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**CHA Testifies Before the Mental Health Services Working Group**



On January 29, CHA testified at a public hearing hosted by the Mental Health Services Working Group of the legislature's Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety. The Task Force will provide recommendations to the legislature so that it may adopt measures to prevent gun violence, improve school safety, and increase access to mental health services.

Carl Schiessl, Director, Regulatory Advocacy, CHA, commented on the lack of access to mental health services and the impact the recent state budget cuts will have on hospitals' abilities to subsidize mental health services.

Others who testified on behalf of Connecticut hospitals included Yann Poncin, MD, Medical Director, Children's Psychiatric Inpatient Service and Child Psychiatric Consultative Service to Pediatric Emergency Department, Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital; Frank Fortunati, MD, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Yale-New Haven Hospital; and Harold I. Schwartz, MD, Psychiatrist-in-Chief, Hartford Hospital, Institute of Living, and Vice President, Behavioral Health, Hartford Hospital.

"A patient may spend days or weeks in a hospital emergency department, waiting for a bed in an appropriate facility, a spot in the right outpatient setting, or for appropriate housing, simply because there are not enough resources available," said Mr. Schiessl in his testimony. "And, as the state has trimmed its budget, resources for mental health patients have been among the casualties. As recently as last month, hospital funding was reduced by a staggering \$103 million dollars. This cut will impact our ability to provide care for patients, including those who require mental health services... The annual loss to hospitals for unreimbursed and under-reimbursed mental health services amounts to millions of dollars."

Mr. Schiessl closed by providing data demonstrating how funding is decreasing while hospitals are seeing an increase in utilization of their mental health services, including an alarming spike in the number of younger patients seeking such services. Read Mr. Schiessl's testimony by clicking [here](#).

The Mental Health Services Working Group is expected to provide its recommendations on or before February 15, 2013, with the goal of legislative action on consensus policy changes by the end of February. Additional information can be found on the Task Force's [website](#).

**Hospitals' Safety Work Highlighted in Journal for Healthcare Quality**



*Peter Pronovost, MD, PhD, FCCM, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine*

Connecticut hospitals' work preventing central-line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) was published on January 24 in the Journal for Healthcare Quality. The article described how a multifaceted intervention program shown to be successful in Michigan was implemented in Connecticut, resulting in a reduction of CLABSI rates. Even though the statewide CLABSI rate in Connecticut was low, rates were reduced even further and well below national benchmarks.

Seventeen ICUs, representing 14 hospitals and 104,695 catheter days, were analyzed. Starting in 2009, hospitals collected 12 months of baseline data and 21 months of post-intervention data for the "On the CUSP: Stop BSI" project. The overall mean CLABSI rate decreased by nearly 50 percent—from 1.8 infections per 1,000 catheter days at baseline to 1.1 infections per catheter days after the interventions were implemented.

This reduction in infections was achieved through an approach focused on evidence-based care for the insertion, maintenance, and timely removal of central lines, as well as implementation of the Comprehensive Unit-based Safety Program (CUSP) that includes tools, checklists, and communications that foster the sharing of experiences, best practices, and results. Connecticut hospitals continue to make progress in decreasing CLABSI rates through the Partnership for Patients program.

In addition to lead author Alison Hong, MD, Director, Quality and Patient Safety, Connecticut Hospital Association, study authors included Peter Pronovost, MD, PhD, FCCM, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and other experts from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

Read the abstract [here](#).

## Congressman Joe Courtney Announces Renewal of Medicare Dependent Hospital Program for Windham Hospital



*Windham Hospital and Natchaug Hospital President and CEO Steve Larcen and Congressman Joe Courtney (D-CT 2)*

On January 28, Congressman Joe Courtney (D-CT 2), joined by Windham Hospital and Natchaug Hospital President and CEO Steve Larcen, announced the renewal of the Medicare Dependent Hospital (MDH) program, restoring \$5.2 million to the hospital and ensuring that Windham Hospital will continue to offer a full range of essential medical services to residents of eastern Connecticut.

The program expired on September 30, 2012, but earlier this month, Congress agreed to extend it—thanks in part to a push by Congressmen Courtney and Congressman John Larson, a member of the House Ways and Means Committee.

MDH provides enhanced reimbursement for small rural hospitals that have at least 60 percent of inpatient days or discharges covered by Medicare. Small rural hospitals are more vulnerable to inadequate Medicare payments than other hospitals because they are less able to cross-subsidize with private payer reimbursements. As such, Congress established special payment protections to buttress these hospitals. Windham Hospital is the only hospital in the state and one of 212 nationwide that meet the criteria supported by MDH.

“Windham Hospital has long provided high-quality, cost-effective care to the residents of Windham and surrounding counties,” said Congressman Courtney. “The Medicare Dependent Hospital (MDH) program, which expired last October, has helped ensure fair Medicare reimbursements for this care. Fortunately, the *American Taxpayer Relief Act* included a year-long extension of the MDH program, upholding an obligation for fair Medicare payments to Windham and dozens of other hospitals, and ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries continue to receive the quality care they need and deserve.”

“The loss of funding through the Medicare Dependent Hospital program would have been devastating in our effort to provide critical health care services to residents of eastern Connecticut,” said Dr. Larcen. “I thank Congressmen Courtney and Larson for their commitment and determination to ensure the people of eastern Connecticut have access to world-class care right here in the community and that Windham Hospital remains a vital component of the local economy.”

The \$5.2 million in funding from MDH represented about 6 percent of Windham Hospital's operating budget in 2012. The provision in the “fiscal cliff” legislation extends the MDH program until October 1, 2013.

