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Legislative Session Opens With Pledges of Bipartisan Cooperation

In his [State of the State Address](#) to the joint houses of the Connecticut General Assembly on Wednesday, January 4, Governor Dannel Malloy laid out his budgetary and legislative goals for the 2017 Legislative Session, which promises to be challenging given the state's fiscal woes.

Beginning his speech with the charge, "Let's get to work," Gov. Malloy said he has identified three key areas that must be addressed in order to balance the budget and ensure the long-term prosperity of the state. Those areas are: making government leaner and more efficient, addressing and honoring public pension obligations, and more carefully allocating a smaller pool of state aid to municipalities for education.

The Governor also repeatedly stressed the need for Republicans and Democrats to work together, and with his office, to tackle the work

ahead.

"I'm asking for your partnership," Gov. Malloy said. "I'm asking that we approach this session and this budget in a spirit of authentic, bipartisan collaboration."

The Governor did not make any announcements or hint at healthcare-related proposals he will seek to advance in 2017. The precise details of Gov. Malloy's budget proposal will be made public by mid-February and the Governor's legislative proposals will be filed in the coming days. It is projected that lawmakers will face a \$1.5 billion budget deficit for FY 2018 and another \$1.5 billion deficit for FY 2019.

The Governor's remarks followed the ceremonial swearing-in of lawmakers in both the House of Representatives and the state Senate. In total, of the 187 members of the General Assembly, there are 31 new members in the House of Representatives and four new members in the state Senate. The House will have 78 Democrats and 72 Republicans. In an almost unprecedented scenario, the state Senate will be evenly divided, with each party holding 17 seats apiece.

In addition to the routine ceremonies of opening day, this year there was an added focus on the unique power-sharing arrangement in the Senate. The Senate officially voted to elect Senator Martin Looney (D-New Haven) as President Pro Tempore, the chamber's highest ranking Senator, and Senator Len Fasano (R-North Haven), as the first-ever Republican President Pro Tempore. Senator Bob Duff (D-Norwalk) will retain the title of Senate Majority Leader, and Senator Kevin Witkos (R-Canton) will assume the new title of Deputy Senate Republican President Pro Tempore.

In addition, joint legislative committees will include two Senate co-chairs – one Democrat and one Republican – and an equal number of Senate Republicans and Democrats will be appointed to each committee (allowing each chair equal say in developing the agenda of bills and the power to split a joint committee into House and Senate committees on any particular bill). Budget bills and budget implementation bills shall be made available for review by each caucus for at least 12 hours before any vote.

In their remarks, Senators Looney, Fasano, Duff, and Witkos highlighted the unique composition of the Senate, stressed the need for bipartisanship, and vowed to work hard to solve the state's fiscal problems in order to improve the quality of life for the state's residents.

Members of the House also elected their leadership, including Rep. Joe Aresimowicz (D-Berlin) as Speaker of the House, Matthew Ritter (D-Hartford) as House Majority Leader, and Rep. Themis Klarides (R-Derby) as House Minority Leader.

Speaker Aresimowicz pledged to work collaboratively with both Democrats and Republicans in the House, stressing that cooperation between the two parties is in the best interest of the state. He and Rep. Klarides both remarked on the number of new lawmakers taking office this week, saying that it provides a unique opportunity for the "People's House" to recommit itself to solving the state's fiscal problems.

It is expected that the Senate and House Democratic caucuses will announce leadership and committee membership assignments in the coming days. The House Republican caucus released its leadership and committee assignments prior to the start of session. Its leadership can be found [here](#) and committee assignments can be found [here](#).

Three State Legislators Not Seated

In a last minute agreement between Senate leaders, two state Senators – one Republican and one Democrat – submitted their resignations prior to the beginning of the 2017 Legislative Session. With a member of each party resigning, the Senate remains evenly divided, with



each party holding 17 seats.

On the Republican side, Senator Rob Kane (R-Watertown) submitted his resignation in order to be nominated for the position of State Auditor. The position has been vacant since long-time Republican Auditor Robert Ward retired last month. The auditors of public accounts in Connecticut are overseen by two legislative appointees, one Republican and one Democrat.

Senator Kane, first elected in a special election on January 15, 2008, served as the Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee and represented the towns of Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Middlebury, Oxford, Roxbury, Seymour, Southbury, Waterbury, Washington, and Woodbury.

Also resigning from the Senate was veteran Democratic Senator Eric Coleman (D-Bloomfield), who will instead seek a judicial appointment. First elected to the Senate in 1994, Sen. Coleman has served most recently as the Senate Chairman of the Judicial Committee. He previously served in the House of Representatives from 1983-1994. Sen. Coleman's Senate District seat represents the communities of Bloomfield, Hartford, and Windsor.

In the House, long-time Democratic State Representative Stephen Dargan (D-West Haven) declined to be sworn into office on Wednesday. It is expected that Rep. Dargan, one of the longest serving members of the House, will be appointed by Gov. Malloy to serve on the Board of Pardons and Paroles. Members of the General Assembly are precluded from taking another position in state government after they are sworn into office.

