

Progress Notes September 2011

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

Progress 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.

“Super Committee” Momentum Grows

The 12 members of Congress who sit on the new bi-partisan deficit reduction committee, also dubbed the “super committee,” have met twice and early indications are that entitlement programs, especially Medicare, will suffer further cuts. The “super committee” by Thanksgiving must deliver to Congress a deficit reduction package of \$1.2 trillion in savings (2012 through 2021).

If this committee’s agreement does not pass Congress by December 23, automatic, across-the-board cuts, including up to two percent to Medicare providers, will go into effect starting in the 2012 fiscal year. The committee has broad authority to change the tax code, cut funding to entitlement programs, and engage other means to achieve the targeted savings.

Nationwide, hospitals voluntarily agreed to \$155 billion in Medicare cuts during the next 10 years, as one way to fund the Affordable Care Act. As insurance coverage expands under the new law, some of this sacrifice would be recouped by hospital providers. The value of this shared sacrifice on the part of Long Island hospitals will total \$1.8 billion after the 10 years. For more timely information about the committee’s progress, go to <http://deficitreduction.senate.gov/public>.

And even more cuts likely . . .

President Obama’s American Jobs Act is a plan to revive employment and reduce the federal deficit by an additional \$3 trillion over the next decade. It calls for spending reductions of some \$320 billion in Medicare and \$73 billion in Medicaid and other health programs. The majority of these cuts would come from providers. At the present time, Congress has not considered the jobs bill.

At this juncture in the nation’s struggling economy, reductions to these programs are seemingly unwise, as cuts to hospital jobs will inevitably occur. This is counterintuitive to the president’s job creation “battle cry” and his reason for introducing the jobs bill.

Federal government remains operational for now . . .

The Senate approved a stopgap spending bill September 26, 2011 to keep the government running until November 18, 2011. House lawmakers are on recess, but quickly agreed to keep the government running in the very short term and will approve the spending bill when they return to Washington in early October.

A bill to keep the government running had been held up by party line differences surrounding the funding of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and allotment of disaster aid. When the agency determined it had enough cash on hand to sustain it through the end of the current fiscal year (September 30, 2011), Senate Republicans relented on their demand that disaster aid targeted for the remaining days of fiscal year 2011 be offset by spending cuts. Republican lawmakers considered the federal loan program for the production of fuel-efficient cars for cuts. – *Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org*.

The **New York State Congressional Delegation** is our conduit to the “Super Committee” and members are urged to contact their respective representatives either in their home districts and/or as part of a broader force on **Tuesday, October 4**, when the **American Hospital Association holds a Federal Advocacy Day in Washington, DC**. Encourage our delegation to continue its bipartisan effort to weigh in with the **Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction** against provider cuts to Medicare and Medicaid and other health care spending.

Around the State . . .

Health Insurance Exchange Legislation (HIE): The legislation remains stalled in the legislature and there appears to be no urgency on the part of lawmakers to pass a bill, even though another federal funding deadline passed in September. New York has already secured \$39 million in federal funds, but it cannot apply for multi-year Level 2 grants without legislation that defines the framework of New York's state insurance exchange. States have the option of establishing their own exchange or allowing the federal government to establish one for the state. State exchanges must be fully operational by January 1, 2014. Prior to the close of the 2011 legislative session in June, the Senate and Governor Cuomo had introduced versions of an exchange bill, but no final bill was agreed upon. Albany lawmakers say they want to study the issue further and examine rules coming out the Centers for Medicaid and Medicaid Services before committing to a bill. States can apply for Level 2 grants quarterly through June 2012.

Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT) Phase 2: Workgroups continue to meet and explore ways to reduce costs and improve quality in the state's Medicaid program. There are nine workgroups. Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council Chief Operating Officer Wendy Darwell is a member of the Program Streamlining and State/Local Responsibilities workgroup. The Council's success and experience with its Facilitated Enrollment Program is helpful to the work of this group. This workgroup recently met and will soon report its findings and recommendations to the full MRT. Many Medicaid reform recommendations from Phase 1 – including the global Medicaid cap – were included in the 2011-2012 state budget. Phase 2 recommendations will likely be included in next year's state budget. - *Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org*



Mark Your Calendar for NSHC Events in October

- Oct. 4 "Communicating Quality" Presented by NSHC Communications Committee, 2 – 4 p.m.
- Oct. 6 Executive Committee, 8 a.m.
- Oct. 11 Nurse Managers Committee, 12:30 p.m.
- Oct. 12 Finance Committee, 8 a.m.
- Oct. 19 HIM User Group Meeting, 9 a.m.
- Oct. 25 Corporate Compliance Committee, 9:30 a.m.

*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.

Advocacy Logo Signifies Strength in Numbers

Given the delivery and payment reforms underway in Albany and Washington, DC, hospitals in the suburban regions immediately east and north of New York City are strengthening their advocacy efforts to ensure their regions' specific concerns are heard by lawmakers. The group, known as the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State (SHA), recently unveiled a logo geared toward solidifying its



presence and heightening its identification among lawmakers, the business community, the media, and the public.

