

eProgress Notes . . . January 2010

A Monthly Publication of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council, Inc.

eProgress Notes publication is a summary of regulatory and legislative news, advocacy messages, and other relevant issues affecting the delivery of hospital and health care on Long Island.

State Budget Seeks \$40 Million in Medicaid Cuts to LI Hospitals

Hospital leaders gather to assess damage and course of action

It's another round of budget cuts and tax increases for Long Island's hospitals – the seventh to occur in just two years – and hospital leaders are gearing up now to advance their position with state legislators and the Governor's office. Their message is clear – Long Island's hospitals economically cannot weather any more cuts without seriously compromising the delivery of services and programs and even staffing. Representatives from the Healthcare Association of New York (HANYs) were at the offices of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC) on Wednesday, January 27, 2010 to deliver the grim budget news to a roomful of hospital CEOs, finance directors, government relations experts, and public affairs personnel.

A proposal to increase the gross receipts tax on all inpatient services and make this tax permanent will inflict the most damage to Long Island's hospitals. The elimination of the Medicaid trend factor, an inflationary index that adjusts for increases in costs to do business, is another major concern. Further, redistributive mechanisms tied to teaching hospitals and indigent care payments unfairly target some hospitals in this region. – Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org.

Help Your Hospital Website Engages Powerful Advocacy

Click on www.helpyourhospital.org now to make a difference

The [helpyourhospital.org](http://www.helpyourhospital.org) website, developed by the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYs), is zip code driven and with one click immediately displays the cuts that hospitals in a specific area will sustain with this proposed budget. Even more dramatic, the site also lists the cumulative cuts absorbed by these hospitals during the past two years.

Long Island's 24 not-for-profit and public hospitals have endured \$180 million in Medicaid cuts since April 2008... stop the devastation by going to www.helpyourhospital.org

National Health Reform Still Alive

President Obama made it clear in his State of the Union Address Wednesday, January 27, 2010 that he still wants Congress to pass major health care reform legislation. In the days leading up to this address and the release of the administration's budget in early February, support for the Senate bill has waned, but some elements of reform can and should remain, emphasized the President. These include commercial insurance reforms, affordable coverage for everyone, and measures to control spending through quality improvements and control mechanisms. Health and hospital industry analysts expect these measures, if not included in a reform bill, to at least appear in the President's budget recommendations. Hospital re-admissions penalties, more pay for performance, and bundled payments are likely, as are Medicare and Medicaid cuts. In the absence of a reform bill, these and other proposals would kick in regardless of any offset in covered lives that the reform bill would guarantee. – *Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org.*

Help for Hospital IT Jobs; Technology Transition

The Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC) has partnered with Melville-based Lloyd Staffing to help the Hospital Council's members launch and forge their health care technology transition goals. The partnership became effective December 1, 2009. It has the potential to create hundreds of IT jobs through the re-training of current hospital employees and the addition of new skilled employees who will be needed to meet the growing health information technology demand.

The Hospital Council will help its member hospitals meet current federal mandates for patient chart conversions and a shared network of data that is expected to improve the overall quality, safety and costs of treatment. Hospitals on Long Island have already begun to make substantial commitments to these efforts, which are expected to radically change and improve patient care from diagnosis to treatment and medical outcomes. EMR offers widespread cost savings, but it ultimately saves lives by reducing errors and offering a system for checks and balances for the most accurate patient care.

“We've already amassed an exceptional pool of talent, specifically individuals in the three core areas in which the highest demand is anticipated: implementation engineers, project managers and scanning technicians,” reports Phil Sparacino, LLOYD's managing director for IT Consulting, who is spearheading this initiative for LLOYD. “There are thousands of other individuals with varying titles in our database and we have drilled down to focus on healthcare backgrounds and those that can easily transfer their experience into the clinical information environment.”

“We wanted to provide member hospitals with a strong resource for health information technology professionals that offers the knowledge base to accomplish the task at hand, while bringing long-term financial and operational benefits to our members. This will allow them to contract directly with LLOYD under the umbrella of the agreement. “It's about having the right talent not just now, but for the future, said Wendy Darwell, chief operating officer for the Hospital Council.

