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Save the Date for CHA's 100th Annual Meeting



Forum Held on Behavioral Health Practices in the ED



On December 18, CHA and Beacon Health Options - Connecticut co-sponsored a forum on emergency department care of behavioral health patients. Beacon is the administrative services organization retained by the Connecticut Departments of Social Services, Children and Families, and Mental Health and Addiction Services. More than 100 people attended the forum.

Opening remarks delivered by Carl Schiessl, Director Regulatory Advocacy, CHA, and Lori Szczygiel, CEO, Beacon, addressed the rising number of adults and children relying on hospital emergency departments to treat their behavioral health disorders. The morning program included presentations focused on Connecticut data, as well as on best practices related to both the youth and adult patient populations.

Robert Plant, MD, Senior Vice President for Quality and Innovation, Beacon, presented 2016 data on the utilization of ED behavioral health services by adults enrolled in the Medicaid program. After his presentation, panelists including Robert Carroll, MD, Senior Medical Director, Emergency Medicine, Eastern Connecticut Health Network (ECHN), Maria Sullivan, Administrative Director of Behavioral Health, ECHN, and Manchester Police Chief Marc Montminy, recounted the development of the HOPE Initiative to address the victims of the opioid epidemic. They were joined by Rebecca Allen, MPH, Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR), who offered a presentation on the work of recovery coaches in the emergency departments at The William W. Backus Hospital, Lawrence + Memorial Hospital, Manchester Memorial Hospital, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, and Windham Hospital.

Carrie Bourdon, Assistant Vice President Performance Improvement, Beacon, presented 2016 data on the utilization of ED behavioral health services by children enrolled in the Medicaid program. After her presentation, Claudia Moreno, MD, Medical Director of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry and Psychiatric Emergencies, Yale New Haven Children's Hospital, led a panel discussion on best practices to prevent child ED overstays. Her presentation was followed by a presentation by Jessica Collins, Behavioral Health Nurse Manager at MidState Medical Center, on best practices to connect children to care from the ED. These programs were selected for presentation based on the success achieved by each hospital in their respective subject areas.

The program ended with a demonstration by Beacon of a proposed online bed tracking tool for inpatient psychiatric beds in hospitals. Beacon is working with CHA, hospitals, and state agency representatives to develop a new tool that is intended to facilitate the location of available inpatient psychiatric beds and the placement of behavioral health patients into these beds. Members offered valuable input from the hospital perspective on the practical and operational aspects of this online tool, which is under development.

January Special Session Addresses Medicare Savings Program



The General Assembly convened in Special Session on January 8 to vote on a bill that reverses newly established eligibility standards for the Medicare Savings Program (MSP). MSP provides financial assistance to low-income seniors to pay for their Medicare Part B premium.

The new eligibility standards were passed as part of the FY 2018-2019 budget in an effort to save about \$54 million.

The bipartisan bill, **HB 7601, *An Act Concerning Adjustments To The State Budget Regarding The Medicare Savings Program And Eligibility Therefor***, passed by both chambers of the General Assembly with a veto-proof margin, will restore full funding to the MSP, which provides subsidies to help pay for Medicare Part B premiums, deductibles, and co-insurance for eligible participants. The \$54 million was realized by transfers, lapses, and reductions in funding to the Teachers' Retirement System. There is no impact to the hospital agreement.

Last Friday, the Governor indicated that he would veto the bill. Additionally, he said he would independently delay changes to the MSP and has urged legislators to address the more than \$200 million FY 18 state budget deficit, instead of addressing the fix to the MSP.

The General Assembly adjourned sine die and will convene on February 7, 2018 for the start of the 2018 Legislative Session. (Please click [here](#) for CHA's 2018 Legislative Agenda.)

The Office of Legislative Research summary of HB 7601 can be found [here](#), and the fiscal note can be found [here](#).

Special Election Held in the 15th House District

On January 9, voters in the towns of Bloomfield and Windsor elected Bobby Gibson (D-Bloomfield) as their next State Representative from the 15th House District. The Special Election was held to fill the vacancy created when former State Representative David Baram (D-Bloomfield) resigned after winning a Special Election to serve as Judge of Probate from the Tobacco Valley District Court.

