

FEDERAL NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



✓ Their names are listed in the Medicare Participating Physician/Supplier Directory, which is furnished to senior citizen groups.

Non-participating providers are advised they can charge beneficiaries no more than 115 percent of the Medicare allowance.

In January of 1995, 72.3 percent of Oklahoma's physicians were participating in the program, now as of January 1996, that number has climbed to 76.1 percent.

—US DEPT. OF HHS
05/22/96

TRANSPORTATION

FHWA IDENTIFIES NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM CONNECTIONS TO INTERMODAL TERMINALS IN ALL STATES

■(WASHINGTON) Rodney E. Slater, Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Tuesday announced that National Highway System (NHS) connections to major passenger and freight intermodal terminals have been identified for all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

"Once we submitted our proposed NHS map to Congress, the department embarked on additional work to ensure that the system would include important highway linkages with all major passenger and freight intermodal terminals," said Slater.

The National Highway System Designation Act of 1995, signed by President Clinton last November, includes 161,108 miles of important rural and urban roads, including some connections to major intermodal terminals. Congressional approval is needed to modify the NHS to include the additional 1,925 miles of rural and urban roads that will provide the connections to other major intermodal terminals.

—US DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
05/22/96

GOVERNMENT/INDUSTRY COALITION FORMED FOR AIR BAG SAFETY

■(WASHINGTON) Secretary of Transportation Federico Pena Tuesday announced the formation of an unprecedented coalition of

automobile manufacturers, air bag suppliers, insurance companies, safety organizations and the federal government to prevent injuries and fatalities which may be inadvertently caused by air bags, especially to children.

Coalition members have pledged almost \$10 million to pursue a three-point program:

✓ An extensive national effort to educate drivers, parents and care-givers about seat belt and child safety seat use in all motor vehicles, with special emphasis on those equipped with air bags.

✓ A campaign to convince states to pass primary seat belt use laws. Under such a primary law, police officers need no other reason to stop a driver and issue a ticket than failure to use a seat belt. Only 12 states have primary laws. Thirty-seven states currently have secondary belt laws, meaning that police may cite belt law offenders only if first stopped for some other violation.

✓ Activities at state and local levels to increase enforcement of all seat belt and child seat use laws, such as increased public information and use of belt checkpoints.

Air bags are an important safety advance that have saved some 1,500 lives since the late 1980s, said Secretary Pena. However, NHTSA is aware of at least 19 cases in which a child either in a rear-facing infant seat or riding improperly belted was killed by a deploying air bag.

"Infants in rear-facing child safety seats should never be placed in the front seat if the vehicle has a passenger-side air bag," said Ricardo Martinez, M.D., administrator of the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

All passenger cars must offer dual front air bags by model year 1998, and light trucks the following year. Virtually every new passenger vehicle sold today comes equipped with at least a driver-side air bag, and many already offer dual air bags in the front seat.

—US DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
05/22/96

FAA RELEASES CHALLENGE 2000 FINDINGS

■(WASHINGTON) The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will streamline its rule making process, revamp its Regulation and Certification organization, and build world centers of excellence in aviation safety, as part of a plan to keep the agency apace with the rapidly evolving aviation industry as America enters the 21st century.

"The FAA must prepare now to meet the combined challenges of rapidly changing technologies, and unprecedented growth in air travel in the future," FAA Administrator David R. Hinson said recently while unveiling the findings of the Challenge 2000 project, an exhaustive review of how FAA responds to changing needs in the aviation industry. "That's why last year I asked two independent sources to take a top-to-bottom look at our safety regulation and certification operation."

Praising the impressive U.S. aviation safety record, the Challenge 2000 report notes that if the present accident rate remains constant while demand for air travel grows at a rate of approximately five percent annually over the next decade, there will be an increase in the number of aviation accidents in the next 10 to 15 years. Achieving the FAA's "zero accident rate" will require a new sense of purpose on the part of the FAA and the industry it regulates, the report states.

Hinson said he was gratified to learn that some of the key recommendations in Challenge 2000 are efforts that the FAA already has begun. He noted that the recommendation to create teams comprised of experts in a special area to expedite rule making echoes the approach that was taken in publishing the "one level of safety" Commuter Rule Safety Initiative in a record 11 months. He noted that the task force recommendations also call for strengthening the partnerships between FAA and air carriers and manufacturers, which complements the FAA's philosophy that zero accidents can only be achieved through a shared responsibility with all segments of the aviation community.

—FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
05/23/96



"You are remembered for the rules you break."

Douglas MacArthur