

Progress Notes

October 2014



Published monthly by the **Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State LLC** . . . a consortium of 52 not-for-profit and public hospitals advocating for better health care policy for all those living and working in the nine counties north and east of New York City.

Region’s Hospitals Discuss Ebola Readiness

The 52 hospitals within the nine counties represented by the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State continue their preparedness efforts to treat infectious diseases, such as Ebola, and other medical emergencies related to natural and manmade disasters through routine and enhanced preparedness activities. These include system-wide drills with health care workers in the donning and doffing (removal) of personal protective equipment (PPE), review of communication protocols and triage practices to ensure understanding within care teams and throughout facilities, and review of identification/treatment/transfer processes with local health departments and other first responder agencies to ensure swift and secure coordination. Roundtable discussions, led by local

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health commissioners, about Ebola preparedness occurred in Suffolk and Nassau counties on October 22, 2014, and similar conversations have been taking place with public health officials in the seven counties that comprise the Hudson Valley region.

Since the presentation in September of the first infected Ebola patient in Texas to the consequent infection of healthcare workers treating that patient, federal and state guidelines pertaining to the care of patients and protection of healthcare workers have been reviewed and revised by state and federal health agencies. While the chances of spread of the Ebola virus, which can only be transmitted via the bodily fluids of an actively symptomatic infected person, remain highly remote, hospital workers in the Suburban Alliance counties are well-trained and ready to deal with an infectious agent as virulent as Ebola.

In mid-October, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued enhanced guidelines for healthcare workers treating Ebola patients. These include the wearing of full body suits with no skin exposure and use of a respirator at all times. CDC

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Ebola readiness continued from front page . . .

Director Thomas Frieden advised that healthcare workers undergo rigorous and repeated training in the donning and doffing of the gear until it becomes “ritualized.” The CDC also recommends that hospitals have a trained monitor to observe workers as they put on and take off the personal protective equipment. Learn more about the CDC’s enhanced guidelines for healthcare workers at their [website](#).

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) has also taken a very proactive stance on hospitals’ Ebola preparedness. An October 16th order of action from the NYSDOH offers more detailed and exacting descriptions of infection control practices, drilling and training timelines – specifically requiring monthly assessments of staff competence in donning and removing PPE – and stringent protocols for identification, isolation, and transport of patients suspected of Ebola infection. It further defines procedures for medical waste disposal, treatment personnel logs, and point-of-contact mechanisms to track the disease’s origin and spread. State Department

of Health staff are traveling now to hospitals in the state to survey and assess their readiness and to offer assistance, if needed. The DOH designated eight hospitals located in strategic geographic regions throughout the state to serve as Ebola treatment facilities for identified patients. Go to the state’s [website](#) for more details about the NYSDOH order and the Ebola virus.

“The hospitals throughout the Hudson Valley region and on Long Island adhere to strict infection control protocols in all disease outbreak situations,” said Kevin Dahill, president/CEO of the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State. “Table top drills and simulations take place on a prescribed basis, as required by state and federal emergency preparedness mandates. Drills and training exercises at our hospitals were ramped up in the past few weeks, even before the state’s recent order, and our facilities are prepared to handle wide scale emergencies and disease outbreaks.” – *Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org; jlogan@normet.org*

Ebola Prep Costs and Funding Streams

Focus turns to quantifying expenses, regulatory relief, future preparedness needs

The enhanced preparedness efforts hospitals are undertaking in response to the Ebola situation are stressing financial and human resources at hospitals. The Suburban Hospital Alliance, under the lead of the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS), is now educating federal and state lawmakers about these costs and is working with these elected officials to obtain some level of funding. Most recently, the New York State Congressional Delegation joined members from the eight hospitals the state-designated as Ebola centers on a HANYS-led conference call. Congressional members are attentive to the needs of these hospitals, as well as the additional preparedness burden placed on facilities of all sizes throughout the state. In the coming weeks, the White House is expected to forward a supplemental spending request to Congress. The bulk of that request is expected to address the growing outbreak in West Africa. Domestic support will also be included. Leaders in both the House and the Senate are anticipating post-election efforts to address Ebola-related funding needs. Timely and pertinent information about evolving Ebola issues can be found at [HANYS' Ebola web page](#). **Tune into a HANYS-hosted webinar on Monday, November 3, 2014 from 10 to 11:30 a.m. for clarification about temporary suspension or modification of statutes and regulations during and after emergencies. Register at www.hanys.org.**

