Governor Dannel P. Malloy unveiled a $19.87 billion budget on February 3 that includes the continuation of a $90 million cut to hospitals, as well as other reductions in healthcare spending.

The Governor’s budget proposal, which contains cuts of nearly $600 million in the next fiscal year, includes a 5.75% across-the-board cut to all state agency budgets and non-education aid to towns. Governor Malloy also called for the elimination of more than 1,000 state jobs through attrition and other means.

The proposal also contains the following provisions related to hospitals and healthcare:

- Reduces funding to the Small Hospital Pool by $3 million ($1 million state share). The Small Hospital Fund is reduced from $14.8 million to $11.8 million, and Johnson Memorial Hospital is removed from the Fund due to its recent acquisition.
- Reduces funding to Connecticut Children’s Medical Center by $775,407.
- Reallocates funding for the implementation of hospital roundtable requirements – initially appropriated to only the Department of Social Services – to other agencies, including the Department of Public Health, the University of Connecticut Health Center, the Lieutenant Governor’s Office, and the Department of Insurance.
- Eliminates funding for Community Care Teams.
- Reduces by $15.8 million grants for mental health and substance abuse services.
- Consolidates behavioral health boards and councils.

Governor Malloy outlined his plans during his annual address to a joint session of the Connecticut General Assembly. Click here to view a PowerPoint summary of the budget.

Jennifer Jackson: Governor’s Proposed Budget Includes Cuts to Core Healthcare Services

In response to the Governor’s budget announcement, Jennifer Jackson, CEO, Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA), made the following statement:

“Governor Malloy’s proposed budget cuts over $90 million from core healthcare services – hospitals and programs like Community Care Teams – and we urge legislators to oppose these reductions.

“Connecticut hospitals are taxed $556 million each year, and the state returns only $165 million to hospitals. That is a cost of $391 million each year, and it is simply unsustainable. Connecticut’s hospitals are offering a solid solution to help remedy the problem today and into the future.

“The Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis at the University of Connecticut released an economic analysis showing that by returning to hospitals the taxes they pay to the state, the state can generate 6,600 jobs, and bring in close to $35 million every year – starting in the first year. This solution would enable the state to grow jobs and revenue quickly, and maintain it – as well as strengthen our healthcare system – for years to come.

“Hospitals not only provide healthcare services to all, they play a critical role in our economy. Investing in them is a win for our state’s economy, patients, communities, and healthcare system.”

CHA’s advocacy campaign in opposition to cuts and taxes includes new TV and digital ads. The message focuses on how it is time to protect hospitals, not cut and tax them. The TV ads are airing on network and cable stations across the state. Additional ads will be rolled out as the session progresses.

The campaign website, www.StopTheCutsNow.org, has also been updated. It includes information about the negative effects of taxes and cuts, describes hospitals’ economic impact to the state economy, and provides a sign up to join the fight.

Connecticut Hospitals Focus on Preventing Surgical Site Infections

When Carrie Simon underwent cardiac surgery 11 years ago, she told attendees at CHA’s January 28 Surgical Site Infection program, she knew to ask about the risk of infection.

Although her surgery was complex – Ms. Simon was being treated for coronary valve disease stemming from radiation treatments she underwent years earlier for early stage Hodgkin’s lymphoma – her surgeon assured her that the risk of infection was "very, very small."

The surgery was successful and after spending a few days in the intensive care unit in a hospital out of state, the Connecticut resident was transferred to a cardiac step-down unit. All seemed fine until day 10, when Ms. Simon’s pain began to increase. Her doctors informed her that she had a healthcare-associated MRSA - methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus – in her chest tube site, that it was very difficult to treat, that she
Infections from representatives of Yale-New Haven Hospital, Stamford Hospital, and Griffin Hospital. In addition to his presentation, participants also heard panel presentations on multidisciplinary approaches to reducing surgical site infections from representatives of Yale-New Haven Hospital, Stamford Hospital, and Griffin Hospital.

"As a surgeon, I’m happy if I see the drug dripping when the nurse hands me the knife to begin the case," he said. "You want the drug in the tissue and the blood during the operation until the wound is closed."

Dr. Dellinger also pointed out that the antibiotics have been proven to work better to prevent infection if they are given right before the operation. "Which cases benefit from this?" Dr. Dellinger asked. "Every procedure that’s ever been studied you can reduce infections when given prophylactic antibiotics, especially GI surgeries."

