

Blue Cross Lashes Back at Medicaid Claim Critics

By Harrison Weber
Iowa Daily Press Assn.

DES MOINES — Blue Cross is DES MOINES — Blue Cross is doing its best to get the program off the ground. It is not being able to provide Medicaid payments.

For months the Des Moines organization has been the target of stinging criticism for inept processing of claims for Medicaid, which is for people over 65 and the medically indigent.

Blue Cross President William Guy feels much of the criticism is unwarranted.

He points the finger of blame, in part, on the state for not being able to provide Blue Cross with an accurate record of those Iowans eligible to receive Medicaid payments.

Although the program

started last July, Blue Cross did not receive an eligibility tape to run through its computers until November. Even after 11 months' operation the state has not been able to provide Blue Cross with a list of everyone eligible to receive Medicaid payments.

18,000 Backlog

Guy said this is the key reason for the foul-up and why there are approximately 18,000 claims that date back 90 days or more that haven't been processed.

"It's ridiculous to think that Blue Cross, which is handling nearly 1.2 million individual accounts, can't handle the Medicaid program which con-

sists of about 125,000 people," Guy said in an interview.

"The Medicaid program should be relatively simple to administer, if we are ever told who is eligible," he said.

A fair number of vendors, such as druggists, still do not understand that they can't be paid until the state determines whether the person who submitted the claim is eligible for assistance, Guy said.

Blue Cross, under its arrangement with the state, is paid 92 cents for each claim processed. After checking each claim for accuracy, certain information is put on magnetic tape by Blue Cross employees.

This tape is then checked

against the eligibility tape provided by the state. If a person's name is not on the eligibility tape, then Blue Cross can not pay the claim.

This week 20,000 old claims were run through the Blue Cross computer. Guy said 12,000 claims were "kicked out" by the computer for being inaccurate.

Nearly 5,000 of the 12,000 claims were rejected because the names of the claimants were not on the eligibility tape provided to Blue Cross by the state.

County Role

While the state board of social welfare sets out the eligibility guidelines, the county boards of social

welfare must determine the merits of each individual case.

Blue Cross contends it has been hampered in reducing this backlog of claims because the state board of social welfare (which is being combined with the state board of control into the state department of social services) has stipulated that the private organization may not contact either county welfare offices or the vendors about inaccurate claims.

Guy estimated there are 85,000 outstanding claims including 32,000 which have been "kicked out" by the computer for one reason or another. "But," he continued, "if Blue Cross could send back to the state or the vendors the 18,000

old claims received 90 days ago or longer, we could be current on the remaining claims within one week."

Maurice A. Harmon, newly-appointed director of the state department of social services, said he has "no complaint about Blue Cross at this point."

Harmon said this is a "very complex" matter and "I do not choose to blame anyone for the backlog of unpaid claims."

5 Percent

The state official pointed out that less than 5 percent of the claims are unpaid. He feels the state, Blue Cross and others are making "good pro-

gress" at reducing this backlog.

"Only this morning we had a meeting with some nursing home operators who told us they were beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel," Harmon said.

"Admittedly," he said, "it's bad that claims dating back to July and August haven't been paid. But," Harmon continued, "compared to the whole, that's a small number of the amount."

The state director of social services also noted that since the program began last July some 559,000 cases had been processed with benefits totaling over \$14 million.

Field auditors for the department of social welfare are being called into Des Moines to help examine the program "to see what went wrong with the claims," Harmon said.

"We've given this top priority in our accounting department," he added.

Last March the state retained a data processing consultant firm to help smooth out the Medicaid program. The firm is expected to make its report shortly.

But in the end, both state officials and Blue Cross representatives know that these old claims will have to be processed "by pencil and paper" rather than by a computer and this takes time.

Memorial Programs Scheduled

TAMA-TOLEDO — Memorial day services in Tama and Toledo Thursday will be sponsored jointly by the American Legion posts and their auxiliaries of Tama and Toledo and the Tama-Toledo Veterans of Foreign Wars post and its auxiliary.

Joint memorial services will be in Oak Hill cemetery, Tama, at 9:30 a.m., followed by a memorial prayer and military salute at St. Patrick's cemetery between the two towns at 10:15 a.m. Appearance on the court-house lawn in Toledo will be at 10:45 a.m. and a program at Woodlawn cemetery, Toledo, will begin at 11 a.m. Customary dropping of a wreath from the Iowa river bridge, Tama, into the water in memory of deceased navy veterans will be at 11:30 a.m.