News Briefs

Insurance Marketplace Set to Re-Open . . . officially on November 15, 2014. This is the second open enrollment season for the NY State of Health insurance marketplace. Enrollment closes February 15, 2015. On Long Island, the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council, one of the local hospital associations that is part of the Suburban Alliance, is one of three state-appointed navigator agencies for that region. The Hudson Valley region is serviced by the Community Service Society of New York, Maternal Infant Services Network of Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster counties, and the Westchester County and Rockland County Departments of Health.

NSHC Insurance Navigator Agency Recognized by State . . .

Agency's website content claims award for "Best Co-Branded Material" . . . The NSHC Navigator Agency won the New York State of Health's 7th Inning Stretch Award in the "Best Co-Branded Material" category for its user-friendly website content and website navigability. The web development team at HANYS helped develop the website. NSHC navigators processed nearly 2,500 applications during the marketplace's first enrollment period October 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014. The user-friendly site – www.coverage4healthcare.com – was a driving force in the agency's success, according to Stacy Villagran, who oversees the NSHC Navigator Program.



NSHC Navigator Staff from left: Michelle Bates, Lead Supervisor; Rebecca Dilan, Administrative Assistant; Stacy Villagran, Director of the NSHC Navigator Program and Grants Administrator for NSHC; Enroller Luz Ayala; Enroller and Quality Assurance Staffer Neffy Townes; and Enrollers Lilliana Gomez and Jorge Rivas. Missing from photo are HANYS web team members: Juan DiDiego, Manager of Web Development and Graphic Design; Tighe Lory, Internet Development Specialist; and Shannon Hutton, Director of Online Communications.

Who Are the Hospital Heroes . . . is a new online initiative

sponsored by the Coalition to Protect America's Health Care and the American Hospital Association. The program showcases hospital caregivers and many others, from administrative staff and nurses, to physicians and other allied health professionals, maintenance and security, who go above and beyond in their work to help patients in their communities. Visit the [Hospital Heroes website](http://HospitalHeroes.com) to view featured heroes and to nominate a hospital hero.

Hospitals Adhere to the Triple Aim . . . and varied stories about how New York's hospitals are doing so are highlighted on the HANYS website through its "NYS Triple Aim" campaign. The campaign captures the widespread efforts of hospitals that are pursuing the Triple Aim approach of improving population health, enhancing the quality of patient care, and reducing the cost of healthcare. New York's hospitals are actively engaged in implementing new and innovative approaches to healthcare delivery despite fiscal constraints. Go to www.HANYS.org/tripleaim. Feel free to re-tweet and post the outstanding work performed by hospitals. To submit a story for the campaign, contact Steve Kroll at skroll@hanys.org or Michael Pauley at mpauley@hanys.org.

Pre-admission and Discharge Info Law . . . became effective October 20, 2014. The new law requires hospitals to offer to provide pre-admission and discharge planning information to visually impaired patients in large-print version, or, at the patient's request, as an audio recording. Guidance to assist hospitals in implementing the law will be forthcoming.

Draft Regs for State-certified ACOs . . . were released and comments are due to the state by December 1, 2014. DOH has proposed regulations establishing a process for entities to obtain a state certificate of authority to become an Accountable Care Organization. The DSRIP Project Plan application cross references the opportunity to apply for an ACO certificate of authority. The Suburban Alliance, in conjunction with HANYS, will submit comments on the draft regulations.

