



Thursday, May 12, 2011

Budget Developments: State Sued Over “Unbalanced” Budget; “Plan B” Released

On Friday, May 6, two current legislators, Senator Len Suzio (R-Meriden) and Representative Chris Coutu (R-Norwich), along with two former legislators, and a conservative group—the Roger Sherman Liberty Center—filed a suit in state Superior Court to challenge the constitutionality of the budget passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Dannel Malloy.

The suit alleges that the budget is unconstitutional in that the Connecticut constitution’s requirement that the state’s expenditures match its revenues was violated when the budget was adopted with \$2 billion in yet-to-be-determined state employee union concessions.

Also on May 6, Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management Ben Barnes released his “[Plan B](#),” the plan to achieve \$2 billion in savings if the Malloy administration is unable to achieve \$2 billion in state employee union concessions. The plan contains more than 4,700 state employee layoffs and proposes a menu of another \$1.2 billion in spending reductions that will be used to achieve the needed savings.

“Plan B” proposes hospital-related reductions, including reducing DSH and Supplemental payments to hospitals under a revised user fee proposal, reducing funding in the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services for uncompensated care, and restructuring Medicaid for Low-Income Adults.

Hospitals are continuing to work together to mitigate the impact of the hospital tax included in the state budget. For more information about CHA advocacy efforts, contact Jim Iacobellis, CHA Vice President of Government Affairs, iacobellis@chime.org.

Union-Backed Bills Advance in Legislature

With the 2012-2013 biennium budget signed into law by Governor Malloy and less than a month remaining in the session, legislative committees continued to meet this week in order to vote on bills working their way through the legislative process. On Monday, the Appropriations Committee took action on, [SB 913](#), *An Act Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Leave To Employees*, a union-backed bill strongly opposed by the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). After four hours of debate, the Committee voted [28-24](#) to release the bill with a Joint Favorable (JF) report. Representatives Ernest Hewitt (D-New London), Linda Schofield (D-Simsbury), and Bryan Hurlburt (D-Tolland); along with Senators Bob Duff (D-Norwalk), Joan Hartley (D-Waterbury), and Andrew Maynard (D-Stonington); joined every Republican member of the Appropriations Committee in voting against the bill. The bill was referred to the Senate floor and awaits further action.

The House of Representatives began debating [HB 5460](#), “*An Act Concerning Captive Audience Meetings*” at 2:00 p.m. yesterday, only to be held captive by a Republican filibuster until 1:00 a.m. today. The bill passed, 78 to 65, with 14 Democrats joining the Republicans in opposing the bill. The bill prohibits employers from requiring employees to attend meetings “the primary purpose of which is to communicate the employer’s opinion concerning religious or political matters.” This bill is strongly [opposed](#) by Connecticut hospitals.

The Senate met in session yesterday, but did not debate or vote on any bills of interest to hospitals. Both chambers are meeting today and items of interest to hospitals will be reported next week.

In This Issue:

[Budget Developments: State Sued Over “Unbalanced” Budget; “Plan B” Released](#)

[Union-Backed Bills Advance in Legislature](#)

[Blumenthal Requests GAO Look Closely at Drug Shortages](#)

[Connecticut Celebrates Nursing with Nightingale Awards](#)

[Save the Date: CHA Awards Presented at June 23 Annual Meeting](#)

[Education Updates](#)

Blumenthal Requests GAO Look Closely at Drug Shortages

Last week, in response to reports of frequent shortages of life-saving pharmaceutical products at hospitals around the country, US Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) sent a formal request to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) calling for a closer look at the ongoing shortages of critical pharmaceutical products. In the [letter](#) to GAO Comptroller General Gene L. Dodaro, Senator Blumenthal, joined by US Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Tom Harkin (D-IA), urged the GAO to examine how the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) identifies and responds to drug shortages and to identify what steps the FDA could take under its current authority to better prevent, manage, and resolve drug shortages. The Senator and his staff have been working closely with CHA and hospital pharmacy directors to gather information on specific drug shortages and their impact on hospitals.



Senator Blumenthal is a co-sponsor of the Preserving Access to Life-Saving Medications Act ([S. 296](#)) that would give the FDA tools to better manage and prevent drug shortages. Senator Blumenthal emphasized that shortages directly threaten public health, often forcing doctors to ration their supply of medication, delay medical procedures, and use alternative products that may carry with them unwanted side effects or may be unfamiliar to the physicians prescribing them.

The American Hospital Association (AHA) is actively working with Congress and the FDA to find solutions as well, reporting that drug shortages could cost US hospitals at least \$200 million annually through the purchase of more expensive generic or therapeutic substitutes. In addition, the unprecedented number of shortages of drugs for sedation, emergency care, and chemotherapy threaten patient safety and quality of care, while increasing healthcare costs due to the higher prices hospitals pay for those critical drugs in shortage.

Connecticut Celebrates Nursing with Nightingale Awards

On Thursday, May 5, during the celebration of National Nurses Week, attendees at four Nightingale Galas recognized outstanding nurses across Connecticut at events in Wallingford, Mystic, Stamford, and Hartford. The annual galas are intended to promote nurse retention, inspire future nurses, gain public attention, elevate the nursing profession, and recognize nurses at the local level.



Michael Hayes, RN, BSN, of Yale-New Haven Hospital walks the red carpet at the Nightingale Awards for Excellence in Nursing.



A group shot of all the honorees.



Janet McManus-Penzero from Stamford Hospital at the Fairfield area gala.



Sonia Fraser from Norwalk Hospital at the Fairfield area gala.



