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***The Critical Care News Summary is an update from The Roundtable on Critical Care Policy. For further information on the Roundtable, please visit our website at [www.CriticalCareRoundtable.org](http://www.CriticalCareRoundtable.org).***

## **Critical Care Awareness & Recognition Month: Profiles in Critical Care**

In honor of National Critical Care Awareness and Recognition Month, we will be profiling our Roundtable participants in our News Summaries throughout May.



Vicky Kark, second from left, with Congressman Leonard Lance (R-NJ) at the Roundtable's Congressional Breakfast & Washington Outreach Day. As a result of the March 8th meeting, Congressman Lance signed on as an original co-sponsor of the Critical Care Assessment and Improvement Act.

A syndicated columnist for ADVANCE for Nurses, Vicky writes about nursing research and publishes widely on the topics of critical care, trauma and cardiac surgery, and also lectures for the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses and multiple local, regional, and national meetings. Vicky is the only two-time recipient of ADVANCE for Nurses' "Best Nursing Team" award for two different cardiac surgery units.

### **Profiles in Critical Care: VICTORIA A. KARK, RN, MSN, CCRN, CCNS**

Vicky Kark, RN, MSN, CCRN, CCNS, CSC, a nurse for 36 years, has been a part of the Roundtable since its inception in October of 2009, when she participated on a panel on the adequacy of the critical care workforce at the National Summit on U.S. Critical Care Policy. As Vicky tells it, "critical care is one of the most technically advanced areas of medicine. Nurses working in this environment must not only possess the high tech-skills necessary to adeptly utilize medical technology, but also must have the ability to provide high touch care to their patients."

As a co-chair of the Roundtable's Working Group on National Preparedness & Infrastructure, Vicky has been instrumental in helping the group to identify challenges and needs for optimizing delivery of high-quality critical care services in the event of a major public health crisis. "Critical care nursing is vital to the field of medicine because it creates safe passage for critically ill patients," says Vicky. "It is, perhaps, one of the most integrated areas of healthcare since it fosters an environment of collaboration among all healthcare providers, resulting in the provision of the best patient care possible."

Currently employed at Dimensions Health Care System as the nurse manager mentor for the NSP I grant, Vicky is a doctoral student at the Catholic University of America, and a graduate of Alexandria Hospital School of Nursing, the University of Maryland (BSN), and the Catholic University of America (MSN). She has been on the faculty at Georgetown University and Columbia Union College.

## National Summit Update

Following the tremendous success of the Roundtable on Critical Care Policy's March 8<sup>th</sup> [Congressional Breakfast & Washington Outreach Day](#), the Roundtable is pleased to announce the **Third Annual National Summit on Critical Care Policy on Wednesday, June 8, 2011, at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, DC**. The critical care community has already begun to have a voice and impact in the current federal policy environment, and the Summit will provide a timely forum for select thought-leaders to focus on policy and action priorities to optimize federal policy impacting the delivery of U.S. critical care.

Yesterday we announced that Ronald Brownstein, Political Director for Atlantic Media (publishers of The Atlantic Monthly, National Journal, and The Hotline, among other publications) will be the luncheon keynote speaker at our Third Annual National Summit on Critical Care Policy on June 8th. Mr. Brownstein is a leading inside-the-beltway voice on politics, the media and health care. As you may know, the National Journal recently began a three-part polling and policy series entitled "Living Well at the End of Life: A National Journal Discussion." As part of this series, the National Journal – in conjunction with the Regence Foundation – released polling data on Americans' thoughts and attitudes on end-of-life care. Ronald Brownstein will join us to discuss these findings as well as provide his perspective on the political challenges to having a dialogue on this important issue. Stay tuned for more speaker announcements!

***Space is limited! [Register today for the Third Annual National Summit on Critical Care Policy!](#)***

## Roundtable News

During one of our Washington Outreach Day meetings on March 8<sup>th</sup>, we learned that the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions (HELP) may act this year to reauthorize the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA), which governs the public health emergency preparedness and response activities at the Department of Health and Human Services. Though the Committee is currently in the beginning stages of drafting the reauthorizing legislation, PAHPA represents an important opportunity to improve our nation's public health and medical preparedness and response capabilities. As such, the Roundtable has sent a letter to the Committee with the Roundtable's legislative recommendations to improve federal disaster preparedness efforts to care for the critically ill or injured, and urging the Committee to incorporate some of the preparedness provisions included in the Critical Care Assessment and Improvement Act of 2011 into the updated PAHPA language. To view the letter sent on May 5<sup>th</sup>, please click [here](#).