Mr. Gibson is a middle school science teacher in the Bloomfield School System and has served as a coach for football, track and field, and girls basketball. In addition to his work with children, Mr. Gibson is a Sons of the American Legion Commander and a Trustee at Hopewell Baptist Church.

Mr. Gibson beat petitioning candidate Joe Suggs, formerly the State Treasurer and Mayor of Bloomfield, with an unofficial vote of 881 to 748.

With this election, the Democrats retain their 79-72 majority in the House of Representatives.

Results are considered unofficial until certified by Secretary of the State Denise Merrill. Once certified, it is expected that Mr. Gibson will be sworn into office and will assume duties and committee assignments at the start of the 2018 Legislative Session, Wednesday, February 7.

House Democrat Linda Gentile to Retire at End of Term



On January 8, State Representative Linda Gentile (D-Ansonia) announced that she will not seek reelection in November 2018 to the 104th House District seat. First elected in 2004, Rep. Gentile currently serves as a Deputy Speaker of the House and serves on the Higher Education, Planning and Development, and Legislative Management Committees. The 104th House district comprises the towns of Ansonia and Derby.

Most recently, Rep. Gentile served as a key member of the Speaker's leadership team in working with hospitals to come to a budget agreement for FYs 2018 and 2019.

"Rep. Gentile has been a steadfast supporter of Griffin Hospital, which literally sits in the middle of her district," said Patrick Charmel, President and Chief Executive Officer, Griffin Hospital. "As a former Griffin Board member, Linda understands the challenges faced by Connecticut's community hospitals and has worked tirelessly to protect our ability to meet the healthcare needs of those we serve throughout the Lower Naugatuck Valley and beyond. Her commitment and skill was evident in the most recent state budget deliberations during which she facilitated a series of very productive meetings between legislative leaders and hospital executives that resulted in a new level of understanding and cooperation and led to a substantial reduction of the burden of the state's provider tax on Connecticut's hospitals without increased cost to the state. She also championed the passage of the saline flush legislation this past session, which enables hospitals to utilize revolutionary new technology that spares hospital inpatients from painful needle sticks to draw blood for laboratory testing."

Rep. Gentile's announcement is the first of what is anticipated to be many retirement announcements from members of the General Assembly between now and the end of the 2018 Legislative Session. State elections will be held on Tuesday, November 6, 2018.

The Charlotte Hungerford Hospital Affiliates with Hartford HealthCare



The Charlotte Hungerford Hospital (CHH) and Hartford HealthCare (HHC) became officially affiliated on January 1, 2018. They commemorated their partnership at a signing ceremony on December 18 at CHH.

Executives from both organizations, members of the CHH board, local politicians, and the Mayor of Torrington were on hand to offer congratulations and witness this historic event. A 120-day strategic planning process is starting, which will outline the priorities and plans for the affiliation, as well as the organizational goals that will form the basis for the transition and future operations.

As a result of the affiliation, CHH became a member of Hartford HealthCare, which includes Hartford Hospital, Backus Hospital, The Hospital of Central Connecticut, MidState Medical Center, Natchaug Hospital, Windham Hospital, and a wide spectrum of additional services, which include urgent care, outpatient care, a primary care network, health centers, rehabilitation, senior services, LIFE STAR, homecare, surgery centers, a Behavioral Health Network, as well as other health services.

“With this final step of our affiliation in place, a timely and thoughtful transformation of our health services will begin so that access to care is secure for the people of northwest Connecticut and the future of that care is a strategic blending of CHH’s historic sense of place and purpose with the financial, clinical, and operational acumen that come with being part of a larger health system,” said Dan McIntyre, President of Hartford HealthCare Northwest Region.

