep. Joe Pitts

PITTSBURG POST GAZETTE: Four Republican House leaders— Pennsylvania Rep. Joe Pitts, R-Lancaster; Rep. Dave Camp, R-Mich.; Rep. Fred Upton, D-Mich.; and Rep. Wally Herger, R-Calif. — say they have serious concerns about an incentive system that “squanders taxpayer dollars and does little, if anything, to improve outcomes for Medicare.”

Much of the letter focused on the alleged ambiguity of recently published “meaningful use” criteria — the standards by which the federal government will judge whether hospitals and doctors have upgraded their electronic medical records systems in meaningful ways.

The congressmen also said that, despite the \$10 billion disbursed thus far in incentives, there is little proof that the IT system upgrades are helping the health care system move toward an interoperable digital system that can trade patients’ medical information...

EDITOR: *Pitts must be aware that Lancaster General Hospital is spending well over a hundred million dollars to create an area wide electronic health records system. Pitts should be concerned that that Congress failed to adopt a national standard to assure that all systems can be interconnected.*

To-do list for the next Pennsylvania attorney general

by Bill Keisling

The Sandusky / Penn State/ Corbett scandal

Complaints against Jerry Sandusky first were made in the 1990s. Why did Pennsylvania’s former attorney general, Tom Corbett, for years fail to file charges against Sandusky?...

The Second Mile and the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

In 1998 Centre County Children and Youth, supervised by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare Office of Children, Youth and Families, heard complaints that Jerry Sandusky was showering with a boy at Penn State. At the time, both the state and the county departments charged with protecting children for some reason dropped the ball. For years afterward, the state Department

of Public Welfare continued to refer disadvantaged youth to the Second Mile Charity. ...

The disappearance of Centre County District Attorney Ray Gricar

When Centre County DA Ray Gricar vanished from the face of the earth in April 2005, newly elected AG Tom Corbett refused to investigate. Instead, Corbett’s office suggested that DA Gricar had “wandered off.” As we now know, Gricar was a central figure in the botched investigation of Jerry Sandusky...

The Hershey Trust

In September 2011, the **Chronicle of Philanthropy** wrote, “For two decades neither the Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office nor the Internal Revenue Service has been willing to take serious action to

remedy the abuses that have plagued one of the wealthiest nonprofits in America, the Milton Hershey School for poor children.”

“It is one of the longest lingering scandals in the modern nonprofit world and one of the most glaring examples of the abuses of the public trust that can happen when regulators fail to keep a close eye on a charity’s governance.”

Conflicts of interest and malfeasance in Pennsylvania courts, and failure of the court’s disciplinary boards to investigate lawyers and judges

It took *The New York Times* to editorialize the obvious: *“Chief Justice Ronald Castille has a classic and flagrant conflict of interest: he is passing judgment on a prosecution that he approved and oversaw, and on a trial judge’s ruling that strongly censured that prosecution. He was the Philadelphia district attorney in 1986 and accountable for the serious misconduct that led to Mr. Williams’ death sentence.” ...*

What other misconduct do the state courts conceal?

York Pennsylvania courthouse corruption

Where to begin in York, Pennsylvania? Two former public officials, including the police commissioner, have long sought a criminal investigation of a prostitution ring centered around the county courthouse. As well, York County Judge Tom Kelley’s former girlfriend alleges that Judge Kelley broke her arm in a domestic dispute. The county DA referred the case to the AG’s office, which has refused to take action against Kelley.

York County insiders complain the state AG’s office has long protected the courthouse corruption, and state courts.

Patronage at the Pennsylvania Turnpike

The current turnpike Executive Director, Brian Nutt, for example, is the father of Gov. Corbett’s former chief of staff, Brian Nutt. It’s time for a top-down investigation of patronage practices at the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission.

Good news for the Convention Center; room tax receipts jump

The 2012 Lancaster County Room Rental Tax and Excise Tax collections are up by \$362,268 for the year through August as compared with 2011, an increase of 9%.

Collections in August came to \$844,089 for the month compared to \$774,997 for August the prior year, again a jump of 9%

Kudos to the Intell for articles on presidential debate the next morning

The debate wasn’t over until 10:30 pm and it must have taken another hour at least to receive articles from McClachy Newspapers and the Associated Press, but somehow the intrepid Lancaster Newspaper’s staff featured them on the front page of the next morning newspaper.

The above items have been excerpted from www.NewsLanc.com. Visit the website daily for news, commentary, letters, and other features. Suggestions and letters can be sent anonymously through the home page.