The Avenue of Flags will be displayed at the three cemeteries.

McGregor

McGREGOR — Memorial day services, sponsored by the American Legion post 267 and Armvets post 108, will be held Thursday morning.

All veterans are to meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Legion hall. Memorial services will be at 9 a.m. at St. Mary's cemetery and at 9:30 a.m. The Mar-Mac band, Scout troops and veterans will march from the Mar-Mac high school to the river front for a service. Services will be held at 10:30 a.m. at Pleasant Grove cemetery.

Manchester

MANCHESTER — A Memorial day parade will form at the west end of West Union street at 10 a.m. The navy dead will be honored when Mrs. Roy Sheppard places a wreath on the Maquoketa river. The parade will then move to St. Mary's and Oakland cemeteries. Wreaths will be placed by Hubert Swift at St. Mary's and Thomas Tracey at Oakland. The Legion will sponsor the services but many organizations will participate.

Maynard

MAYNARD — The Rev. Arnold Thalacker, pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran, will speak at a program Thursday at Long Grove cemetery. The West Central band and Legion members will march from the Community hall to the cemetery at 9:45 a.m.

Earlier a short service will be conducted at the Center Grove cemetery 3 miles north of Maynard and at the north bridge.

West Union

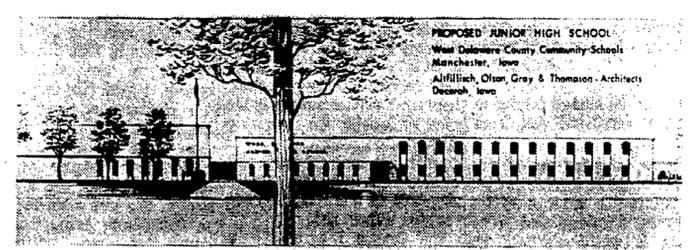
WEST UNION — The Legion will be in charge of services at 8:30 a.m. Thursday at Auburn cemetery; 9 a.m. at Eldorado; 9:30 a.m. at Mt. Calvary and 10 a.m. West Union cemetery. The Rev. Gene Crooks, pastor of Bethel Presbyterian, will speak at Auburn and West Union; the Rev. Richard Zellmer at Eldorado and the Rev. Eugene Weimer at Mt. Calvary.

The Cedar Rapids Gazette

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Okay Bonds

A proposal to issue \$1,200,000 in bonds to construct a new junior high school in Manchester was approved in the West Delaware district Tuesday. The vote was 1,352 yes, 801 no for a favorable percentage of 62.9. The vote by areas was Manchester, 1,101 yes, 485 no; Greeley, 907 yes, 33 no; Dundee, 13 yes, 101 no; Masonville, 46 yes, 86 no; Ryan, 95 yes, 98 no. The building is to be completed by the fall of 1969.

Englert Tract Decision Is Due June 6 in Iowa City

IOWA CITY — The Iowa City Planning and Zoning Commission has decided to hold a special session to take action on rezoning and preliminary "planned area development" of the Englert tract in the northern part of the city. That special meeting has been set for 7:30 p.m. June 6.

More Details

Another member, Lane Mashaw, insisted that unless the commission considered both the rezoning and preliminary plan necessary to satisfy the ordinance, he could not vote favorable on rezoning. The extra time for the special meeting was granted to allow the developer to further detail the plans and to include the Taft Speedway green strip.

Apartment Houses

Downer said the plan provides for three apartment house sites, 19 lots for town houses, and an approximate 4.6 acres for open spaces. Proposed were 220 apartment units and 110 townhouse units. According to the plan, this would average about 3,000 square feet for each family unit.

Drunk Driving

TOLEDO — Richard E. Collette, Des Moines, charged with drunk driving Sunday on highway 30 in east Tama county, was bound to the district court by Mayor Jim Sorensen of Tama. Collette was arrested by Highway Patrolman Jim Smith of Toledo. Collette is free on the bond.

Fixed \$40 Auto License Fee Urged by Road Unit

DES MOINES (AP) — A legislative committee is studying a recommendation calling for the cost of a license for every passenger car in Iowa to be fixed at \$40 a year, regardless of value, size or age.

Iowa highway commission officials made the suggestion Tuesday to a committee studying interstate truck financing.

Currently, the state's 1.3 million car owners pay license fees on the basis of weight of the vehicle and its dollar value. The fee starts going down after a car reaches a certain age.

Officials said the average registration fee in 1967 was \$28.23.