To further support this partnership, LLOYD will offer a program utilizing LLOYD's training resources to inform and educate prospective talent associates on the EMR technology process. The LLOYD Health IT curriculum will be specifically focused on current health care industry technology initiatives and will increase the pool of clinical IT professionals available to Council hospitals. “We are talking skills such as compliance management, quality assurance, software applications, document capture, medical billing, medical coding and more,” said

Member Hospitals

- Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center
- Catholic Health Services of Long Island
 - Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center
 - Mercy Medical Center
 - St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center
 - St. Charles Hospital
 - St. Francis Hospital
- East End Health Alliance
 - Eastern Long Island Hospital
 - Peconic Bay Medical Center
 - Southampton Hospital
- Long Beach Medical Center
- John T. Mather Memorial Hospital
- Nassau University Medical Center
- New Island Hospital
- North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System
 - Franklin Hospital
 - Glen Cove Hospital
 - Huntington Hospital
 - North Shore University Hospital
 - Plainview Hospital
 - Southside Hospital
 - Syosset Hospital
- Stony Brook University Hospital
- Veterans Affairs Medical Center – Northport
- Winthrop South Nassau University Health System
 - South Nassau Communities Hospital
 - Winthrop-University Hospital

Sparacino. "Beyond information technology, LLOYD has the ancillary talent for work that will be needed for file management, records inventory, data storage, print-to-data conversions and general administration."

Hospitals that have transitioned to the use of electronic medical records and can share records with other institutions are eligible for Medicare and Medicaid incentive payments beginning in 2011. Hospitals and providers interested in the recruitment, staffing and workforce development services available through this partnership should contact Wendy Darwell, NSHC's chief operating officer, at 631-963-4152 or wdarwell@nshc.org.

www.coverage4healthcare.com – the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council's newly designed and user-friendly enrollment website.

News Briefs . . .

Joint Commission Associate Director Speaks to Facilities Engineers

George Mills, associate director and senior engineer for the Joint Commission's Standards Interpretation Group, will be the featured presenter at the Long Island Healthcare Life Safety Association's (LIHLSA) March 9th educational seminar. Mills, whose division oversees surveys of the physical healthcare environment, will discuss those life safety, emergency management and health care issues most recently cited in 2009 surveys and will review the Joint Commission's scoring and survey process. The seminar will be held on March 9 from 8 a.m. – 12 noon at South Nassau Communities Hospital in Oceanside.

The cost of the seminar is \$150, which will include the 2010 membership fee for LIHLSA, a non-profit organization comprised of hospital facilities engineers and managers, fire marshals and other safety officers. Space is limited, so reservations must be made no later than February 15. For more information on LIHLSA or to register for the seminar, contact Tom Salamone at tomsalamone@msn.com.

Hospital Council CEO Co-Authors Academic Paper

NSHC CEO Kevin Dahill and Martin Cantor, director of Dowling College's Long Island Economic and Social Policy Institute (LIESP) co-authored a report on the federal health care reform effort. Both Dahill and Cantor are regarded as leading health care policy experts.

The paper "Health-care Reform: The Beginning of a Journey" looks at the pros and cons of the House and Senate versions of reform bills. This report offers invaluable insight, as the analysis reflects the expertise and accumulated wisdom of two health and economic policy experts whose careers have been entrenched in the interplay between health-care economics and the delivery of services by providers.

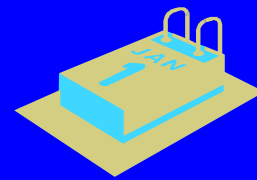
They note in their report that, "While imperfect, both the House and Senate versions of health-care reform each have elements important to achieving reform."

"All vested interests should be held accountable, but also should be asked to participate in the change. As anyone who has tried to bring about process improvement will attest, you will fail unless you engage those that touch the process along the way. Our government leaders must understand that whatever they enact now is a first step in what promises to be a long journey," conclude Cantor and Dahill.

