AHA CEO Rich Umbdenstock Headlines Connecticut Health Council Event

In a time of change, hospitals continue to lead the way in patient care, safety, and quality, Rich Umbdenstock, President and CEO of the American Hospital Association, told a packed house at the January 9 Connecticut Health Council event in Hartford. Mr. Umbdenstock spoke about the challenges and opportunities of healthcare reform and hospital performance improvement.

He spoke of three emerging trends in healthcare that preceded health reform but have been accelerated as a result of it: system integration, financial risk, and public accountability. He said the care environment is increasingly focused on accountability and transparency in relation to cost and quality, and he discussed the challenges and benefits of the new model that puts payment at risk.

Mr. Umbdenstock described how hospitals are leading the way in integrating care throughout the continuum, including physician integration. He noted that hospitals are using technology, population health management, and best practices to improve care—and doing it with fewer resources. Mr. Umbdenstock shared highlights of the positive impact being made by hospitals participating in the national Partnership for Patients initiative to reduce patient harm and readmissions. Connecticut hospitals have been recognized repeatedly for their participation and performance in the Partnership for Patients initiative, particularly for their groundbreaking work in high reliability.

Introducing Mr. Umbdenstock, Chris Dadlez, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, described how Connecticut hospitals contribute nearly $20 billion to the state and local economies, generate nearly 110,000 jobs in our communities, and are leading with innovation and a focus on high-quality, patient-centered care for all through health reform.

“Hospitals are strong supporters of the health reform goal of increasing access to coverage, and we are committed to giving patients the greatest opportunity to receive covered care anywhere in the state,” he said. “All Connecticut hospitals are participating in the health insurance marketplace, and a large majority are participating with all three health insurance plans provided through Access Health CT. We’re also working with the exchange to train our staff to help people enroll in coverage.”

Mr. Dadlez also said hospitals are collaborating with the state to improve care delivery and redesign Medicaid.

CHA and many Connecticut hospitals are members of the Connecticut Health Council, an association of health sector leaders who work together to promote Connecticut as a premier center for the development of businesses, initiatives, and technology that improve health care and wellness both nationally and in the state. The Council is co-chaired by Marty Gavin, President & CEO of Connecticut Children’s Medical Center.
New CHA Diversity Collaborative Video

CHA has released a new video about the CHA Diversity Collaborative: From Intent to Impact. The Collaborative, which began in 2011, comprises 200 people in 28 hospitals across Connecticut who are hard at work to increase diversity in hospital governance and senior management, improve cultural competence in the delivery of care, and increase supplier diversity. The video shows some of the many ways hospitals are implementing strategies to achieve these goals.

View the video by clicking here.

Connecticut’s Healthcare Innovation Plan Submitted to CMS

On December 30, 2013, the state submitted Connecticut's Healthcare Innovation Plan to the federal Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI), an entity within the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) created under healthcare reform to support the development and testing of innovative healthcare payment and service delivery models.

Connecticut hospitals provided input during the development of the proposed plan, which the state describes as its framework and roadmap for the future of how care is delivered and paid for. The plan seeks to move Connecticut toward achievement of higher quality healthcare that produces better health outcomes at a reduced cost. The state calls the plan whole-person centered, targeting the elimination of longstanding and persistent health disparities. It focuses on giving primary care providers a larger role in care, and improving the transitions of care. Providers would be accountable for quality and cost of care, and could share in savings if achieved.

The proposal, if accepted, will provide the basis for a new healthcare delivery and payment model that will impact 80 percent of Connecticut residents.

In related news, on December 27, 2013, Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman announced the appointment of Mark Schaefer, PhD, as the new Director of Healthcare Innovation. In this role, Mr. Schaefer will lead Connecticut’s State Innovation Model Initiative (SIM) by directing and managing the day-to-day activities of implementing the State Healthcare Innovation Plan. A clinical psychologist, Mr. Schaefer previously served as the state’s Medicaid Director.

Influenza is Widespread in CT

Classifying the flu as “widespread” in Connecticut, the Department of Public Health (DPH) is reporting a total of 683 cases for the current season to date, including two flu-associated deaths. DPH is also reporting an increase in emergency department visits and outpatient visits attributed to the flu. Read the latest DPH influenza update here.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Connecticut is among 25 states that have seen a significant increase in flu activity in recent weeks. According to the CDC, most of the viruses characterized so far this season have been 2009 H1N1 viruses (“pH1N1” viruses), which have circulated worldwide as seasonal flu viruses since the flu pandemic of 2009. During the pandemic, younger adults and children, and particularly people with chronic medical conditions and pregnant women, were harder hit by pH1N1 compared with adults aged 65 and older. According to the CDC, while it’s not possible to predict which influenza viruses will predominate for the entire 2013-2014 influenza season, if pH1N1 virus continues to circulate widely, illness that disproportionately affects young and middle-aged adults may occur this season.

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. Twenty-two acute care hospitals in Connecticut have implemented a mandatory flu vaccination policy.

Education Updates

Demonstrating the Financial Impact of Quality Initiatives

Monday, January 27, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Healthcare leaders in all disciplines recognize the need to identify, analyze, and demonstrate the financial benefit of quality initiatives. However, those involved in such initiatives, clinicians and non-financial managers, often find it difficult to articulate the positive financial outcomes that accrue to quality improvements. This program will help clinicians and non-financial managers involved in quality improvement initiatives understand the intersection between quality and cost, and how to “connect the dots” from quality improvement to financial benefit.

The presenter will be William J. Ward, Jr., director of the MHS Degree Program in Health Finance and Management at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, where he teaches accounting and finance. Mr. Ward is a former senior healthcare executive with more than 25 years of experience in healthcare finance and operations.

Continuing education credits will be awarded. Please see the brochure for more details.