The highway commission officials said the proposed boost would increase license revenue from \$36.5 million to \$51.5 million a year.

They said the additional money is badly needed for highways, roads and streets in the state.

The highway officials also recommended that the license fee on trucks of up to four tons

North English

NORTH ENGLISH — A Memorial day program will be held at 10 a.m. at the North English cemetery. In case of bad weather, the program will be held in the junior high gymnasium. The Rev. Berwyn Oltman will speak and various groups will participate in the program.

ATKINS

ATKINS — The Legion and auxiliary will sponsor the annual Memorial day program at 9 a.m. in the Memorial hall. The Rev. Paul K. Figge will speak. Short programs at St. Stephen's and Raetz cemeteries will follow.

GUTTENBERG

GUTTENBERG — Clayton County Sheriff Milton Klink is investigating the theft of seven outboard motors from boats tied along the Mississippi river here.

The motors were taken Monday night. Three of the motors belonged to Guttenberg residents; the other four to persons from out of town. The boats were all in an area above the locks.

It reportedly has been a common practice to leave the motors on the boats when they are tied up.

Downer said the proposed use

is medium density and in line with recommendations in the "North Side Study". R-3 zone

Presently, the fee for any truck

is \$25 a year. The proposal also calls for a straight \$25 a ton fee for vehicles of eight tons or more. A 36-ton unit therefore would be registered for \$900. The proposal also would cut the fee on the trailer to \$5.

Thus, the combined truck-trailer vehicle would be licensed at \$905 — only \$10 more than at present.

Highways Director Joseph Coupal told the committee the reasoning behind the single \$40 per car fee is that a "Volkswagen gets as much use from the highway as does a Cadillac."

He added there is no reason to collect a larger registration fee on a bigger car because the difference in weights among cars is of no significance in wear and tear on the highways.

"The difference in weights among vehicles under 6,000 pounds is almost impossible to measure," he said.

Senate Okays Aid for Iowa's Storm Victims

WASHINGTON (AP) — The senate gave approval Tuesday to three amendments to the house and urban development bill which could bring substantial relief to victims of recent tornadoes in Iowa, Sen. Jack Miller (R-Iowa) reports.

He said the bipartisan amendments cover victims of "major disasters" occurring after Jan. 1.

Under two of the amendments, homeowners, farmers and businessmen would no longer be required to obtain a certificate that they cannot borrow money from normal private sources to repair property damage.

Instead, Miller said, they would be authorized to borrow money at low interest rates from the Farmers Home Administration or the Small Business Administration.

Under the third amendment, homeowners or tenants whose residences have been made uninhabitable or destroyed by a major disaster would be furnished housing, including mobile homes, by the federal government at a monthly rental not exceeding 25 percent of the family's monthly income.

The Vote

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican Sens. Bourke Hickenlooper and Jack Miller of Iowa voted with the majority Tuesday as the senate passed a \$5 billion omnibus housing bill which includes major new subsidies designed to help poor families to buy homes or rent apartments.

Three Iowans Die in Viet

By Associated Press

The war in Vietnam has claimed the lives of three more Iowans, the Defense department reports. The latest victims:

Navy Hospital Corpsman Ronald G. Swain, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. Leslie D. Swain of Des Moines, who was killed May 20. He was a 1965 graduate of Saydel high school and entered the navy in 1966.

—Army Spec. 4 Alvin Van Riesen, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wessel Van Riesen of Sheldon, who was killed Sunday when a truck he was driving struck a land mine. Van Riesen, a Sheldon high school graduate, joined the army in August of 1966, and had been in Vietnam since last August.

—Army Sgt. Donald E. Nelson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Norman C. Nelson of Ames, who was killed in action May 23. No details of the death were available.

Eastern Iowans To Attend UNI German Institute

CEDAR FALLS — Twenty-seven elementary and secondary school German teachers have been selected to participate in a four-week summer institute for teachers of German at the University of Northern Iowa.

The institute is designed to provide the teachers with intensive training in understanding and speaking German and to increase each individual's skills as much as possible in a congenial German atmosphere.

Scheduled for June 10 through July 3, the institute will offer participants four semester hours of graduate credit.

East Iowans who will participate in the institute include:

Ann Hale, Cedar Rapids, a teacher at Shellsburg; Nina Rebasoo, Decorah teacher; Mary Stegen, Decorah, a UNI student.

Susan Smith, Iowa City teacher; Barbara Reudy, Middle, a UNI student; Rose Turner, MFL teacher; Charles Silliman, Mt. Vernon teacher; Wilhelmine Kuennen, Waucoma, a West Union teacher; Clara Boeckenhauer, West Union, Allamakee Community teacher.