Hospitals in nine suburban counties are represented by the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, stretching from the eastern counties of Nassau and Suffolk on Long Island to the seven counties north and westward that comprise the lower and mid-Hudson Valley. The Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC) on

Long Island and the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association (NorMet) in the Hudson Valley are the primary advocacy organizations for hospitals in these respective regions. Both organizations are led by CEO Kevin Dahill.

Top Performers Recognized

Six hospitals located in the regions served by the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State were recognized by The Joint Commission for having demonstrated sustained excellence in the accrediting body's accountability measures. The six hospitals are: ***John T. Mather Memorial Hospital, North Shore University Hospital, Plainview Hospital, Southside Hospital, St. Charles Hospital and Bon Secours Community Hospital in Orange County.*** These facilities are among an elite group of 405 acute care and critical access

hospitals nationwide to have achieved this status.

The accountability measures are process of care measures that meet tests for reliability, validity, and importance to patient outcomes. The Top Performer is based on hospital data reported on evidence-based clinical processes, including heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, surgical care, and children's asthma. A top performing hospital may be recognized for any and all of the five measures. The Top Performers program is designed to celebrate success and inspire continued improvement. Go to The Joint Commission website for more information and details about the top performers.

News Briefs . . .

Health Care Leader to Know . . . distinction goes to South Nassau Communities Hospital CEO Joseph Quagliata. He was named to the Becker Hospital Review 2011 "List of 256 Hospitals and Healthcare Industry Leaders to Know" in the United States. This is the second consecutive year he was named to this list. Quagliata is a former chair of the NSHC board of directors and HANYS board of directors.

Sorry Works! . . . is an early disclosure and apology approach to handling adverse events and mitigating costly litigation. A forum about the concept was held September 27, 2011 and hosted by Vassar Brothers Hospital in Poughkeepsie. Sorry Works! founder Doug Wojcieszak explained key aspects of the Sorry Works! approach that includes a commitment to five-star customer service, sincere empathy, and a willingness to accept fault. Three regions – Long Island, NorMet, Rochester - joined the presentation via video/telephone conference.

Costs of Medical Procedures . . . achieved a new level of transparency when the website www.fairhealthconsumer.org debuted in August. The website is the result of the creation of the not-for-profit FAIR Health that was formed to replace Ingenix as the source for determining typical costs of medical procedures. The consumer-friendly website allows comparison by zip code of out-of-network charges for both medical and dental procedures.

Website Helps Patients . . . compare local hospitals and physicians. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation launched

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

- St. Joseph 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

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

the nation's most comprehensive online directory for patients to find reliable information on the quality of health care provided by physicians and hospitals in their communities. Go to www.rwjf.org.

Committee News ...

Communications Committee: At its September 13 meeting the committee discussed priorities, projects, and educational programs for the upcoming year. The committee will develop a public information/media campaign about tangible aspects of the Affordable Care Act. The goal is to provide consumers/media with quick and easy reference to this complex piece of legislation. Emphasis is on pinpointing relevant parts of the legislation that affect Long Island patients and hospitals and communicating this in an engaging way, such as through an animated "You Tube-like" video, among other communication vehicles. The campaign idea will first be presented to the NSCH board of directors. NSHC Facilitated Enrollment Program Director Stacy Villagran updated committee members on the progress of the Community Health Advocates (CHA) program and grant. Under the CHA grant, the Council has been able to notify hospitals about patients who have applied for insurance assistance. This has resulted in increased payments to hospitals, including retroactive Medicaid payments. On October 4, the Communications Committee will host a "Communicating Quality" workshop.

Finance: At its September 14 meeting, the Finance Committee received a special briefing from HANYS managed care staff on the changing behavior of managed care plans as health care reform implementation begins. HANYS Vice President of Fiscal Policy William Allison and his staff reported on the ongoing Medicaid reform process and several state audits.

Nurse Executives: Nancy Landor, Senior Director of Strategic Quality Initiatives at HANYS, briefed the committee on the joint HANYS/GNYHA grant application through the federal Partnership for Patients program, and the potential for regional collaborations. Ms. Darwell reported to the group on a change to the mandatory overtime prohibition regulations, proposed scope of practice changes for RNs and the AHAs health care worker vaccine initiative.

Notable Upcoming Meetings


HANYS Solutions Fall 2011 Health Information Management (HIM) User Group takes place Wednesday, October 19, from 9 – 11 a.m. at the Council offices in Hauppauge. Learn more about the products and services that help capture, analyze, and report on health information management data and how each is evolving to meet regulatory and environmental changes. Call 800-388-9821 for info and to register.

Complimentary web conference series **New Models of Care Delivery: From Strategy to Execution** addresses executive level strategic issues for making the business case for new models of care across the continuum. Next one is October 12, 2 – 3:30 p.m. **Readiness Assessment: Management of Chronic Diseases**. For info and to register: www.hanys.org.

Social Media: Strategies to Evolve, Engage, and Excel takes place November 16, 2011 at HANYS offices in Rensselaer. This is a full-day conference. Contact: wvanslyk@hanys.org.

SWAT V, Gambling with New Payment Models: Making the Right Bets on Financial Risk, takes place October 13 and 14 at the Doubletree Hotel in Tarrytown. Must register by October 6. Call 518-431-7890.

First **Statewide Palliative Care Conference** takes place October 27 in Saratoga Springs. Offered by HANYS. Info and registration: www.hanys.org.



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