## Capitol Hill Events and Updates

On Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Senate Republicans unveiled their blueprint for creating private sector growth and strengthen the economy. On the healthcare front, the plan seeks to "pursue reforms that reduce costs further to stop the job losses occurring because of the skyrocketing cost of care," proposing to: repeal "ObamaCare"; enact meaningful medical malpractice reform; allow for purchases of insurance across state lines; provide additional risk pools for small business; and strengthen Health Savings Accounts and patient-centric health care. To view the full plan, championed by Senator Rob Portman (R-OH), please click [here](#).

**Senate Appropriations Committee: Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee  
Hearing on the Budget for the National Institutes of Health**

*The Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies will hold a hearing on the budget for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Witnesses include NIH Director Francis Collins.*

**Date:** Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>  
**Time:** 10:00 a.m.  
**Location:** 124 Dirksen Senate Office Building

**House Appropriations Committee: Defense Subcommittee Hearing on Defense Department Health Affairs**

*The House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense will hold a hearing on Defense Department health affairs. Witnesses include Assistant Defense Secretary for Health Affairs Jonathan Woodson; Surgeon General of the Army Lt. Gen. Eric Schoomaker; Surgeon General of the Navy Vice Adm. Adam Robinson Jr.; and Surgeon General of the Air Force Lt. Gen. Charles Green.*

**Date:** Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>  
**Time:** 10:00 a.m.  
**Location:** 2359 Rayburn House Office Building

**House Homeland Security Committee: Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications hearing: "Taking Measure of Countermeasures (Part 2): A Review of Efforts to Protect the Homeland Through Distribution and Dispensing of CBRN Medical Countermeasures"**

*The Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications will hold a hearing entitled "Taking Measure of Countermeasures (Part 2): A Review of Efforts to Protect the Homeland Through Distribution and Dispensing of CBRN Medical Countermeasures."*

**Date:** Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>  
**Time:** 2:00 p.m.  
**Location:** 311 Cannon House Office Building

**House Ways and Means Committee: Health Subcommittee Hearing on New Models for Delivering and Paying for Services that Physicians Furnish to Medicare Beneficiaries**

*The House Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health will hold a hearing on new models for delivery and paying for services that physicians furnish to Medicare beneficiaries. Witnesses to be announced.*

**Date:** Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>  
**Time:** 2:00 p.m.  
**Location:** 1100 Longworth House Office Building

## Federal Activity

### **"Majority of U.S. hospitals meet all-hazards preparedness measures," (Press Release) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, May 5<sup>th</sup> 2011**

More than 76 percent of hospitals participating in the National Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) met 90 percent or more of all program measures for all-hazards preparedness in 2009, according to a report released Thursday by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response. *From Hospitals to Healthcare Coalitions: Transforming Health Preparedness and Response in Our Communities*, the program's first state-by-state report, identifies the advances that states have made in preparing hospitals for all types of disasters. The report also discusses the next steps the program will take to boost community resilience.

To view the full report, please click [here](#).

## News and Reports

### **"Doc-pay solution a high priority: Upton," *ModernHealthcare.com*, May 5, 2011**

The American Medical Association delivered a three-pronged approach to changing the Medicare physician payment formula during a congressional hearing last Thursday to examine the issue reform proposal to lawmakers. The proposal calls for: the immediate repeal of the Medicare sustainable growth rate formula; the implementation of a five-year period of "stable payments;" and the immediate testing of new payment models, many called for by health reform, that will lay the pathway for permanent physician payment reforms by Sept. 30, 2015. AMA's plan comes in response to the House Energy and Commerce Committee's call for providers to draft legislative proposals by the end of April to permanently reform the embattled SGR policy.

To view the hearing testimony of AMA President Cecil Wilson, outlining AMA's three-part approach, please click [here](#).

### **"Race, Ethnicity May Influence ICU End-of-Life Care," *DoctorsLounge.com/HealthDay News*, May 4, 2011**

Racial and ethnic differences that are independent of socioeconomic status may be present in end-of-life care in intensive care units (ICU), according to a study published in the May issue of *Chest*. The study found that nonwhite patients were less likely to have a living will and more likely to die while on full support. Researchers said treatment preferences and values may account for some of the differences but added "others may represent disparities in health care at the end of life."

To view the study, "The Influence of Race/Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status on End-of-Life Care in the ICU," published in the May issue of *Chest*, please click [here](#). (Subscription required.)

### **"More nurses become certified in different areas of expertise," *The Patriot-News (Harrisburg, Pa.)*, May 3, 2011**

More registered nurses today are becoming specialists and even new RNs are seeking a critical care certification, which can enhance the quality of the hospital workforce. Nursing experts say such specialization reflects the fact that more patients are hospitalized with medically complex conditions that require advanced technical nursing skills.