CHA Announces 2004 Advocacy, Legislative Agendas

The CHA Board of Trustees approved the Association’s Advocacy Agenda and its Legislative Agenda at its most recent meeting.

The documents, which were developed with substantial membership input and involvement, are a comprehensive articulation of CHA’s advocacy priorities and objectives for 2004, reflecting critical issues facing Connecticut hospitals.

The 2004 Advocacy Agenda delineates CHA’s commitment to six broad advocacy priority areas at both the state and federal level: hospital reimbursement, medical liability system reform, mental health system reform, quality and patient safety, regulatory oversight, and healthcare workforce issues.

The 2004 Legislative Agenda identifies specific legislative objectives for achieving CHA’s advocacy goals. The document will serve as the roadmap for CHA’s activities at the Capitol during the 2004 legislative session, which begins Wednesday, February 4.

Both documents, as well as a variety of other materials and information on CHA’s advocacy efforts, are available on CHA’s website at www.cthosp.org.

Healthcare Top of Mind Among Voters

A national survey commissioned by the American Hospital Association (AHA) indicates that affordable healthcare has emerged as the country’s leading concern after the economy and jobs, and terrorism and national security.

Of the 2,000 healthcare consumers who were polled, a majority indicated that they felt the current healthcare system met their families’ needs, while almost 75% felt the current system did not meet the needs of most other Americans. Over 90% of those polled expected to vote in the November elections.

The poll found that voters felt strongly about access and coverage, with a majority of respondents advocating that every citizen should have access to healthcare, that children have health coverage, and that Americans have access to preventive care services. Prescription drug coverage for seniors and choice of physician were also issues that voters felt were important.

The complete results of the poll are available on the “Campaign 2004” section of the AHA website at www.aha.org.

Hartford Hospital Achieves Magnet Recognition Status

Hartford Hospital has been granted the “Magnet Recognition for Excellence in Nursing Services” by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association (ANA).

Magnet Recognition has been awarded to fewer than 100 hospitals in the U.S. and only one other Connecticut hospital, Middlesex Hospital, which received the designation in June 2001.
To achieve Magnet status, Hartford Hospital had to demonstrate its adherence to more than 65 standards developed by ANCC through both an extensive written document and a three-day site visit by ANCC in November. ANCC standards include demonstrating a collaborative practice that values the contributions of nurses, educational support for nurses within the facility, the quality of care provided by the institution, research-based practices, a shared governance structure that encourages nursing input on decisions for patient care, and the promotion of an empowered nursing service.

Magnet designation has been proven to be a major factor in recruiting and retaining nurses, and has also been shown to be a factor in attracting physicians.

Commenting on the hospital’s Magnet status, Laura Caramanica, R.N., Ph.D., Vice President of Nursing at Hartford Hospital, said, “I’m extremely proud of our nurses, and am grateful for their commitment to making this happen. I’m privileged to work side by side with such a dedicated and professional group.”

Red Cross Urges Donations, Citing Critically Low Blood Supplies

Citing record low blood inventories, the American Red Cross (ARC) Connecticut Blood Services Region has implemented its Emergency Red Cell Allocation Procedure, effective this morning.

Blood drives at hospitals have been doing well, the Red Cross reports, with Hartford Hospital and Connecticut Children's Medical Center coming in at well above 100% of their goals in the past week.

Meanwhile, the Red Cross held a press conference Wednesday at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center (CCMC) to urge the public to donate blood, again citing the emergency shortage. Issuing the urgent appeal for donations were Larry Gold, President & CEO of CCMC; J. Robert Galvin, M.D., Commissioner of the Department of Public Health; Arnold Altman, M.D., CCMC’s Director of Hematology & Oncology; Gary A. Wandmacher, CEO of ARC Connecticut Blood Services Region; and several CCMC patient families who have ongoing blood services needs.

Also, several national blood banking organizations joined with Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson earlier in the week to urge all eligible Americans to immediately donate blood, citing critically low blood supplies on the national level.

Survey: Impasse Puts Pension Plans at Risk

Congress' failure to pass pension reform is jeopardizing employer-sponsored pension plans, according to a recent Hewitt Associates survey of 200 large employers.

More than one-third (39%) of survey respondents that offer pension and other defined benefit plans said that without congressional reform, they would freeze the plans entirely or restrict them to current employees. Only 11% said they would maintain their traditional pension plans, while the remainder said they would take a "wait-and-see approach."

The U.S. Senate adjourned for its winter recess last month without acting on a House-passed pension reform bill, but unanimously agreed to take up the legislation when Congress re-convenes on January 20, 2004.

CHA is continuing to advocate for pension reform, since pension expenses are among the many escalating cost pressures that are threatening the fragile financial infrastructure of Connecticut’s hospitals.

Program Covers Transition to Management

Leadership roles in the workplace are far more challenging and complicated than ever before. After meeting the challenge of acclimating to their role, new managers find that they are charged with organizational demands for high productivity combined with financial and regulatory prudence, tasks that must also be balanced with an excellent grasp of human relations concepts.

Leaping from Staff to Management: You’re a Manager - Now What?, an interactive training session for new managers, will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 27, 2004.

The program is designed to cover the basics of management and leadership in theory and applied practice. It also lays the groundwork for continued future development of management and leadership skills.

For more information, visit the Education section of the CHA website at www.chime.org or contact Rhonda Bates at (203) 294-7267 or bates@chime.org.