Monona Man is Aboard Scorpion

MONONA — A Monona man is one of four Iowans aboard the overdue nuclear submarine Scorpion.

He is Steven LeRoy Johnson, 23, a first class communications electrician, who has been in the navy since 1964.

Johnson is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Leland Johnson, who farm 4 miles east of Monona.

The Monona man was the latest Iowan to be listed as a member of the crew. The others, listed earlier, are Machinists Mate David Stone, son of Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Stone of Ames; Commissary Seaman Johnny Veerhusen, son of Johnny Veerhusen, jr., of Carroll, and Electronics Technician 2-c Kenneth Martin, son of the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Martin of College Springs.

Under Estimates

IOWA CITY — Bids were opened Tuesday afternoon on the proposed remodeling of the northwest section of the university's Quadrangle dormitory, and according to University Architect George Horner they were below preliminary estimates.

He indicated the low bidder on the general contract was Fane Wawter and Company of Des Moines with a bid of \$279,866.

Other low bidders were Jackson Electric of Iowa City, \$43,780 for the electrical work; Larew Co., of Iowa City \$71,500 for the mechanical contract; and Great Western Automatic Sprinkler Co. of Davenport, \$23,690 for the sprinkler system.

Final action on the bids must be taken by the board of regents.

Bates To Seek G.O.P. Nod for Seat in House

IOWA CITY — Former longtime City high football coach Frank Bates Wednesday announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination for state representative from Johnson county's west district.

Bates, who is 61, currently is director of physical education and health, in the local school system. He came to Iowa City in 1943 and formerly served two terms on the University Heights town council.

Bates, who has the endorsement of the G.O.P. central committee, said the indifference of good people disturbs him and that he hopes to make the people conscious of problems that do exist.

He is the only Republican to announce for the post so far.

Attorney Edward Mezvinsky, of Iowa City, is seeking the Democratic nomination.

Clinton County-City Building Is Approved

CLINTON (AP) — Clinton county voters Tuesday gave 69 percent approval to a \$627,000 bond issue to finance a county-city law enforcement center. The vote was 4,269 to 1,918.

The proposed center will house the Clinton city police department, the county sheriff's office, a civil defense headquarters and a jail.

Voters in the county previously had defeated three bond issues for a new county jail.

Wyoming Governor To Speak at Ray Dinner

DES MOINES — Gov. Stanley Hathaway of Wyoming will be the speaker at a \$50-a-plate dinner here for Robert Ray, candidate for the Republican nomination for governor.

The "Bob Ray Dinner" will be at 8 p.m. June 13 at Fort Des Moines hotel.

Like Ray, Governor Hathaway is a former Republican state chairman who, again like Ray, had served in several key party posts as he rose to the top position in his state Republican organization.

Governor Hathaway's wife, the former Roberta Harley, is from Sioux City.

Former State Senator Jack Schroeder of Davenport is general chairman of the "Bob Ray Dinner," assisted by John Rehmman of Des Moines.

Dyersville Airport Bonds Are Rejected

DYERSVILLE — Voters in Dyersville Tuesday rejected a \$20,000 issue to acquire a site for a municipal airport and develop it. The vote was 473 against the airport and 350 for its construction.

Frank Bates



Chafee To Speak At Iowa G.O.P. Session June 5

DES MOINES — Gov. John Chafee of Rhode Island will give the keynote address at the Republican state convention here June 5, G.O.P. State Chairman Jack Warren, Waterloo, said Tuesday.

Chafee, 45, serving his third term as governor, will deliver the speech during the opening session of the convention at Veteran's Memorial auditorium. Activities begin the evening of June 4 with district caucuses where members of the State Central committee will be elected, and the convention convenes at 10 a.m. Wednesday.

Chafee, who served with the U.S. marine corps during World War II and the Korean conflict, was elected to his first two-year term as Rhode Island governor in 1962, and then won re-election despite the landslide in 1964. In winning that year, Chafee became the first Republican governor of Rhode Island to serve two successive terms in 34 years. Chafee also won his third term in 1966, gathering 64 percent of the vote.

Chafee, who is chairman of the Republican Governors' Assn. and a member of the Republican Coordinating committee, began his political career with three terms in the Rhode Island General Assembly, including one term as minority leader.

A graduate of Yale college and the Harvard law school, Chafee is married and the father of four sons and two daughters.

Quadrangle Bids

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