

# Progress Notes . . . August 2013

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.

## Federal Funding Deadlines Imminent

When Congress returns to Washington, DC in September, members will have less than two full weeks to strike a compromise to raise the debt ceiling and agree on funding for the next federal fiscal year, which begins October 1, 2013. If no agreement is reached, the nation once again faces default and a government shutdown. Such a situation would wreak havoc on the nation's fragile recovery, agree economists.

Meanwhile, automatic sequestration cuts remain in place; there have been no overtures by either party to develop a plan to replace the sequester cuts. Medicare payments to hospitals were cut two percent for Medicare services provided on and after April 1, 2013. If left in place, Medicare sequestration cuts to hospitals in the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State regions, which include hospitals on Long Island and in the Hudson Valley, will total \$629 million (2013 – 2021). Compounding the situation is the Medicare physician payment cut of 24.4 percent that will occur January 1, 2014, if Congress does not act to stop it. Every year since 2002, Congress has stepped in with a "doc fix" to avert such a draconian cut to the nation's physicians. Just this past January, hospitals absorbed about \$30 billion in additional Medicare cuts to offset the physician reimbursement fix. Without a reasonable solution to the flawed sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula – the 1997 Balanced Budget Act inflation-based provision that guides and restricts physician reimbursement - hospitals once again remain vulnerable to more cuts. – Janine Logan, [jlogan@nshc.org](mailto:jlogan@nshc.org).

## Head to Washington DC for Fall Advocacy Days September 17 and October 29

The Washington office of the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS) will assist Hospital Council members in scheduling meetings with Congressional representatives at American Hospital Association fall advocacy days. Hospitals remain at risk for further Medicare and Medicaid cuts, especially as Congress negotiates spending bills, the debt ceiling increase, and the "doc fix." Contact Elyse Oveson, HANYS director of federal relations, at [eoveson@hanys.org](mailto:eoveson@hanys.org) – 202-488-1275 – to schedule your meetings.

## STATE UPDATE: Hundreds of Bills Await Governor's Action, While New Regs Related to Patient Safety Now in Effect

Only half of the bills passed by the legislature in June have been acted upon by the governor. Major health-care related bills backed by HANYS, such as managed care, Hepatitis C, observation status, and smoking prohibition legislation, are still waiting. Meanwhile, state-mandated sepsis protocols must be filed with the state by all hospitals by September 3, 2013, and the Internet System for Tracking Over-Prescribing (I-STOP) went into effect August 27, 2013.

### Sepsis Protocols

This past spring, final rules were adopted that require hospitals to have in place evidence-based protocols for the early recognition and treatment of patients with severe sepsis and septic shock that are based on generally accepted standards. The Department of Health developed a website through which protocol documents should be submitted. The documents will be reviewed for compliance and completeness. *continued on page 2*

To help hospitals with compliance and understanding of the new regulation, HANYS developed a Hospital Sepsis Care Resource Guide that is available on the HANYS website. The guide was developed by the HANYS Sepsis Advisory Committee and clinical experts from the national Surviving Sepsis Campaign. The guide builds upon successful strategies

of hospitals and professional associations nationally and internationally that have improved sepsis care and outcomes. HANYS is also offering two webinars – Sepsis and Executive Leadership, Tuesday, September 10, 2013, from 1 to 2 p.m., and Update on the Surviving Sepsis Campaign, Thursday, October 10, 2013, from 10 to 11 a.m. Register online [cguyon@hanys.org](mailto:cguyon@hanys.org).

#### **I-STOP Law**

New York is the first state in the nation to mandate that physicians or their designees consult a database of a patient's prescription history before prescribing controlled substances. The requirement took effect August 27, 2013. The law also requires pharmacists to report in real time when they fill a controlled substance prescription into the state's Prescription Monitoring Registry. The law includes several exemptions from the consulting requirements, such as when a controlled substance is prescribed within a hospital emergency department, prescribed under hospice care, and when a practitioner is directly administering the controlled substance, to name a few. – Janine Logan, [jlogan@nshc.org](mailto:jlogan@nshc.org).

## **Navigators Prepare for Exchange Opening, October 1**

With the formal renaming of New York State's online insurance exchange – New York State of Health – the health department is moving forward with formal navigator training. The Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council is the lead Navigator Agency for Long Island, and its enrollers will be fully trained and certified to serve as navigators in time for the online marketplace's opening on October 1, 2013.

Trained and certified enrollers will assist individuals, families, and businesses in understanding the insurance options offered on the online insurance marketplace and in purchasing insurance. Insurance purchased from the marketplace becomes effective January 1, 2014 - the date the Affordable Care Act's individual insurance mandate also takes hold. The navigators will assist individuals in completing the application for coverage, and will determine whether their income levels and family size qualify them for subsidized insurance premiums, Medicaid coverage or Child Health Plus

enrollment. The navigators will also help small business owners determine if they are eligible for any tax credits.