First elected in 1990, Rep. Dargan has served as the House Chairman of the Public Safety and Security Committee for the past 22 years. Rep. Dargan represented the 115th House District, which includes the town of West Haven.

Senator Murphy Celebrates Legislative Victory at Middlesex Hospital



U.S. Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) convened a forum of families, mental health advocates, and medical professionals at Middlesex Hospital on December 20, 2016 to celebrate the passage of his Mental Health Reform Act, the most comprehensive mental health bill passed by Congress in years. The Mental Health Reform Act is an integral part of sweeping legislation called the 21st Century Cures Act, which increases funding for medical research, eases the development and approval of experimental treatments, and reforms federal policy on mental healthcare.

Senator Murphy said he was delighted to return to Middlesex Hospital where, in October 2014, he held his first roundtable discussion and where, in August 2015, he announced the bill's introduction. The October 2014 event was the first of more than 30 mental health and substance abuse roundtables, town hall meetings, and public hearings with providers, advocates, and families hosted by Sen. Murphy across the state.

"Thank you once again to everyone for opening up Middlesex to me and to our team," said Sen. Murphy. "We worked hard to make sure we heard from providers and patients, those with experience, and family members about what's broken in our behavioral health system."

The mental health reforms included in the 21st Century Cures Act are intended to integrate physical and mental health, strengthen transparency and enforcement of mental health parity, establish new programs for early intervention and improved access to mental healthcare for children, and strengthen suicide prevention. The law establishes a new national mental health policy laboratory, reauthorizes successful programs, strengthens leadership and accountability for federal mental health and substance use programs, and will result in the development of new educational materials on privacy protections.

The law also provides \$1 billion over two years for grants targeting opioid abuse prevention and treatment activities, such as improving prescription drug monitoring programs. During the forum at Middlesex Hospital, Connecticut Chief Medical Examiner James R. Gill, MD, announced that in 2016, it appeared that more than three times as many people would die from opioid-related causes than from motor vehicle accidents in Connecticut. Dr. Gill said this represents an alarming and unprecedented increase in the number of opioid deaths in our state.

Sen. Murphy applauded efforts under way at several Connecticut hospitals to develop comprehensive approaches to treating people with behavioral health disorders, such as Community Care Teams and placing behavioral health professionals in primary care settings. He noted that the new law, while a laudable achievement, addressed roughly 10% of the problem by his estimation. He closed the forum by encouraging those in attendance to continue working with him to improve the mental healthcare system.

Bruce Cummings, President and Chief Executive Officer, L+M Healthcare, to Retire in 2017

After a long and rewarding career in healthcare, Bruce D. Cummings, who has been President and Chief Executive Officer of L+M Healthcare for the past 11 years, announced his plans to retire in 2017.

"Simply stated, this is the best time for me, my family and the organization," Mr. Cummings said. "It was of paramount importance for me to ensure our affiliation with Yale New Haven Health would not only be approved, but prosper.

"With the approval behind us and opportunities for growth ahead of us," continued Mr. Cummings, "this was just the right time. I've reached normal retirement age, my children are grown, and I'm a grandfather. It's important for me to begin to focus on other things."

A national search for a successor is under way and Cummings, who also serves as executive vice president with Yale New Haven Health, will continue to lead L+M Healthcare until a new president has been selected, according to Maria P. Borgstrom, President and Chief Executive Officer of Yale New Haven Health.



"As always, Bruce has been thoughtful about this decision," said Ms. Borgstrom. "His foremost concern over the past 11 years has been to support the continued growth and success of L+M Healthcare. He has accomplished that in so many ways, including first the decision to acquire Westerly Hospital and then, most recently, leading the process of aligning L+M Healthcare into Yale New Haven Health.

"Bruce's leadership and dedication have been evident during his entire tenure at L+M," continued Ms. Borgstrom. "We are grateful for his unrelenting focus on making healthcare better and more accessible in Connecticut and Rhode Island."

In addition to his leadership roles at L+M Healthcare and Yale New Haven Health, Mr. Cummings is the immediate past Chairman of the CHA Board. He has previously served as the Chairman of the CHA's Committee on Patient Care Quality and Chairman of the Committee on Hospital Finance. Under his leadership, L+M Hospital received from CHA the John D. Thompson Award and two Community Service Awards.

CHA thanks Mr. Cummings for his exceptional service to patients and healthcare in Connecticut, and wishes him much enjoyment in his retirement.

Gina Burrows, APRN, Joins CHA as Director, Population Health



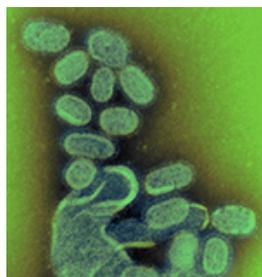
The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) welcomes Gina Burrows, APRN, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, as Director, Population Health. In this role, Ms. Burrows will manage a wide range of diverse activities that support CHA's leadership role in Population Health, including advancing care coordination, information flow, health improvement through convening members for shared learning, and community outreach.

Ms. Burrows will also provide support for various quality initiatives that integrate with population health to improve patient outcomes.