Eliminating surgical site infections is a strategic focus of the CHA Committee on Patient Care Quality, as well as the focus of a statewide initiative. The January 28 program was offered under the Partnership for Patients HEN 2.0 national initiative to eliminate events of preventable harm in collaboration with the Connecticut Surgical Quality Collaborative.

Safe Sleep Campaign Launched

On February 2, The Connecticut Departments of Children and Families, Public Health, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Office of Early Childhood, and the Office of the Child Advocate, along with CHA, Day Kimball Hospital, Yale New Haven Health System, and Casey Family Programs, launched a statewide campaign promoting safe sleep environments for infants. Led by Joette Katz, Commissioner, Department of Children and Families, the campaign is intended to keep Connecticut babies safe by reducing the risk of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome.

"Many experts in the field of child well-being have stressed that promoting child safety is a community-wide responsibility," said Commissioner Katz. "So this campaign that reflects the partnership of so many state agencies, advocates, national experts, private providers and the medical community is an important advance in working together to protect children."

Information and materials regarding best practices for safe sleep are being distributed to physicians, hospitals, and other caregivers for sharing with new parents. They key recommendations, which include making sure babies sleep on their backs, in a separate bed from the parents, and are kept away from smokers, are based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Pursuant to Public Act 15-39, hospitals are required to provide parents of newborn infants with these recommendations at the time of an infant’s discharge from the hospital.

CH Hosts Forum on EDs and Pediatric Behavioral Health Crises

On January 29, the Connecticut Hospital Association hosted an informational forum on the role of emergency departments in managing pediatric behavioral health crises. The presentation was sponsored by CHA, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and Beacon Health Options. Representatives from 27 hospitals attended the program, along with individuals representing DCF, Beacon, the Connecticut Department of Education, and emergency mobile psychiatric service (EMPS) providers.

The forum featured a presentation by Robert Plant, PhD, Senior Vice President of Quality and Innovation at Beacon, on the current status of psychiatric crisis care for children in Connecticut. During the forum, attendees separated into work groups to address strategies of improvement. The reports from each work group highlighted system-wide issues and specific regional concerns that will be further addressed by the group. The group discussed issues including the need for integrated care models such as hospital-based community care teams in all regions of the state, concerns about the impact on EDs and EMPS providers of zero tolerance policies in schools for behavioral health issues, and the need for a more robust array of options to accommodate the behavioral healthcare needs of children and adolescents in Connecticut.

CHA Annual Meeting Awards - Call for Nominations

We are pleased to announce the call for nominations for the CHA Annual Meeting awards. The presentation of the awards is an important part of the CHA Annual Meeting and a valuable opportunity to showcase Connecticut hospital and staff achievements. Award applications/nominations are linked below.

The 2016 John D. Thompson Award for Excellence in the Delivery of Healthcare Through the Use of Data recognizes outstanding achievement in patient care quality initiatives. It is sponsored by CHA’s education and research affiliate, the Connecticut Healthcare Research and Education Foundation (CHREF). All CHA acute care and other hospital members are encouraged to apply. Note: There is a two-year period of ineligibility for previous John D. Thompson Award winners. Click here for an application.

The 2016 Connecticut's Hospital Community Service Award is an excellent opportunity for recognition of outstanding achievements in community service. The award is sponsored jointly by CHA and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH). Note: There is a three-year period of ineligibility for previous Community Service Award winners. Click here for an application.
CHA's Healthcare Heroes Awards celebrate the invaluable contributions of healthcare workers, both to their field and to the community at large. CHA is seeking nominations from both direct patient care and nonclinical areas of CHA member facilities. Ten healthcare heroes, selected by a panel of judges, will be awarded a $100 cash prize. Click here for an application.

All entries must be received by Friday, March 25, 2016. Winners will be honored at the CHA Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 28, 2016.

Education Updates

**Financial Skills for Managers**

Friday, February 5, 2016
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
[View Brochure] [Event Registration]

Because healthcare delivery methods and payment systems are changing rapidly, carefully managing the financial health of the organization is more important than ever. Resources are scarce and stretched to the breaking point. Doing more with less is routine. The need for sound business and financial management tools—survival skills—is paramount for all managers. These include planning and budgeting, financial analysis, and maximizing resources, all of which are essential if managers are to achieve the institution’s mission and contribute to “bottom line” results. Bill Ward, a popular and dynamic lecturer on financial management in healthcare is back by member request to present the program.

