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LOBBYING REPORT

Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (Section 5) - All Filers Are Required To Complete This Page

1. Registrant Name Baker Healthcare Consulting, Inc.			
2. Address <input type="checkbox"/> Check if different than previously reported One American Square, Suite 2000, Box 82058			
3. Principal Place of Business (if different from line 2) City: Indianapolis State/Zip (or Country) IN 46282			
4. Contact Name Dale E. Baker	Telephone 317-631-3613	E-mail (optional) bakerhealthcare@yahoo.com	5. Senate ID # 5164
7. Client Name <input type="checkbox"/> Self Middletown Regional Hospital			6. House ID # 33560

TYPE OF REPORT 8. Year 2000 Midyear (January 1-June 30) OR Year End (July 1-December 31)

9. Check if this filing amends a previously filed version of this report
 10. Check if this is a Termination Report ⇒ Termination Date _____ 11. No Lobbying Activity

INCOME OR EXPENSES - Complete Either Line 12 OR Line 13	
<p>12. Lobbying Firms</p> <p>INCOME relating to lobbying activities for this reporting period was:</p> <p>Less than \$10,000 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$10,000 or more <input type="checkbox"/> ⇒ \$ _____ <small>Income (nearest \$20,000)</small></p> <p>Provide a good faith estimate, rounded to the nearest \$20,000, of all lobbying related income from the client (including all payments to the registrant by any other entity for lobbying activities on behalf of the client).</p>	<p>13. Organizations</p> <p>EXPENSES relating to lobbying activities for this reporting period were:</p> <p>Less than \$10,000 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>\$10,000 or more <input type="checkbox"/> ⇒ \$ _____ <small>Expenses (nearest \$20,000)</small></p> <p>14. REPORTING METHOD. Check box to indicate expense accounting method. See instructions for description of options.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Method A. Reporting amounts using LDA definitions only</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Method B. Reporting amounts under section 6033(b)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Method C. Reporting amounts under section 162(e) of the Internal Revenue Code</p>

Signature _____
 Printed Name and Title DALE E. BAKER, President

Registrant Name Baker Healthcare Consulting Client Name Middletown Regional Hospital

Information Update Page - Complete ONLY where registration information has changed.

20. Client new address

21. Client new principal place of business (if different from line 20)

City _____ State/Zip (or Country) _____

22. New general description of client's business or activities

LOBBYIST UPDATE

23. Name of each previously reported individual who is no longer expected to act as a lobbyist for the client

ISSUE UPDATE

24. General lobbying issues previously reported that no longer pertain

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

25. Add the following affiliated organization(s)

Name	Address	Principal Place of Business (city and state or country)

26. Name of each previously reported organization that is no longer affiliated with the registrant or client

FOREIGN ENTITIES

27. Add the following foreign entities

Name	Address	Principal place of business (city and state or country)	Amount of contribution for lobbying activities	Ownership percentage in client

28. Name of each previously reported foreign entity that no longer owns, or controls, or is affiliated with the registrant, client or affiliated organization

Signature Dale E. Baker Date 8/14/00

Printed Name and Title Dale E. Baker, President

**COUNTYWIDE RECLASSIFICATION GROUP
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 1989 Congress established the Medicare Geographic Classification Review Board and specifically instructed the Department of Health and Human Services, Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) to provide for countywide reclassifications. Accordingly, HCFA established criteria to demonstrate that countywide costs are "comparable" to the area to which the county seeks redesignation. Because there were no target Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) costs available on a current basis, HCFA chose to develop formulas comparing countywide costs per discharge to the Prospective Payment System (PPS) rates that hospitals were paid in both the home geographic area and secondly, the rate they would be paid if the hospitals were reclassified. If the countywide cost per case exceeded the base rate plus 75% of the difference between the base rate and the reclassified rate -- then the county hospitals met this criteria for reclassification. HCFA used *rates as a proxy* for costs.

In FFY 1995 twenty-three counties were granted countywide reclassifications. Starting in 1996, the number of countywide reclassifications began to plummet until only five counties were reclassified for FFY 1999 and FFY 2000. Four of the five counties reclassified in FFY 2000 are in New Jersey; the fifth is Orange County, New York, one county north of New Jersey.

The reason for the decrease in countywide reclassifications is that the proxy doesn't work anymore. The 1988 data used in formulating this policy indicated PPS rates were only 2.7% higher than PPS unit costs. Current cost data indicates that these formerly reclassified counties generally have input costs (as measured by the average hourly wage) and output costs (costs per discharge) that are just as comparable to their target MSAs as the costs were in 1988. The proxy no longer works because of environmental and resulting structural changes in hospitals. Many hospitals have opened post acute care units (SNF, psych, rehab, home health) and now allocate fixed overhead costs to these newer units instead of the fixed costs being fully absorbed by the PPS unit. The result of this is that counties are denied reclassification simply because of the changes in how medicine is practiced in the late 90's compared to earlier years.

HCFA was informed of this problem last year during the regulatory comment period and failed to even acknowledge the issue.

We ask that a legislative solution be enacted for FFY 2000 for hospitals that filed with the MGCRCB for FFY 2000 and meet the revised criteria. This would primarily affect Lake County, Indiana (Gary). For FFY 2001, the criteria would become effective for all counties and restore the countywide reclassifications to approximately the same number of counties as when originally promulgated.

We suggest the use of an actual cost comparison rather than use a "rate proxy". Such target MSA costs may need to be trended forward -- HCFA would work out the details. This would eliminate the proxy problem and provide a true county to MSA cost comparison.

The proposal is budget neutral and would redirect approximately \$100 million (\$8.91 per discharge) from all hospitals to the countywide hospitals re-establishing reclassified status.

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Proposed Legislation – Countywide Reclassifications

(a) 42 USC 1395 ww (d) (10) (D) (i) (II) is amended by adding at the end the following: "In the instance of all hospitals in an urban county seeking redesignation to another urban area, the Secretary in developing criteria to demonstrate comparable costs between hospitals in adjacent urban areas, shall utilize costs per Medicare discharge to determine comparability of costs. Hospitals seeking redesignation under this subsection shall demonstrate as a group that their costs per Medicare discharge are at least equal to 100% of the costs per discharge of the hospitals in the targeted urban area, after adjusting to remove costs attributable to disproportionate share and indirect medical education. Any group of hospitals seeking redesignation under this subsection that has filed an application for redesignation by September 1, 1998 and meets the criteria for redesignation including the requirement of this subsection shall receive the payment rate as redesignated hospitals for Medicare discharges occurring on and after October 1, 1999. For federal fiscal year 2001, hospitals may file for countywide redesignation by December 1, 1999.

If the application of this clause, or a decision of the Medicare Geographic Classification Review Board or the Secretary results in the redesignation of all hospitals in an urban county to another adjacent urban county and reduces the wage index for hospitals in an urban county or counties remaining in an MSA vacated by the redesignated hospitals, the Secretary shall calculate and apply such wage index to that county or counties under this subsection as if the hospitals so treated had not been redesignated.

(b) Except for groups of hospitals filing for redesignation by September 1, 1998, the amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to payment rates for federal fiscal years after 1999."

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