## Connecticut Hospitals Highlight Policy Makers



CHA is profiling newly elected members of Connecticut's congressional delegation and key leaders in healthcare in the Connecticut General Assembly. These elected officials will play a new and/or important role in the decisions being made in Washington and Hartford. CHA has profiled [U.S. Representative Elizabeth Esty](#), [U.S. Senator Christopher Murphy](#), and [State Rep. Brendan Sharkey](#). This week, we profile Connecticut House of Representatives Majority Leader Joe Aresimowicz.

## Connecticut House of Representatives Majority Leader Joe Aresimowicz: Representing the Communities of Berlin and Southington in the 30th House District



State Rep. Joe Aresimowicz (D-Berlin) was reelected to a 5th term in the Connecticut State House of Representatives on November 6, 2012. On January 9, 2013, Rep. Aresimowicz was sworn into office and elected by his peers to serve as House Majority Leader, the second ranking member of the House of Representatives. In this role, he is responsible for managing the legislative activity on the House floor during sessions, and he is part of the inner circle of decision makers on budgetary and legislative matters.

Prior to being elected as Majority Leader, Rep. Aresimowicz served as Deputy Speaker and as a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee; Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee; Housing Committee; and the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. Prior to joining the legislature, Rep. Aresimowicz served three terms on the Berlin Town Council.

Honorably discharged from the United States Army Reserve, Rep. Aresimowicz served as a combat medic and has been recognized by local and statewide organizations including the American Legion, the Connecticut State Firefighters Association, and the Connecticut Working Families Party. A supporter of environmental issues, Rep. Aresimowicz received a perfect score from the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters for his support and advocacy of environmental initiatives. In addition to his public service, Rep. Aresimowicz was also a incorporator of the former New Britain General

Hospital and the Boys & Girls Club of New Britain.

A lifelong Berlin resident, Rep. Aresimowicz and his wife Crystal have three children: Michael, Ryan, and Kaitlynn.

Rep. Aresimowicz joins Speaker Sharkey and other members of the General Assembly leadership team in managing legislative activities during the 2013 Legislative Session. CHA looks forward to working with Rep. Aresimowicz on issues of importance to hospitals during the session.

## Hospital Economic Impact Website Relunched



CHA has relunched its hospital impact website, [ProtectMyHospitalCT.org](http://ProtectMyHospitalCT.org). The website allows people to calculate the economic impact of their local hospital on the communities around it. The figures include economic activity generated by jobs, goods, and services directly paid for by the hospital, as well as the ripple effect of those funds into the local economy.

Last week, CHA released its annual report, [Connecticut Hospitals: Improving Health, Strengthening Connecticut's Economy](#), which described how Connecticut hospitals contribute \$20 billion to the state's economy. According to the CHA report, Connecticut hospitals provide more than 54,000 jobs, with a total annual payroll of \$5.2 billion. Earnings by Connecticut hospital and health system employees reverberate through the community, creating an additional 55,000 jobs in the local economy.

We encourage you to follow [ProtectMyHospitalCT.org](http://ProtectMyHospitalCT.org) and [CHA](#) on Facebook and [Twitter](#).

## Education Updates

### HIPAA Privacy and Security Rule Changes

Tuesday, February 12, 2013

8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

The long-delayed HIPAA privacy and security rule changes have finally been issued! These changes will substantially affect operations for all HIPAA covered entities and business associates. This program will explain what's changed, review which policies and contracts related to business associates and their subcontractors need revision, and outline the compliance deadlines. The program presenter is Jennifer Cox, a founding member of Cox & Osowiecki, LLC, a Hartford law firm representing all levels of healthcare institutions and providers in regulatory, litigation, licensing, and business matters.

View the save-the-date flyer [here](#). Register [here](#).

### Leaping from Staff to Management: You're a Manager. Now What?

Tuesday, February 19, 2013

8:30 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

Making the transition from being a staff person one day to a supervisor/manager the next is a significant step. Being effective in a leadership role is far more challenging and complicated than ever before. Managing the demands of your organization for high productivity and quality, combined with financial prudence and regulatory compliance, are only part of the equation. You will discover that those tasks must be balanced with an excellent grasp of human relations skills in working closely and collaboratively with others.

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

View the brochure [here](#). Register [here](#).

### Lean Principles: Process Flow and Value Stream Mapping in Healthcare

Wednesday, February 20, 2013

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

As the demands of health reform drive change in all areas of healthcare delivery, hospital leaders are focused on transforming their organizations through strategies that simultaneously increase revenue and sharply reduce costs. Lean principles offer leaders a management system and methodology that eliminates road blocks and allows hospitals to improve the quality of care for patients by reducing errors and waiting times. It is a systematic approach to reducing costs and risks, while simultaneously setting the stage for growth and expansion. Please note: this is a two-session program – the second session is being held on February 27, 2013. Participants should plan to attend both sessions.

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

View the brochure [here](#). Register [here](#).

### **2013 Healthcare Executive Summit**

Tuesday, February 26, 2013

8:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

The 2013 Healthcare Executive Summit will focus on the unprecedented strategic and operational change underway in hospitals, other healthcare organizations, businesses, and various institutions throughout the nation—triggered by health reform. Rob Reilly, Chief Marketing Officer, GE Healthcare, who is returning to CHA at member request following his thought-provoking presentation at the CEO Forum last November, will present a provocative look at emerging new healthcare models—and GE's unique perspective on the threats and opportunities it faces to provide health benefits to its 600,000 employees while managing almost \$3 billion in health related costs. We are pleased to announce that also joining us for the Summit is Susan Keane Baker, author and nationally recognized speaker, who will present HCAHPS and Willingness to Recommend: What Senior Leadership Can Do Next. Ms. Baker will focus on specific actions senior leaders can implement to move the dial on HCAHPS rankings, including best practices of hospitals with a willingness to recommend of 90 percent or more.

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

View the brochure [here](#). Register [here](#).

