President Bush Continues to Call for Medicare Cuts in State of the Union Address

In his last State of the Union Address on January 28, 2008, President Bush did not propose any new health care initiatives nor did he put forth a plan to provide health insurance to uninsured Americans. Instead, he talked about his previous proposals and emphasized his continued desire to cut Medicare spending and strengthen the private insurance market through the expansion of Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) and the establishment of Association Health Plans.

It is anticipated that the President’s proposed FY2009 budget, to be released in early February 2008, will include dramatic cuts to the Medicare program.

Quality, Access, and Safety Workgroup of HealthFirst Connecticut Authority Holds First Meeting

The Quality, Access, and Safety Workgroup of the HealthFirst Connecticut Authority held its first meeting on January 31, 2008. During this introductory meeting, workgroup members reviewed the Authority’s charge and the principles presented in the Institute of Medicine’s Insuring America’s Health, which are the guiding principles to be used for the Authority’s recommendations.

Jennifer Jackson, CHA President and CEO, recommended that the workgroup and Authority should also address the issues related to the underinsured, specifically the Medicaid and SAGA population. Brian Fillipo, MD, CHA Vice President, is also a member of the Quality, Access, and Safety Workgroup.

The workgroup discussed various approaches to organizing its work and identified topics to be discussed, including access to primary care and specialty care, emergency department over-utilization,

CHA Advancing Hospital Priorities in Hartford and Washington, D.C.

This week, CHA staff members began meetings with state and federal lawmakers to advance Connecticut hospitals’ priorities prior to the February 6, 2008 start of the Connecticut General Assembly session and the release of President Bush’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 budget within the next month.

In Hartford, Jim Iacobellis, CHA Vice President of Government Relations, Brian Cournoyer, CHA Manager of Government Relations, and Stephen Frayne, CHA Senior Vice President of Health Policy, held meetings with Sen. Jonathan Harris (D-West Hartford) and Rep. Peter Villano (D-Hamden), co-chairs of the Human Services Committee, to discuss the CHA proposal for increasing Medicaid and State-Administered General Assistance (SAGA) rates to cover the full cost of providing care, and continuous eligibility for the HUSKY program. During the meetings, CHA requested that these issues be raised for committee consideration.

At the federal level, Iacobellis and Frayne met with Reps. Chris Murphy (CT-5) and Joseph Courtney (CT-2) to ask for their assistance in seeking a change that would allow SAGA days to be counted in Medicare Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) calculations, which would increase hospitals’ Medicare reimbursements. Both Congressman are supportive of this proposal and have agreed to work with the Connecticut Congressional Delegation and their other congressional colleagues on this issue.

CHA Releases 2008 Legislative Agenda

At its January meeting, the CHA Board of Trustees approved the 2008 Legislative Agenda. The agenda includes specific proposals for improving the health of Connecticut residents, enhancing quality and patient safety, ensuring access and coverage, securing fair and adequate reimbursement, reforming the mental health system, and building a strong workforce.

More Than 100 Attend CHA Healthcare Executive Summit

Save the Date: CHA 13th Annual Human Resources Forum

Save the Date: 2008 Smart Moves Annual Forum on Safe Patient Handling

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Save the Date!

CHA 13th Annual Human Resources Forum

On Tuesday, February 26, 2008, CHA will host its 13th Annual Human Resources Forum. Jo Manion, PhD, Founder and Principal Consultant, Manion & Associates, will set the stage during her keynote address for a full-day review of strategies for creating a positive workplace. With over 30 years experience in healthcare and business, Manion has worked widely in the area of leadership development, serving as a coach for both individuals and organizations, and has authored six books.

This premier educational program will be held from 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at CHA. To register, visit the education section of the CHA website. For more information, contact Susan Distasio at distasio@chime.org.

2008 Smart Moves Annual Forum on Safe Patient Handling

On Thursday, February 21, 2008, the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA), the Connecticut Nurses’ Association (CNA), the Connecticut Association of Not-for-Profit Providers for the Aging (CANPFA), the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities (CAHCF), and the Connecticut Association for Home Care & Hospice (CAHCH) will collaboratively present the 2008 Smart Moves Annual Forum on Safe Patient Handling.

William Charney, DOH, a national consultant in Occupational Safety and Health, will kick off the forum with his keynote address, The Link Between Safe Patient Handling and Patient Care Quality. Charney has been a safety engineer in healthcare for 25 years and has directed health and safety programs in major healthcare delivery systems. He has published approximately 20 peer review articles, has developed new technology and systems to protect healthcare workers for ergonomic injury, including the first portable patient lift for home health care workers, and developed the Lift Team Method to reduce back injury to acute and long-term care providers.

This program will be held from 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at CHA. For more information, contact Liz Beaudin at beaudin@chime.org. To register, click here.

behavioral health, dental care, patient safety and quality across settings, chronic disease management, health disparities, and electronic health records. In addition, it was recommended that the workgroup review the Governor’s Hospital System Strategic Task Force Report.

More Than 100 Attend CHA Healthcare Executive Summit

On Tuesday, January 29, 2008, CHA hosted its 4th Annual Healthcare Executive Summit, welcoming more than 100 healthcare executives for a half-day of professional development focused on political, clinical, leadership, and financial performance issues.

Political commentator Norman Ornstein, PhD, gave the keynote address describing the current political landscape in Washington and its impact on healthcare issues. Concurrent sessions included Success Factors for High Clinical Performance: The Role of Leadership and Governance presented by Dale W. Bratzler, DO, MPH; Strategic Medical Technology Planning: The Role of Evidence presented by Winifred S. Hayes, President and CEO of Hayes, Inc.; and a presentation by Andrew Webber, President and CEO of the National Business Coalition on Health, offering a perspective on how business leaders drive healthcare reform.