2015 Legislative Session Convenes

On Wednesday, January 7, 2015, the members of Connecticut's General Assembly, elected on November 4, 2014, were sworn in and began their two-year terms as members of the House of Representatives and the State Senate. In total, of the 187 members of the General Assembly, there are 29 new members in the House of Representatives and seven new members in the State Senate. The House will have 86 Democrats and 63 Republicans, and the Democrats will hold a 20 to 15 advantage in the State Senate. There are two vacancies in the House and one vacancy in the Senate.

Mostly ceremonial in nature, opening day of the 2015 Legislative Session included the swearing-in of legislators at 10:00 a.m., followed by the adoption of the House, Senate, and Joint Rules, under which legislative committees and the legislature as a whole will operate during the next two years. There were no major changes to the rules adopted in both chambers of the General Assembly. Shortly after 4:00 p.m., Gov. Malloy addressed the General Assembly in a Joint Session. In his State of the State Address, Gov. Malloy laid out the broad themes and budgetary and legislative goals for the 2015 Legislative Session.

Speaking of difficult choices his administration had to make during the last four years, Gov. Malloy stated, "Today marks a new chapter – a chapter in a story that began long before any of us were here, and one that will continue on long after our contributions end." The Governor stated his goals of improving the transportation infrastructure comprising roads, rails, and bridges. The Governor said his proposal, which will be included in his budget, will reach across the state and be comprehensive. He said the plan will include widening I-95 statewide, building new rail/commuter lines, and improving statewide bus service.

The text of the Governor’s inaugural address given at the William O’Neill Armory can be found here.

The Governor did not make any announcements or hint at healthcare-related proposals he will seek to advance in 2015. The precise details of Gov. Malloy’s budget proposal will be made public by mid-February.

Also, as part of the opening day festivities, legislative leaders were officially nominated and approved by both chambers of the General Assembly. Of the four caucuses, only Speaker of the House Brendan Sharkey (D-Hamden) will return to his leadership post. All other legislative leaders will be new to their positions due to the retirement of their predecessors. Legislative Committee leadership was previously announced and made official with the members being sworn into office. In the coming weeks, legislative committees will meet to organize and begin to raise concepts and bills for consideration during the 2015 Legislative Session.

Safety Absolute Adopted by Connecticut Hospitals

On January 1, 2015, as part of the CHA High Reliability Collaborative, Connecticut hospitals adopted the first statewide Safety Absolute. A Safety Absolute is a flag on an existing rule that reinforces the rule as critical to patient safety. The Safety Absolute that hospitals adopted is about patient identification. Specifically, the rule states: Before taking action with a patient or patient information, verify patient identification using first and last name. Validate patient identification using birth date or medical record number and matching to a source.

Hospital staff are reinforcing the rule of checking two forms of identification when they provide care, collect specimens, transfer patients for procedures or studies, prescribe or offer medication, and when they offer food. Staff members are asking for a patient’s name and then validating his or her identity by asking for a date of birth, checking the medical record number, or scanning the barcode on a patient’s ID bracelet. The Safety Absolute rollout includes education and training for hospital staff, managers, and physicians.

The goal of the High Reliability Collaborative is to reduce all-cause preventable harm and empower hospitals to become high reliability organizations, creating cultures with a relentless focus on safety. To date, more than 10,000 hospital staff and physicians have been trained in high reliability safety behaviors.

Last fall, CHA released a patient safety video related to the Safety Absolute for hospitals to share with patients. The video, "Your Safety Comes First in Connecticut Hospitals," can be viewed and downloaded in multiple forms via this link.

Anne Diamond Named CEO of UConn Health’s John Dempsey Hospital

The UConn Health Board of Directors named Anne Diamond the CEO of UConn Health’s John Dempsey Hospital. She has been serving as interim CEO since August 2013.

Since joining UConn Health four years ago, Ms. Diamond has been instrumental in improving the hospital’s performance in several key areas including quality, service, and patient satisfaction scores. The Joint Commission in 2013 rated UConn Health in the top third of hospitals nationally on key quality metrics. Patient satisfaction has improved in almost all hospital areas, and key measures of service, such as emergency department wait times, have improved dramatically.

Financial and operational performance has also improved as UConn Health has recorded more than $50 million in cost savings over the past two years and hospital admissions and operating room cases are now at the highest levels they’ve been in the past four years.

Andrew Agwunobi, MD, UConn Health’s Interim Executive Vice President for Health Affairs, cited Ms. Diamond’s strong focus on safety and quality and also praised her for her leadership and ability to work collaboratively.

"Anne is an inspirational leader with a strong focus on quality and safety," Dr. Agwunobi said, adding that she will lead a major transition in 2016 as construction is completed on UConn Health’s new hospital tower.
Ms. Diamond joined UConn Health in 2010 as Associate Vice President of Clinical Operations and became Chief Operating Officer a year later. Following the resignation of Mike Summerer, MD, Ms. Diamond was named interim CEO in August 2013.