Since 2000, NSHC has served as a Facilitated Enrollment Agency, under a New York State Department of Health grant, to assist individuals and families in applying for Medicaid, Child Health Plus, and Family Health Plus. For these programs, NSHC currently maintains a separate website dedicated to enrollment – [www.coverage4healthcare.com](http://www.coverage4healthcare.com). For more details and a broader view of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which directed the development of New York's online insurance marketplace, go to NSHC's website, [www.nshc.org](http://www.nshc.org), and click on the ABCs of Health Care Reform. Stacy Villagran, Navigator Program Director, is the direct contact for questions and concerns regarding New York State of Health – the official health plan marketplace and enrollment issues. Contact her at [svillagr@nshc.org](mailto:svillagr@nshc.org) or 631-963-4160. – Janine Logan, [jlogan@nshc.org](mailto:jlogan@nshc.org).

### **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

# News Briefs . . .

**Workforce Report** . . . compiled by the Healthcare Association of New York State, the Hospital Council, and other regional hospital associations shows that the aging health care workforce and population, combined with health care reform, will increase demand for many health care professionals and expand the roles and necessary skill sets for existing professionals. *The 2013 Nursing and Allied HealthCare Professionals Workforce Survey Report* identifies areas where members are most challenged with recruitment and retention of nurses and allied health care professionals, including physicians, medical assistants, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.

**Medicaid Global Spending Cap** . . . remained within limits for the for first two months of the new fiscal year, according to the New York State Department of Health's most recent report. The state's spending on Medicaid was \$5 million, or 0.2 percent, below projections for May 2013. Medicaid enrollment numbers in May rose by 42,000 or .08 percent over March.

**Honorable Mention for Exemplary Palliative Care** . . . was granted to **North Shore University Hospital's Palliative Care Program**. It was one of the programs that received a Citation of Honor from the American Hospital Association's Circle of Life Award program for hospital's commitment to training, education, and collaboration across the health system.

**Novel Employee Cafeteria Program** . . . made a debut at **John T. Mather Memorial Hospital** when it launched a "Meatless Monday" initiative in June. Mather is the only hospital on Long Island to adopt the program. The initiative offers employees meatless entrée alternatives. Meatless Monday is a non-profit initiative of the Mondays Campaign, in association with the Johns Hopkins' Bloomberg School of Public Health.



## Mark Your Calendar for NSHC September Events

- Sept. 10 Nurse Managers Committee Meeting, 10 a.m.
- Sept. 11 Finance Committee Meeting, 8:30 a.m.
- Sept. 13 Flu Mandate Meeting, 8:30 a.m.
- Sept. 16 NSHC Board Retreat, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Sept. 18 Communications Committee Meeting, 8:30 a.m.
- Sept. 18 Population Health Workgroup, 10 a.m.
- Sept. 20 Human Resources Committee Meeting, 9 a.m.

For more information please call: 631-963-4153.

## \* \* \* Blood Donations Needed \* \* \*

The blood supply typically drops off in the summer months. This is true especially as we move into the end of summer and enter the Labor Day holiday. And this year the region's blood supply and donation schedule is further taxed by the disruptive force of Superstorm Sandy. Please consider scheduling a blood drive at your hospital sometime in the next few weeks. Doing so will ensure that the blood supply does not drop to critically low levels during the remaining weeks of the summer. **Call Karen Muscolino at our region's blood supplier, the New York Blood Center, at 516-478-5038 to arrange a blood drive at your hospital.**

## The 2013 Academy for Healthcare Leadership Advancement

Three-day opening session: September 29 – October 1, 2013 • Cornell University, Ithaca, NY  
Participants will then engage in six online sessions before returning to Cornell November 10 – 12 for the closing session, project fair, and certificate ceremony. Through the joint sponsorship of Winthrop-University Hospital, HANYS, and the Johnson School at Cornell University, the program has been approved for 50.0 American Medical Association Physicians Recognition Award (AMA PRA) Category 1 Credit(s)<sup>TM</sup>. Contact: Rachel Hajos (518) 431-7838.

## Committee Meetings and Updates . . .

**Corporate Compliance:** At its August 27, 2013 meeting, the committee discussed the implications of CMS's "two midnights" guideline for determining the appropriateness of an inpatient admission, was briefed on developments in the Medicare RAC program, and received an update on the I-STOP law implementation

**Population Health Workgroup:** This diverse group of stakeholders met on July 30, 2013 to continue its community health planning work. Members from both the Nassau and Suffolk components of this initiative discussed a universal metric tool applicable to all programs offered by hospitals, community-based organizations, and the two county health departments. The tool would assess health status and the level of health understanding with a goal toward changing unhealthy behaviors and imparting helpful knowledge about a variety of chronic diseases and conditions. This initiative will be enhanced by an island-wide public awareness campaign.

**Revenue Cycle:** The committee agenda for the August meeting included briefings on observation care, the Medicare RAC program, and new Medicaid limitations on PCIs and elective deliveries. The committee also discussed implementation of the New York health insurance exchange.

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and You**

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Find out about **A**ccess, **B**enefits, **C**osts as  
they apply to you and your hospital now and in the future. . .



*A public information campaign sponsored by the NSHC Communications Committee*