Promoting Organ Donation . . . is the focus of the [New York Alliance for Donation Hospital Partner Toolkit 2014](#). The need for donated organs and tissues continues to grow. There are currently more than 123,000 people in the United States waiting for organ transplants. Each year, approximately 6,000 people die waiting for an organ transplant.

Medicaid Waiver Update . . .

The public comment period related to the DSRIP draft application materials has now closed. Based on feedback from hospital members, the hospital industry submitted recommendations to the state about the DSRIP application and process. These recommendations called for enhancing fairness; additional guidance, clarification, and adjustments on specific scoring requirements; and reiterating longstanding concerns regarding anti-trust protections; additional transition funding, timing of payments; and the need to work together on the Medicaid managed care plan and value-based purchasing. The health department expects to release the final DSRIP Project Plan application November 14, with Project Plan applications due December 16.

The DSRIP [dashboard](#) on the state's website includes Medicaid data, which can assist applicants with their project plan applications, community needs assessments, prioritizing clinical projects, and understanding network utilization patterns.

HANYS' [Medicaid Waiver website](#) is also another very useful resource.

Workforce Report . . . conducted by HANYS in collaboration with regional hospitals associations, including the Suburban Hospital Alliance, as well as the State University of New York Center for Health Workforce Studies, reveals emerging healthcare job titles and specialties in response to the widening population health-based care approach. As more patients seek preventive care and services in outpatient and ambulatory-based settings, the demand for care coordinators, patient navigators, and community health workers is growing. Additionally, the healthcare occupations identified as being in highest demand across inpatient and outpatient settings include nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, medical assistants, care coordinators, and certified nurse aides. Access

[Healthcare Workforce: New Roles for a Changing Healthcare Delivery System](#) here.

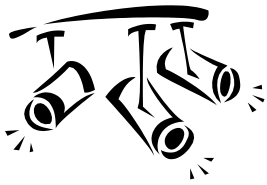
Community Service Plan . . . updates are due December 30, 2014. HANYS will hold an educational webinar about the update and the state's Prevention Agenda on November 7, 2014.

Register at www.HANYS.com.

Educational Discount . . . is being offered to employees of

Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, LLC, hospital members. Mercy College and the Suburban Hospital Alliance entered into a partnership that will allow employees of member hospitals a 15 percent discount on all undergraduate and graduate classes at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, NY. The Suburban Hospital Alliance includes all member hospitals of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council and the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association. For more information contact Mercy College at: 1-877-MERCY-GO.

Relief from Statutes and Regulations . . . during emergencies is explained in a new guide developed by HANYS and the Iroquois Healthcare Association, with input from the Department of Health. *Guide for Healthcare Providers: Temporary Suspension and Modification of Statutes and Regulations During Emergencies* provides a brief overview of the process to request statutory and regulatory relief in New York State, including contact information. HANYS and partnering organizations, including the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, will host a webinar on November 3, 2014 from 10 to 11 a.m., during which the Department of Health will be present to answer questions.



SPOTLIGHT ON: *Quality*

By Kate Warner, Director of Quality and Education

On September 24, 2014, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services submitted the [National Quality Strategy Annual Progress Report to Congress](#). The report discussed the National Quality Strategy's Priorities in Action and highlighted providers across the nation that were "moving the needle" on quality measures. The report also included descriptions of how federal agencies and privately-funded organizations are aligning internal strategies and programming with the National Quality Strategy to further the nation in achieving its stated goals, which include improving the overall quality of care, by making health care more patient-centered, reliable, accessible and safe; improving the health of the population by supporting proven interventions to address behavioral, social, and environmental determinants of health in addition to delivering higher-quality care; and reducing the cost of quality healthcare for individuals, families, employers, and government. Among the initiatives recognized was the New York State Health Foundation's Diabetes Campaign, in which many Suburban Alliance hospitals' staff participated.