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

**Cross Cultural Diversity and Inclusiveness Training - Four-Hour Session for Clinical Providers**

Tuesday, February 16, 2016
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
[View Brochure] [Event Registration]

CHA—in partnership with the Curtis D. Robinson Center for Health Equity at Saint Francis, Hispanic Health Council, and Connecticut Association of Healthcare Executives—is offering the Cross Cultural and Diversity Inclusiveness Training – Four-Hour Session for Clinical Providers at the Connecticut Institute for Primary Care Innovation (CIPCI) in Hartford on February 16. The program was developed in direct response to member requests for an education program to help hospitals achieve the goal of improving cultural competence in the delivery of care – part of the CHA Health Equity Collaborative initiative and the AHA #123 Equity Pledge to Act to Eliminate Healthcare Disparities.

This program has been modified from the original 10-hour, two-module training series to this four-hour session, and is designed for clinical staff. A full description of the program along with driving directions and a registration form can be found in the program brochure.

Please note: Early registration is advised. Class size is limited to facilitate discussion and active engagement of learners. While the majority of openings for this program are allocated to Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center employees, a few slots are available to other CHA member hospitals on a first-come-basis.

This program is being held at the Connecticut Institute for Primary Care Innovation (CIPCI) in Hartford.

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

**CHA Regulatory Series—Wage and Hour Law Review**

Monday, February 22, 2016
9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
[View Brochure] [Event Registration]

This program will serve as a refresher for those generally familiar with wage and hour compliance issues—and as an introduction to key issues for those with new responsibilities in this area. Participants are encouraged to bring real or hypothetical questions about regulatory interpretation to the session for an open discussion.

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

**C.diff and Antibiotic Stewardship**

Wednesday, February 24, 2016
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
[View Brochure] [Event Registration]

Conference attendees will hear a patient story from the daughter of a patient who died from a C.diff infection. Dr. Leonard A. Mermel, FACP, FIDSA, FSHEA, Professor of Medicine, Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, and Medical Director, Epidemiology & Infection Control Department, Rhode Island Hospital—who developed C.diff standards with CMS—will discuss the science of C.diff and current standards. Kerry LaPlante, PharmD, FCCP, Professor of Pharmacy, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI; Adjunct Professor of Medicine, Brown University, Providence, RI; and Director of the Rhode Island Infectious Diseases Research Program, will discuss the microbiome and the impact of antibiotics on guts. Additionally, Ann Spenard, Vice President of Consulting Services, Qualidigm, will discuss the project to prevent C.diff in our partner facilities, skilled nursing facilities, and other organizations across the continuum of care.

For the closing session, Steve Tremain, MD, will help attendees formulate a plan for implementing this new knowledge.

The program is being presented as part of the Partnership for Patients HEN 2.0 educational series.

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

**Cross Cultural and Diversity Inclusiveness Training**

First Session: Monday, March 14, 2016
Second Session: Monday, March 21, 2016
8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
[View Brochure] [Event Registration]

In partnership with the Hispanic Health Council, the Saint Francis Center for Health Equity, and the Connecticut Association of Healthcare Executives, CHA is again pleased to offer Cross Cultural & Diversity Inclusiveness Training (CC&DIT)—a unique, comprehensive, and interactive program to achieve the goal of improving cultural competence in the delivery of care and addressing healthcare disparities.

The CC&DIT curriculum was developed in direct response to member requests for help in providing diversity education and is structured as a two-module program, each session five hours in duration—delivered once each week over a two-week period. Training content is based on current research that emphasizes the idea that cultural competence is not achieved through a single training event—but is a lifelong commitment to learning, and professional skills development. With over 200 members completing the training, program evaluations have been consistently positive about the value of this training.

The program provides an opportunity for hospitals who have taken the AHA #123 Equity Pledge to Act to Eliminate Healthcare Disparities to meet the requirement for training staff in cultural competence.

This program is being held at the Connecticut Institute for Primary Care Innovation (CIPCI) in Hartford.

Staff to Management: Starting the Transition
Wednesday, March 16, 2016
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
[Event Registration]

Making the transition from being a staff person one day to a supervisor/manager the next is a significant step. Transitioning from individual contributor to being effective in a leadership role is far more challenging and complicated than ever before and requires the ability to use the tools of diplomacy, negotiation, persuasion, and alliance-building to a greater degree than one used in the past. 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 and managing change.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.