The full report is available online at www.nshc.org/publications and at www.dowling.edu/LIESP.

State Association Leadership Named

South Nassau Communities Hospital president and CEO **Joseph Quagliata** will lead the Healthcare Association of New York State as



Mark Your Calendar for NSHC Events in February

- Feb. 9 Nurse Managers Committee Meeting 12:30 p.m.
- Feb. 10 Finance Committee meeting, 8 a.m.
- Feb. 12 Revenue Cycle Committee
- Feb. 17 NYPORST
- Feb. 19 Human Resources Committee meeting, 9 a.m.
- Feb. 26 Communications Committee meeting, 9:30 a.m. (NUMC)

*Meetings for NSHC members only and are held at the Hospital Council office in Hauppauge unless otherwise noted. To register/info call: 631-963-4153.

**MARCH 2 and 3
HANYS ADVOCACY
DAYS in ALBANY
Register now...
631-963-4151**

chairman for 2010. **John Lane**, a trustee at Winthrop-South Nassau University Health System in Melville, was named vice chair of the board of governors of the Healthcare Trustees of New York State for 2010.

North Shore-LIJ Health System Receives Prestigious National Quality Award

The National Quality Forum (NQF) announced North Shore-Long Island Jewish (LIJ) Health System as the recipient of the 2010 NQF National Quality Healthcare Award for its ongoing commitment to providing high-quality, transparent, patient-centered healthcare. The award – the first presented to a New York metropolitan area hospital -- will be presented in partnership with *Modern Healthcare* on March 3 during NQF's spring policy conference in Baltimore.

North Shore-LIJ's commitment to quality and transparency has resulted in improved patient outcomes across the continuum. For instance, after implementing a process of weekly, post-discharge phone calls to heart failure patients, one North Shore-LIJ hospital reduced its readmission rate from 32 percent to 9 percent. Through a video-monitoring program in which hand-washing compliance statistics are on display for patients and hospital staff to see, North Shore-LIJ has increased hand-washing compliance by 81 percent.



Meeting the Media Up Close and Personal

Members of the Hospital Council's Communications Committee held their annual Meet the Media Luncheon on Friday, January 22, 2010 at Four Food Studio and Salon in Melville. They had the opportunity to interact with leading media representatives from Long Island in an informal setting.

"This is always a welcome event," said Marsha Kenny, director of marketing and public affairs for Southampton Hospital. "It is such a bonus for us as hospital public relations professionals to meet members of the news media in such a social environment. It helps

all of us establish good working relationships."

Media Panelist from left to right: Jaci Clement, Executive Director, Fair Media Council, served as moderator; Alex Costello, Reporter, Herald Community Newspapers; Charles Lane, Reporter, NPR WSHU Radio; Tim Bolger, Managing Editor, The Long Island Press; Andrea Jones, Managing Editor, Long Island Business News.

NSHC Committee News

Finance Committee... met January 1. The HANYS staff gave a detailed presentation on the implementation status of Medicaid changes included in last year's budgets, the distribution of special funding pools, and the start of Medicaid Integrity Contract audits. Ms. Darwell briefed the committee on the progress of federal health care reform legislation and the wage index review project.

Nurse Managers Committee... The committee received an educational presentation on horizontal and lateral violence in the workplace at its January 12 meeting.

Nurse Executives Committee ... met January 22 and reviewed the results of a survey on LPN employment in Long Island hospitals and a proposed universal orientation program for nursing students that would be implemented by local schools of nursing. Ms. Darwell offered a briefing on the state budget proposal and the outlook for other nursing legislation in 2010.

Corporate Compliance... The committee's first quarter meeting included an extensive briefing by NSHC general counsel Mark Thomas on audit activity by the Office of the Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG), the Medicare Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) and Medicaid Integrity Contractor (MIC). Mr. Dahill briefed the committee on the state budget proposal and federal health reform efforts.

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*The collective voice of Long Island's
not-for-profit and public hospitals.*