Reports from previous years have acknowledged the reporting burden imposed on healthcare providers by various public and private agencies attempting to measure outcomes or improvement. This year's report estimates that there are currently 2,170 measures in use with the Department of Health and Human Services and 4,144 measures in use by public private parties. The burden imposed by the extent of the reporting requirements continues to grow in size and complexity as new programs emerge and quality outcomes become linked to payment. This year's report indicates the department's continued commitment to harmonizing measures and reducing the burden on healthcare providers, and it goes into greater detail on the work of the Measurement Policy Council (MPC) and their successes to date.

The MPC was created in 2012 to facilitate interagency communication that will lead to further alignment of existing measures, measures under development, and future measures. The council has been asked to identify a core set of measures and advocate for the removal of any measures not included in the core set. The council achieves alignment through the standardization of specifications for measures with similar focus (i.e. process, event, or outcome) or the same target population (i.e. children).

Since its inception in 2012, the council has reviewed nine topical areas and has "achieved consensus for alignment in seven high-priority measure topics". These areas include hypertension, smoking cessation, depression, hospital-acquired conditions, HIV/AIDS peri-natal care and obesity. Organizations including the National Quality Forum, Buying Value and the National Academy for State Health Policy also continue to work with public and private sector providers on aligning reporting requirements and specifications with those already in place. For more information on the Measurement Policy Council, and their ongoing work [click here](#).

News from the Long Island Region . . .

A Report on Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council member hospital achievements and notable activities



Improved Patient Communication . . . was the focus of a case study published by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) that featured **Nassau University Medical Center's** (NUMC) use of the Team STEPPS® approach to improve communication between patients and their healthcare team. Team STEPPS (Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety) is an evidence-based system developed by AHRQ and the Department of Defense. NUMC also uses the AHRQ's Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey to ask patients how well the hospital medical staff communicates with them. Since the introduction of Team STEPPS, survey results have shown that communication with patients has steadily improved.

Ebola Preparedness Manual . . . was created by the **North Shore/LIJ Health System** as a public service and reference guide for healthcare organizations and local governments across the United States to aid in preparedness efforts and shed light on key clinical and operational best practices that can prevent the virus from spreading. The detailed resource guide – available as a free download at www.nsljalerts.com – covers a range of topics, including emergency management structure, clinical guidelines, policies and procedures, staff education and training, communications (internal and external), internal evaluation tools, external resources.

Excellence in Stroke Care . . . was awarded to **Mercy Medical Center** from the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. Mercy earned the organization's Get with the Guidelines® - Stroke Gold Plus Achievement Award for the third consecutive year.

If you have news to share about your hospital's achievements, please send to Janine Logan at jlogan@nshc.org.

News from the Hudson Valley Region. . .

A Report on the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association member hospital achievements and notable activities



Westchester CFO of the Year award . . . was presented to **Phelps Memorial Hospital's** Vice President, Finance and Chief Financial Officer Vincent DeSantis. He was named "Westchester CFO of the Year" among companies with more than 500 employees. The awards ceremony was sponsored by Westchester County Business Journal, TD Bank, McGladrey, Rakow Commercial Realty Group, Heineken, and BMW.

If you have news to share about your hospital's achievements, please send to Janine Logan at jlogan@normet.org.

NSHC Events/Meetings Report. . .

Finance Committee: The Finance Committee at its October 8, 2014 meeting received a guest presentation from Kirk Kamien of the Managed Care Advisory Group on its Contract Payment Recovery service, which the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council will offer to members. HANYS staff briefed the group on the Medicaid waiver programs, and Wendy Darwell, COO of the Hospital Council, led a discussion about the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) offer to settle claim appeals for 68 percent of their original inpatient charges.