Prior to arriving at UConn, Ms. Diamond worked for Salem Health, the parent organization for Salem Hospital and West Valley Hospital in Salem, Oregon, where she served as Vice President for service lines and operations.

Ms. Diamond also worked for 10 years at the Electric Power Research Institute, an international not-for-profit organization based in Palo Alto, California, where she served in multiple roles including leading the healthcare research division.

Earlier in her career, Ms. Diamond worked at Maimonides Medical Center in New York as Director of the Safety/Radiation Safety Office. She also worked at the University Hospitals of Cleveland as a nuclear medicine technologist and research technologist.

Ms. Diamond earned her undergraduate degree in nuclear medicine technology from Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and is a graduate of Concord School of Law, where she was awarded the Executive Juris Doctor Award for Academic Excellence.

Norman Roth Named Interim CEO of Greenwich Hospital

On January 1, 2015, Norman Roth became the Interim CEO of Greenwich Hospital.

Mr. Roth, who is also Executive VP, Yale New Haven Health System, joined Greenwich Hospital in August 2014 as the interim chief operating officer (COO). He began his career in the Yale New Haven Health System in 1979. In his most recent role, he served as the COO of Bridgeport Hospital. Previously, he was senior vice president for Administration at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

With over 30 years of experience in an academic medical center setting and most recently in a community hospital setting, he has experienced all aspects of hospital management, operations, administration, and facilities. Mr. Roth was the project executive for the development and construction of the Smilow Cancer Hospital in New Haven and in opening the Smilow Cancer Hospital Campus at Greenwich. He is currently a board member of The Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce and Greater New England Minority Supplier Development Council.

Mr. Roth holds a Master’s degree in Health Care Administration from George Washington University. He is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Influenza Widespread in Connecticut

According to the Connecticut Department of Public Health, influenza is now widespread in Connecticut. To date this season, there have been 444 reports of influenza and 180 hospitalizations in Connecticut. No deaths have been reported.

Vaccination is a best practice for patient and healthcare worker safety, and 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, 24 acute care hospitals in Connecticut have implemented a mandatory participation or mandatory vaccination program.

Education Updates

2015 Joint Commission Standards and National Patient Safety Goals Update
Thursday, January 22, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

National expert Diana Scott, VHA, will join us to present CHA’s annual full-day program outlining The Joint Commission’s new standards and national patient safety goals for 2015, and challenges from 2014 with strategies for compliance. Ms. Scott will also review survey process changes incorporating the new patient safety systems chapter, second generation tracers for nutrition services, ambulatory clinics, and surgical services, 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, join us for the program. Their presentations will cover the CMS-required survey process changes, significant developments in hospital options for the submission of core measure data to The Joint Commission, and compliance data on challenging accreditation standards in Connecticut hospitals.

Continuing education credits will be awarded. See the brochure for details.

HRO Creating Sustainability for High Reliability Organizations
Tuesday, January 27, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Event Registration

Breakfast will be served from 8:30-9:00.

This session is for leaders in the organizations that have trained staff in high reliability behaviors and practices and are looking for techniques to improve the likelihood that high reliability does not become a flavor of the month.

HRO Safety Coach Training
Tuesday, January 27, 2015
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Event Registration

Monday, February 9, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Event Registration

Safety Coaches are peer mentors who help remind employees about the safety practices and behaviors that your organization has adopted.

HRO Leadership Method Training for Hospitals
Wednesday, January 28, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Event Registration

Tuesday, February 10, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Event Registration

Breakfast and lunch will be served.

This Leadership session is for new Level 3 hospitals and any new hires in previously trained Level 3 hospitals. Leadership sessions teach the science of safety and behaviors and practices of High Reliability organizations.

**HRO Cause Analysis - Two-Day Program**
Tuesday, February 3, 2015
Wednesday, February 4, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. both days
Event Registration

Breakfast and lunch will be served each day.

Cause analysis teaches staff how to evaluate events, patterns of events, and causes of events and then helps staff ascertain how to implement solutions.

The sessions are for quality staff, safety staff, risk management staff, and other staff that respond to events.

**HRO Rounding to Influence**
Monday, February 9, 2015
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Event Registration

Lunch will be served from 12:30-1:00.

Rounding to Influence is for leaders who want to learn how to be more effective up on the units, when they are coaching staff and reinforcing behaviors.

**CSMS Program: Tackling Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Connecticut Hospital Readmissions**
Wednesday, February 4, 2015
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Event Registration

CHA supports the upcoming program offered by the Connecticut Slate Medical Society (CSMS): Tackling Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Connecticut Hospital Readmissions. The program will feature national, regional, and local speakers on health equity and healthcare access. The symposium will utilize the data from a CSMS study, which found pronounced disparities in the 30-day readmission rates for Black and Latino patients compared to White patients across most acute care sites in Connecticut. These disparities were significant, regardless of patient age, gender, payer, facility volume, co-morbidities, and other demographic factors and patient characteristics.