

Progress Notes . . . October 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.

Individuals and Small Businesses Navigate New Health Insurance Marketplace

Enrollment process making slow, steady progress

Individuals and small business owners crowded the **Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC) Navigator Agency Office** in Hauppauge on October 1, 2013, the date health insurance marketplaces opened throughout the nation, and were among the first on Long Island to meet with a state-trained navigator and discover the health plans, premiums, subsidies, and tax credits available to them, depending upon their income and household information. Kenneth Adams, commissioner of the New York State Department of Economic Development, was on hand to officially open the NSHC Navigator office and welcome the first applicants to the new insurance marketplace.

Despite nearly two million hits in its first hours of operation and extremely heavy and continuing online traffic accompanied by intermittent computer “glitches,” the New York State Health Department says enrollment is progressing. In-person enrollment sites report similarly heavy volume.

NSHC is one of three lead Navigator Agencies appointed by the New York State Department of Health to provide individuals and businesses on Long Island with enrollment assistance in the new marketplace. Using an online portal, navigators assist individuals, businesses, and families in understanding insurance options offered on the marketplace and in purchasing insurance. Navigators, some of whom are bi-lingual, assist individuals in completing the application for coverage, and use an online tax credit and premium rate estimator to determine whether individuals’ income levels and family size qualify them for subsidized insurance premiums, Medicaid coverage, or Child Health Plus enrollment. Using this tool, the navigators also help small business owners determine if they are eligible for any tax credits.



Navigator Luz Ayala (left) discusses health plan coverage options with Rhonda Seider during the NSHC Open Enrollment Session, October 1, 2013.



Left: Kevin Dahill, President/CEO of NSHC and Kenneth Adams, Commissioner, New York State Department of Economic Development.

“We’re pleased to be able to offer this program to Long Islanders and help them access affordable health care coverage. Our enrollers are well-trained and bring 13 years of enrollment experience to the new insurance marketplace,” said Kevin Dahill, president/CEO of the Hospital Council.

The NSHC Navigator Office continues to field about a 100 phone calls a day from individuals seeking information about the marketplace and their insurance options. It offers 38 enrollment sites per month throughout Nassau and Suffolk counties, most during non-traditional hours. Enrollment is on a first come, first serve basis. View the NSHC enrollment site dates and locations by going to www.coverage4healthcare.com and clicking on the calendar. Long Island’s two other lead Navigator Agencies –

Community Service Society of New York and Public Health Solutions – offer enrollment assistance via appointment. Individuals and business owners also can shop and enroll online at www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov or by phone through the state’s customer service line at 1-855-355-5777. – Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org.

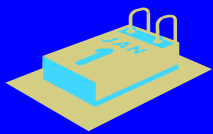
Campaign Reaches Out to Long Island’s Uninsured

On October 2, 2013, the day after the official opening of New York State of Health insurance marketplace, Hospital Council President/CEO Kevin Dahill, representing the hospitals on Long Island, joined HealthFirst plan representatives at Nassau University Medical Center’s unveiling of its campaign to educate low and moderate-income populations about their insurance options in the new insurance marketplace.

With the opening of the insurance marketplace, NUMC is intensifying its efforts to reach this population. The initiative will take place at NUMC and at its federally-qualified health centers located throughout Nassau County. In addition to bi-lingual enrollment assistance provided by NSHC in-person navigators, HealthFirst and NuHealth enrollment counselors, the campaign includes community lectures and seminars, as well as web-based and print information.



Nassau University Medical Center CEO Arthur Gianelli (at podium) is flanked by (l to r) Paul Porstmore, HealthFirst, Craig Hauben, North Shore/LIJ Care Connect, and Kevin Dahill, President/CEO of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council.



Mark Your Calendar for NSHC November Events

- Nov. 12 Nurse Managers Committee meeting, 12:30 p.m.
- Nov. 13 Finance Committee meeting, 8 a.m.
- Nov. 14 Partnership for Patients meeting at 1393 Vets Highway Location, Noon
- Nov. 14 Market Expert Users Group (HANYS meeting) 9 a.m.
- Nov. 19 Corporate Compliance Committee meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- Nov. 20 Quality Committee meeting, 9:30 a.m.

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

result, sequester cuts went into effect earlier this year. Hospitals in the Suburban Hospital Alliance regions will endure \$629 million (2013 – 2021) in Medicare cuts due to this sequester. NSHC’s advocacy agenda is forwarded by the Suburban Hospital Alliance. The Northern

Government Re-opens, Avoids Default

Hospitals Remain Wary of More Cuts Tied to Budget Talks

The agreement reached on Wednesday, October 16, 2013 to re-open the federal government and avoid debt default carries through only to the early part of 2014 and, at that time, brings with it the threat of another standoff and the real possibility of more harmful Medicare and Medicaid cuts to hospitals. The agreement directs House-Senate negotiators to deliver a budget plan by December 13, 2013 that tackles the nation’s debt and deficit concerns. Conferees could look to cut spending for such programs as Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, while seeking higher tax revenues by closing loopholes for corporations and wealthy individuals.

The new federal government funding deadline is January 15, 2014. Congress must act by then and pass another continuing resolution in order to avoid another shutdown. The next deadline for raising the debt ceiling limit is February 7, 2014. During this time, the White House will be working on its version of the upcoming federal fiscal year budget.