At the Wallingford gala: (L to R): John R. Quinn, President & CEO of VNA Health Systems; Jane Shaw, VNA Health Systems' Board member; Charlie Mason, VNA Health Systems' Board member; Robert Motley, Chairman of the Board of Directors for CareSource; **Senator Richard Blumenthal**; Ellen Russell Beatty, Chairperson of VNA Health Systems' Board of Directors; **State Comptroller Kevin Lembo**; Anthony Candido, VNA Health Systems' Board member; **Edward M. Kennedy, Jr., Honorary Chairman and Keynote Speaker for the 2011 Nightingale Awards for Excellence in Nursing**; Dr. Grace Jenq of Yale-New Haven Hospital; Sue Fitzsimons, Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer of Yale-New Haven Hospital; and Diane Vorio, Vice-President, Patient Services of Yale-New

The Nightingale Awards for Excellence in Nursing provide recognition to nurses who demonstrate excellence in clinical practice, leadership, and/or education. The Nightingale Awards program was originally developed by the Visiting Nurse Association of South Central CT (VNA/SCC) as a collaborative effort to celebrate outstanding nurses and elevate the nursing profession.

CHA congratulates all of the Nightingale Award winners.

CHA Annual Awards Presented at June 23 Annual Meeting

An important part of CHA's Annual Meeting, which will be held from 4-7 p.m. on Thursday, June 23, at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington, is the presentation of CHA's annual awards. The awards will be announced during the one-hour business meeting that opens the Annual Meeting. After the business meeting and a networking session, participants will hear a keynote speech by Donna Brazile, political strategist and media commentator. Invitations to the Annual Meeting will be mailed next week.



For more information about CHA's Annual Meeting, contact Christine Prestiano, Coordinator, Education and Sponsorship Services, at Prestiano@chime.org.

Education Updates

The Art and Science of Obstetrics Safety, Tuesday, May 17, 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

There is widespread agreement that obstetrics (OB) is a complex, high-risk area in healthcare. Experts say three in 100,000 deliveries involve serious perinatal injuries that can result in serious disability or death. A comprehensive safety program using precise, standard protocols and evidenced-based guidelines can eliminate many of the adverse outcomes associated with obstetric care.

CHA is pleased to partner with PeriGen, nationally recognized specialists in OB risk reduction, to provide healthcare professionals with an exceptional program addressing an array of innovative and practical patient safety interventions, including a discussion on perinatal high reliability; a case study on eliminating birth trauma; a discussion of critical obstetric issues including inductions under 39 weeks; use of Oxytocin; the role of laborists and midwives; a thoughtful look at the issues of patient satisfaction, cultural change, liability losses, staff satisfaction, patient outcomes; and team dynamics in the process of developing a state-of-the-art obstetric quality and safety program.

Several experienced obstetricians and OB/GYN specialists will serve as faculty including: Edmund Funai, MD, Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences, and section chief at the Yale University School of Medicine; Christian Pettker, MD, Yale Fellow in Maternal-Fetal Medicine and Assistant Professor at Yale University; and William Cusick, MD, Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Director of Maternal-Fetal Medicine at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport, CT.

The Connecticut Hospital Association is an Approved Provider of Continuing Nursing Education by the Connecticut Nurses' Association, an Accredited Approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation (4.25 contact hours). This activity was approved by the National Association for Healthcare Quality for 4.25 CPHQ CE credits. The John D. Thompson Hospice Institute for Education, Training and Research, Inc. designates this educational activity for a maximum of 4.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™.

Click [here](#) for the brochure. Click [here](#) to register.

Building the Quality Foundation, Tuesday, May 24, 8:30 a.m. - noon

As healthcare reform continues to make clear, everyone must be involved in quality improvement and patient safety. This introductory course is designed to provide all hospital administrative, operational, clinical, and support staff with the fundamental knowledge and practical tools needed to build and sustain a culture of quality and patient safety.

Participants will gain a working knowledge of common quality terms, explore how organizational culture either permits or prevents errors, why being on the sharp end of healthcare delivery is difficult when a mistake happens, and how to avoid communication breakdown – cited as the number one sentinel event reported to The Joint Commission. This presentation will review how to build performance improvement teams, develop measures of improvement, and use evidence-based practices to investigate errors and learn from defects. Concepts and methods to improve hand-off communication will be introduced, including briefings, rounding, huddles, and other practical tools.

Alison Hong, MD, CHA's Interim Vice President of Quality and Patient Safety, will be the program's speaker.

This activity has been approved for 3.25 CPHQ continuing education credits from the National Association for Healthcare Quality, 3.25 category II credits from the American College of Healthcare Executives, and 3.25 Physician CMEs.

Click [here](#) for the brochure. Click [here](#) to register.

Sexual Harassment Prevention, Wednesday, May 25, 9:00 a.m. - noon

Connecticut law requires employers with 50 or more employees to provide training and education on the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace to all supervisory employees within six months of their hire or assignment to a supervisory position. Beyond the legal requirement, employers realize that it makes good business sense to train their supervisory staffs, and sends a clear message that respect for others is a foundational value of leaders in creating a high-performance work environment.

This program provides a practical, application-oriented, and cost-effective way for newly appointed supervisors and managers to fulfill the mandatory state training requirement. The format is highly interactive and uses group discussion, a video, examples, and case studies to teach participants how to recognize and deal with sexual harassment. Participants will learn the types of behavior that constitute sexual harassment, how to conduct an appropriate investigation into complaints of misconduct—a process that protects the rights of all parties involved, and how to take appropriate action to prevent serious problems in the organization including poor morale, absenteeism, turnover, and costly lawsuits. The format is highly interactive and uses group discussion, a video, examples, and case studies to teach participants how to recognize and take action to prevent sexual harassment.

This program has met the HR Certification Institute's criteria to be pre-approved for recertification credit (3.0 credit hours).

Click [here](#) for the brochure, and [here](#) to register.