“We are delighted to have reached this important milestone and look forward to this affiliation with Charlotte Hungerford,” said Elliot Joseph, HHC’s Chief Executive Officer. “Bringing our vision of being most trusted for personalized coordinated care to the residents of Northwestern Connecticut — in partnership with Charlotte Hungerford — is a true win for everyone, especially the local community. Building a true system of care across the continuum requires these types of new relationships.”

The affiliation will enable both organizations to share the collective knowledge and expertise of their staff and physicians and give patients easier access to a wider range of services, technology, and treatments.

The goal of the strategic partnership is to enhance CHH’s existing service line options and programs, improve care coordination, provide additional access points for care delivery, support the recruitment of skilled providers, assist with community benefit programming, and allow for further infrastructure investments.

With a backdrop of an evolving healthcare delivery system, reimbursement challenges, and new patient demographics, CHH engaged in a thoughtful self-assessment and evaluation process to address strategic options. The conclusion was that there were compelling reasons for CHH to seek a strategic affiliation with a larger system.

Through a rigorous and competitive evaluation process driven by members of the community and medical staff, Hartford HealthCare was selected as the preferred system with whom to partner because it demonstrated the greatest collaboration for an affiliation, a mutual commitment to grow services, and the clearest shared vision. Hartford HealthCare officials cited CHH’s tradition of providing high quality care to the people of northwestern Connecticut, as well as the organization’s robust partnerships with local agencies and groups, in their reasons for the affiliation.

Education Update

Issue-Based Forum: Patient Access Rights and Release of Information

Wednesday, January 17, 2018

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

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

CHA members are invited to attend an issue-based forum with a focus on assisting hospitals with achieving understanding and compliance related to patient access rights and release of information, including an emphasis on the nuances specific to substance use treatment records. There is no cost associated with this event, which is intended for a broad hospital audience.

Prematurity Prevention: Increasing the Utilization of 17-Hydroxyprogesterone and Low Dose Aspirin Among Eligible Pregnant Patients in Connecticut

Tuesday, January 23, 2018

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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

Premature birth is a complex issue, for which many of the causes are still being researched. However, there are a handful of evidence-based interventions that have proven beneficial for a great number of eligible patients. Join CHA’s Connecticut Perinatal Quality Collaborative and the March of Dimes to engage with other prenatal care providers, women’s healthcare advocates, support systems, administrators, and policy makers across Connecticut to work collaboratively to increase identification of women at risk for preeclampsia and repeat pre-term birth, and collectively inform efforts aimed at the elimination of barriers to access these treatments.

Jay Iams, MD, Emeritus Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Ohio State University, Wexner Medical Center, Obstetrical Lead, Ohio Perinatal Quality Collaborative, Principal Investigator, OSU NICHD Maternal Fetal Medicine and Nullipara Research Networks, will present the keynote presentation at this conference.

17-hydroxyprogesterone (17P) and low dose aspirin are among the eight interventions promoted nationally by the March of Dimes, with an aim to reduce the U.S. pre-term birth rate to 8.1% by 2020 and 5.5% by 2030.

Decreasing Early Elective Deliveries

Tuesday, January 23, 2018

9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

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

In partnership with CHA, the March of Dimes, and the Anthem Foundation, the Improving kNowledge to Decreasing Early Elective Deliveries (INDEED) project is working to decrease the average early elective delivery rate of 3% in Connecticut—which is above the national average of 2%. CHA’s Connecticut Perinatal Quality Collaborative is pleased to offer a conference on January 23 providing best practices to achieve this goal.

This conference is designed for prenatal care providers, obstetricians, labor and delivery nurses, and others who work with this patient population.

2018 Joint Commission Standards and National Patient Safety Goals Update

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

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 2018 and challenges from 2017 with strategies for compliance. Ms. Scott will also review survey process changes, patient safety and Sentinel Event alerts and tips, and CMS focus areas, as well as best practices for a successful survey. CHA is also pleased to have Mark A. Crafton, MPA, MT(ASCP), Executive Director of State & External Relations, at The Joint Commission (TJC), and Jennifer M. Hoppe, MPH, Senior Associate Director, State and External Relations at TJC, join 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 on challenging accreditation standards in Connecticut hospitals.