The Long Island Health Collaborative (LIHC): Members met October 22, 2014 and LIHC is continuing its focus of fostering a population health-based approach to care. LIHC is a multi-stakeholder group of hospitals, the two local county health departments and other local government entities, academic institutions, and dozens of community-based organizations. LIHC is focused on chronic disease management and prevention, with an emphasis on obesity-related conditions, as well as substance abuse/mental health treatment and prevention activities. The website provides links and resources, <http://nshc.org/long-island-health-collaborative/>. The collaborative's other plans include chronic disease surveillance and assessment to gain a collective view of Long Islanders' health, using a pre- and post-engagement Wellness Survey, and the promotion of walking, as a simple and inexpensive way to engage in physical activity to improve/manage one's health.



Communications Committee/LIHC Education/Public Outreach Subgroup: This small group met following the larger LIHC meeting to develop a strategy for a communications/public awareness campaign centered around LIHC's Rx for Walking program and other initiatives related to nutrition and physical activity.

Nurse Executives: Chief nursing officers and deans of nursing discussed Ebola preparations and concerns in their institutions. The committee also received briefings from staff on changes to the Medicare Hospital Compare rating system, the wrap-up of the New York State Partnership for Patients, and several regulatory and legislative updates.

Revenue Cycle: At its October 17, 2014 meeting, the Revenue Cycle Committee discussed CMS's offer to settle outstanding appeals of denied claims, new processes for Medicaid long-term care insurance enrollment, and the progress of Medicare beneficiaries' discharge appeals by the new federal contractor, Livanta. Ms. Darwell also briefed members on changes in plans and enrollment in the New York State of Health marketplace for 2015.

Critical Issues Headline Regional Policy Forums – Register Now

HANYS and the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State will hold two regional policy forums for the member hospitals in each of the Suburban Hospital Alliance regions. The purpose of the forums is for HANYS/Suburban Alliance leadership teams to hear from members about your top issues and to discuss advocacy for the coming year. Register directly with HANYS at www.hanys.org.

Thursday, November 17 – 8 a.m. - Noon
Hospital Council Offices in Hauppauge

Monday, December 1 – 10:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Doubletree Hilton, Tarrytown, NY

NSHC November Events/Meetings

Nov. 11	Nurse Managers Committee Meeting, 12:30 p.m.
Nov. 12	Finance Committee Meeting, 8 a.m.
Nov. 13- 14	HANYS Market Expert, 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Nov. 17	HANYS/Suburban Hospital Alliance Regional Policy Forum, 8 a.m. to Noon.
Nov. 18	Corporate Compliance Committee Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
Nov. 19	Quality Committee Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
Nov. 24	LIHC Meeting, 10 a.m. NSHC Communications Committee with LIHC Education/Public Outreach Subgroup, 11:30 a.m.

*All meetings take place at NSHC offices in Hauppauge
unless otherwise noted. Call 631-963-4153.*

NorMet Member Hospitals

Blythedale Children's Hospital
Bon Secours Community Hospital
Burke Rehabilitation Hospital
Catskill Regional Medical Center
Ellenville Regional Hospital
Good Samaritan Hospital
HealthAlliance Hospital Broadway Campus
HealthAlliance Hospital Mary's Avenue Campus
Helen Hayes Hospital
Hudson Valley Hospital Center
Keller Army Community Hospital
Lawrence Hospital Center
MidHudson Regional Hospital
Of Westchester Medical Center
Montefiore Mt. Vernon Hospital
Montefiore New Rochelle Hospital
The New York Presbyterian Hospital, Westchester Division
Northern Dutchess Hospital
Northern Westchester Hospital
Orange Regional Medical Center
Phelps Memorial Hospital Center
Putnam Hospital Center
St. Anthony Community Hospital
St. Joseph's Medical Center
St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital
St. Vincent's Westchester (Division of St. Joseph's
Medical Center)
Vassar Brothers Medical Center
VA Hudson Valley Health Care System
Westchester Medical Center

NSHC 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

Eastern Long Island Hospital
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

Peconic Bay Medical Center
Southampton Hospital
Stony Brook University Hospital
Veterans Affairs Medical Center – Northport
South Nassau Communities Hospital
Winthrop-University Hospital