



**Thursday,
December 1, 2011**

CHA Welcomes Sharon Hospital Back to Membership



Sharon Hospital, the 78-bed hospital located in Sharon, CT, has rejoined the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) as an acute care hospital member. The hospital had been a CHA member until 2003, a year after it was bought by Essent Healthcare. Recently, Sharon Hospital's parent company, Essent Healthcare, merged with RegionalCare Hospital Partners, another privately held company based in Tennessee. The combined company, which operates under the RegionalCare Hospital Partners name, owns and operates seven hospitals in six states (Alabama, Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Connecticut).

"We are delighted that Sharon Hospital has rejoined the Association," said CHA President Jennifer Jackson. "Today, CHA now represents all acute care hospitals in Connecticut. Sharon Hospital's membership strengthens the collective voice and unity of Connecticut hospitals as we focus on improving community health and strengthening quality and patient safety."

State Budget Update

On Tuesday, November 29, the Office of Policy and Management ([OPM](#)) and Office of Fiscal Analysis ([OFA](#)) provided their fiscal accountability presentations to the Appropriations and Finance Revenue and Bonding Committees. The reports are presented to the legislative committees annually to provide the members of the General Assembly with updated information about the state budget.

OPM projects a budget surplus of \$67.1 million, while OFA estimates the surplus at \$101 million. While both OPM and OFA indicate that the budget picture has stabilized, there are significant concerns related to potential cuts in federal funding, the impact of federal healthcare reform, the expansion of gambling in neighboring states and its impact on casino revenue, and unfunded liabilities.

In addition, both offices mentioned that Connecticut's Rainy Day Fund is currently depleted and, as a result, the state is not prepared for another recession. OFA also noted that there is additional uncertainty with some of the savings expected from the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) agreement.

During his testimony, OPM Secretary Barnes indicated that the projection for the Medicaid deficiency has gone down; however, he stated that Medicaid is "tough since we have to take all comers and we have to pay the bills we are required to pay." OFA and OPM had different projections for growth in Medicaid expenditures, primarily due to differing growth projections in the Medicaid low-income adult (MLIA) population.

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Political consultant Andrew Grossman shares his perspectives on the election and politics with members of CHA at a recent event.



During recent CHA meetings, State Senator Andrew Roraback (R-Goshen), *pictured left*, and House Speaker Chris Donovan (D-Meriden), *pictured right*, discuss the status of healthcare in Connecticut and what's on the horizon for the State Budget and the 2012 session of the General Assembly.



Special Election to be Held January 10, 2012

Last week, Governor Dannel Malloy announced that a special election will be held on January 10, 2012 to fill a vacant seat in the Connecticut House of Representatives. The 24th District House seat was left vacant as a result of the resignation of Tim O'Brien (D-New Britain) on November 15, a week after O'Brien was elected mayor of New Britain. The general election will be between Democrat Rick Lopes and Republican businessman Peter Steele.

A project manager at the state's Department of Administrative Services, Mr. Lopes previously served as a New Britain Alderman and legislative aide to former Democratic Senator Don DeFronzo (D-New Britain).

A licensed real estate agent, Mr. Steele previously served eight years as an executive assistant for former Mayor Timothy T. Stewart. He has also served on the Parks and Recreation Commission and on the Charter Revision Commission.

There are 150 members of the state House of Representatives. Currently, there are 98 Democrats, 51 Republicans, and one vacant spot, O'Brien's vacant seat, which covers parts of the city of New Britain and part of the town of Newington.

GNEMSDC Opens New MBDA Center in Boston

On November 15, the Greater New England Minority Supplier Development Council (GNEMSDC) opened the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) Business Center in Boston. The MBDA Business Center-Boston has three primary goals: (1) to work with minority business enterprises to identify procurement opportunities with large public and private sector organizations with the goal of increasing minority business enterprise vendor outcomes by over \$100 million a year; (2) to assist minority business enterprises in identifying and accessing sources of debt, equity, and angel financing to accommodate their growth and success; and (3) to create and retain jobs in women and minority-owned businesses.

CHA and GNEMSDC have been working together to increase supplier diversity among Connecticut hospitals by identifying qualified minority-owned vendors to supply goods and services to hospitals. During the last two years, CHA and GNEMSDC have hosted a Supplier Diversity Vendor Fair prior to the CHA Annual Meeting, and Fred McKinney, PhD, GNEMSDC President, was one of the featured speakers at the October Kickoff Symposium for the CHA Diversity Collaborative. As part of our commitment to supplier diversity, CHA has also supported and presented at GNEMSDC's Business Opportunity Expo, the organization's premier annual event.



Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick is joined by Dr. Fred McKinney (l), president of Greater New England Minority Supplier Development Council (GNEMSDC) and David Hinson (r), national director of the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), at the grand opening of the new MBDA Center in Boston located in the Copley Plaza complex. A check for \$1,375,000 was presented to GNEMSDC in support of the new undertaking. (Photo credit: The Bay State Banner - Don West/blackwire.us)

Education Updates

HIPAA Privacy Basics: A Bridge to New Rules of the Road, Tuesday, December 13, 2011, 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

HIPAA Privacy rules changes outlined in Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH) are expected soon, and there will be *very limited time* to comply with what promises to be a difficult operational shift for HIPAA compliance. Covered entities and business associates need to ensure that their *existing* HIPAA operations and platforms are fully functioning, and all policies and procedures are already up-to-date; otherwise the goal of managing the HITECH changes by the compliance dates will be extremely difficult to achieve.

This comprehensive refresher course will examine all aspects of the HIPAA Privacy Rule, with a particular emphasis on areas that create the greatest challenges, including case examples and review of the enforcement focus of the Office of Civil Rights since the implementation of the Breach Rule. This program will also examine the likely outcome of the upcoming HITECH Final Rule changes to HIPAA Privacy, and detail the overlap areas of meaningful use incentives and HIPAA Privacy planning.

The session will be presented by **Jennifer Cox** of Cox & Osowiecki, LLC, a Hartford law firm representing healthcare institutions and providers in regulatory, litigation, licensing, and business matters.

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 (3.25 contact hours).

For additional information, click [here](#). To register, click [here](#).

Volunteers, Employees, and Labor Law Issues, Wednesday, December 14, 2011, 9:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

As hospitals expand the use of volunteers, several legal concerns and questions have surfaced. Properly classifying staff as "employees" or "volunteers" is the first step to ensure compliance with federal and Connecticut wage and hour laws. The session format will provide a forum for participants to raise questions and concerns surrounding the expanded use of volunteers, discuss ways to communicate appropriately in both nonunion and union environments, offer clarification and guidance on how the determination to categorize an individual as a volunteer is made, and discuss other legal issues that arise—including how to ensure individuals remain volunteers.

This session is presented by John G. Zandy, a partner at Wiggin and Dana and chair of its Labor, Employment and Benefits Department, representing employers in all aspects of labor and employment law. John worked previously for the National Labor Relations Board, the Solicitor's Office of the U.S. Department of Labor, and is included in *Best Lawyers in America* for Labor and Employment Law.

For more information, click [here](#). To register, click [here](#).

The ICD-10 Impact on Hospitals and Transition Strategies to Meet the Deadline—Webinar Series: December 14, 2011, January 18, 2012, and February 15, 2012, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Two years and counting... is your hospital on its way to ICD-10-CM/PCS implementation by the October 1, 2013 deadline? Are you planning for the significant financial and clinical impact this will have on your organization? Do you have a strong inter-functional team and timeline in place to achieve "ICD-10 readiness?"

This webinar series, begun in November, focuses on helping hospital leaders and their ICD-10 implementation leaders and teams. The next program in the series is:

Understanding Reimbursement Changes and the Financial Impact of the ICD-10 Transition, Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Notwithstanding the operational issues surrounding the ICD-10 transition, the reimbursement impact could be as significant as APCs were in 2000. Even though not all the facts and figures are now known, there are ways to predict the impact in your facility. This session will focus on what steps your hospital should be taking now, before October 2012, before October 2013, and beyond, to minimize what could otherwise be significant financial impact to your hospital's revenue stream.

Speakers for this webinar series include Andrea Clark, RHIA, CCS, CPC-H, president and founder of Health Revenue Assurance Associates (HRAA) and a past presenter at CHA, and Keith Siddel, MBA, PhD(c), Chief Marketing Officer at Health Revenue Assurance Associates, Inc. Ms. Clark, a nationally prominent health information management expert, will focus specifically on revenue integrity of outpatient coding and billing systems; charge capture; coding and billing; data transference,

and outpatient compliance training services. Mr. Siddel has more than 25 years of experience in healthcare finance, information systems, operational, and compliance training expertise, which includes hospital-based and free standing day surgery sites, emergency room, hospital-based clinics, and ancillary diagnostic services areas.

For more information, click [here](#). To register, email educationservices@chime.org.