Ms. Burrows brings extensive experience to her position at CHA. Most recently, she was Administrative Supervisor at The Hospital of Central Connecticut, where she managed daily operations, including staffing, bed management, rounding, training, and patient safety huddles. Prior to that, Ms. Burrows was employed at Saint Mary's Hospital, first as a Shift Clinical Nursing Supervisor and then as Director of NICU, Women and Infants, Critical Care, CVICU, Perinatology, and Shift Clinical Supervisory Team, during which time she was responsible for the daily operations and management of a \$12 million budget and 80 FTEs.

Ms. Burrows attended Saint Mary's Hospital School of Nursing. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management from Post University, a Master of Science in Nursing Administration from Sacred Heart University, and a post graduate degree as an adult primary care nurse practitioner from the University of Connecticut.

Influenza Cases Rising Across Connecticut



Cases of influenza are multiplying in Connecticut at a faster rate than they did last year at the same time, and are now considered "widespread," according to the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH).

According to DPH, there have been 378 confirmed cases of influenza and 182 hospitalizations in the state so far this season. Statewide emergency department visits attributed to the "fever/flu syndrome" recently increased and are now at 7.4%, well above the level of 5% statewide that is generally considered the minimum threshold when there are elevated influenza-associated ED visits.

Influenza was reported in all eight Connecticut counties, but the majority of cases have occurred in Fairfield, Hartford, and New Haven counties. Four deaths have been reported since the beginning of flu season.

The predominant influenza viruses identified this season are Type A, although the percentage of Type B influenza viruses in circulation has recently increased.

Vaccination is a best practice for patient and healthcare worker safety. In 2011, the CHA Board adopted a statewide policy endorsing mandatory influenza vaccination for hospital personnel as part of CHA hospitals' commitment to patient safety. To date, the vast majority of acute care CHA member hospitals in Connecticut have implemented a mandatory participation or mandatory vaccination program.

Education Updates

2017 Joint Commission Standards and National Patient Safety Goals Update

Tuesday, January 17, 2017

9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

[View Brochure](#) | [Event Registration](#)

National expert Diana Scott, Sr. Director, Vizient, will present CHA's annual full-day program outlining The Joint Commission's new standards and national patient safety goals for 2017 and challenges from 2016 with strategies for compliance. Ms. Scott will also review survey process changes, patient safety alerts and tips, and CMS focus areas, as well as best practices for a successful survey.

CHA is also pleased to have Mark Crafton, Executive Director of Communications and External Relations at The Joint Commission (TJC), and Ann Scott Blouin, Executive Vice President of Customer Relations at TJC, participate in the program. Their presentations will include an overview of the new process for surveyors to determine the severity of non-compliance with all accreditation and certification requirements, and a new report format that will more clearly illustrate priority issues impacting patient safety. Attendees will also receive information on compliance data for challenging accreditation standards in Connecticut hospitals. Finally, presenters will share information on new standards and National Patient Safety Goals, including topics under consideration for standards/NPSGs development in 2018.

Continuing education credits are offered for this session. Please see the brochure for details.

CHA Regulatory Series—Wage and Hour Law Review

Friday, January 20, 2017

9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

[View Brochure](#) | [Event Registration](#)

This program will serve as a refresher for those generally familiar with wage and hour compliance issues—and as an introduction to key issues for those with new responsibilities in this area. Participants are encouraged to bring real or hypothetical questions about regulatory interpretation to the session for an open discussion.

Continuing education credits are offered for this session. Please see the brochure for details.

CHA Nurse Preceptorship Program

Wednesday, February 15, 2017

8:30 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

[View Brochure](#) | [Event Registration](#)

Supporting and strengthening the work of nurse preceptors is critical to the development of new nurses and to the retention of the highly skilled staff registered nurses who teach them at the bedside.

CHA's Nurse Preceptorship Program has routinely received positive feedback, featuring a curriculum developed by a team of educators from hospitals and schools of nursing, and is designed to provide core content that is foundational for the role of nurse preceptor. This one-day program includes presentations and interactive sessions that cover topics such as roles and responsibilities, characteristics of a professional role model, basics of teaching and learning, tools and strategies for effective communication, principles of constructive feedback delivery, and evaluating competence. The Nurse Preceptorship Program will serve to start new nurse preceptors off with critical information and also may be of interest to nurse preceptors who have not had this content, or would like to be refreshed on these concepts.

Continuing education credits are offered for this session.

HIPAA Privacy and Security Basics

Tuesday, February 28, 2017

9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

[View Brochure](#) | [Event Registration](#)

This program will review the current HIPAA Privacy, Security, and Breach Rules, with an emphasis on patient access rights and stepped up enforcement activities by the Office for Civil Rights. The program information includes strategies for maintaining continuous compliance, a review of business associates rules, and practical tips and solutions for remaining compliant with HIPAA. The program will also cover emerging issues in cyber security, trends in state enforcement, devices and technology issues, social media considerations, and the growing risks for HIPAA-covered entities and business associates.

Continuing education credits are offered for this session.