Meanwhile, another round of automatic sequestration cuts to domestic programs occurs in January 2014. These cuts are the result of the failure of a bi-partisan “super committee” to develop a debt/deficit reduction plan by November 2011. As a

The American Hospital Association plans two more advocacy days in Washington – **November 19 and December 3**. Contact Elyse Oveson for more information – eoveson@hanys.org.

Metropolitan Hospital Association, which represents hospitals in the Hudson Valley region, is the other hospital region served by the Alliance. – Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org.

News Briefs . . .

Providing Education about the New Health Insurance Marketplace . . . is one of the objectives of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council. In addition to its role as a state-appointed Navigator Agency for Long Island, the Hospital Council is addressing a variety of professional and public audiences about the mechanics of purchasing insurance from the marketplace, as well as the Affordable Care Act that is driving insurance exchanges and other reforms. Since the marketplace opened on October 1, 2013, Stacy Villagran, director of NSHC’s Navigator Program, has presented to a dozen interested audiences assembled at library events, professional educational programs, and other community-based events.

Hepatitis C Testing . . . for patients born between 1945 and 1965 takes effect January 1, 2014. The new state law requires hospitals and health service providers to offer hepatitis C testing to the “baby boomer” group.

In the National Spotlight . . . of the American Hospital Association’s *AHA News Now* e-newsletter was **Stony Brook University Hospital** for its \$1.6 billion contribution to the local economy and the **Nassau University Medical Center** for its \$1 billion contribution to the local economy. Stony Brook was featured September 16th and NUMC October 7th.

Medicaid Global Spending Cap . . . remained within limits for the first five 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 \$29 million or 0.4% under projections through August 2013.

Joint Commission Top Performers . . . include three on Long Island from among 45 hospitals in the state that achieved top performer status for their Quality Measures in 2012. The Long Island facilities are **Mercy Medical Center, St. Charles Hospital, and South Nassau Communities Hospital**. These hospitals were recognized by the Joint Commission for attaining excellence in accountability measure performance during calendar year 2012. As Top Performers on Key Quality Measures®, hospitals in this category represent the top 33 percent of all Joint Commission-accredited hospitals that reported accountability performance measures in 2012. More than 3,000 U.S. hospitals were evaluated.

NSHC New Director of Quality and Education . . . is Kate Warner. She will divide her time between NSHC and the Rochester Regional Healthcare

Association and provide members with analysis and interpretation of the various quality metrics and reporting requirements, as well as education and technical assistance in these areas. She most recently served as a senior planner for the Central New York Health Systems Agency. She holds a Master of Public Health degree with a concentration in

Health Management and Policy from Drexel University School of Public Health. Kate Warner can be reached at kwarn@seagatealliance.com.



Kate Warner, Director of Quality and Education

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

Committee Meetings and Updates . . .

Communications Committee: Members met on October 29, 2013 and discussed their continuing efforts with state Community Service Plans and federal Community Health Needs Assessment implementation plans. Members discussed methods to improve communication efforts through the use of online media and will look to hold an educational program about this next year. “Rethink Your Drink” program director Gemma Saylor, RD, briefed members about implementing the program in their hospitals. “Rethink Your Drink” is an evidence-based CDC program that incorporates a healthy beverage choice initiative. Hospitals across the country are implementing this healthy beverage initiative to promote the health and well-being of patients, families, and staff by eliminating the sales of sugar-sweetened beverages in their facilities. NSHC is a “Rethink Your Drink” worksite. NSHC Navigator Program Director Stacy Villagran updated the committee about the Navigator Program/Insurance Marketplace. – Avesta Khursand, akhursand@nshc.org.

Finance Committee: The October 9, 2013 meeting of the Finance Committee focused on the implementation of and payment for observation care, implications of the federal government shutdown, and the Medicare wage index. Committee members were briefed by the Managed Care Advisory Group on the settlement of litigation regarding insurers’ use of the Ingenix database to set usual and customary charges.

Nurse Executives: Kate Warner, NSHC director of quality and education, gave a presentation on the nursing- sensitive quality and payment changes in the 2014 Medicare inpatient rule. Wendy Darwell, COO of NSHC, discussed the ongoing advocacy efforts on staffing ratio legislation. The committee discussed efforts to implement the state mandate that health workers either receive the influenza vaccine or wear a mask wherever they may encounter patients.

Population Health Workgroup: This diverse group of stakeholders met on October 29, 2013 to continue its community health planning work. Members from both the Nassau and Suffolk components of this initiative – known as the Long Island Health Collaborative (LIHC). - are moving forward with a three-pronged approach to meeting the objectives of the state’s Prevention Agenda. This approach includes activities related to 1) programming, 2) policy, and 3) public outreach. A key component of the public outreach effort is an island-wide public awareness campaign about the Prevention Agenda priorities. These are: 1) reduce obesity in children and adults 2) increase access to quality preventive chronic disease management programs in community and clinical settings. An effort to better prevent and treat mental health/substance abuse overlays these two priorities.



Brought to you by the hospitals on Long Island

For news and updates about the Affordable Care Act go to www.nshc.org
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