Quality Measures Focus of SIM Discussion

On February 4, Mary Cooper, MD, Vice President and Chief Quality Officer, provided written and oral comments reflecting CHA’s position to the State Innovation Model (SIM) Quality Council Work Group, which is developing metrics to measure care quality statewide.

Dr. Cooper commended the Quality Council for the time and effort invested in the work. For more than six months, the group has been meeting regularly to work on measure development.

She shared CHA’s recommendation that the group pursue the development of an initial core set of measures that are actionable, transparent, and scientifically valid. She described how implementing a core set of measures that can be used by all health plans and providers will ensure progress toward improving health, quality of care, and consumer engagement, and eliminating disparities and reducing costs. Moreover, it would offer consistency and a repository of statewide data that can be used to focus on eliminating health disparities.

Dr. Cooper said CHA suggests an initial approach to quality measurement using a model that measures structure, processes, and outcomes, and focuses on proven care improvement measures that are validated, support the continuum of care, and have resulted in better quality and reduced cost.

A frank and open discussion followed Dr. Cooper’s presentation, during which time she was asked to provide further detail on hospitals’ recommendations. Dr. Cooper explained that a coordinated and streamlined measure set allows for analysis, stratification for disparities, and measures that are agnostic to payer.

Once the Quality Council has completed its first round of measure evaluation, the measures will be available for public comment.

MORE Commission Issues Legislative Recommendations

On February 5, House Speaker Brendan Sharkey (D-Hamden) was joined by 12 members of the House of Representatives and a number of municipal officials in presenting the Municipal Opportunities & Regional Efficiencies (MORE) Commission’s legislative agenda for the 2015 Legislative Session.

Troubling to hospitals is a recommendation that would require not-for-profit hospitals and private colleges to pay property tax on any new property they purchase.

Additionally, the MORE Commission endorsed a legislative proposal that would create a tiered payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) program that reimburses towns based on the percentage of property that is tax exempt. It will incorporate the current state, college, and hospital PILOT programs as well as all other tax exempt property such as not-for-profits, churches, etc.

Also announced on Thursday, Speaker Sharkey named Representative Jonathan Steinberg (D-Westport) as the new Chairman of the MORE Commission. The MORE Commission was re-established by Speaker Sharkey in 2013 as a way to bring state and local officials together to study and make recommendations on issues impacting municipalities and regions. Specifically, the Commission is charged with helping cities and towns reduce their costs and increase efficiencies, particularly through regional cooperation, with a goal of ultimately reducing local property taxes.

Connecticut hospitals and private colleges have been working together to preserve the tax exemption for not-for-profit organizations. Please click here to join us in writing your legislators to voice your opposition to imposing property taxes on not-for-profit organizations.

CHA Participates in Symposium on Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Readmission Rates

On February 4, Dr. Marie M. Spivey, EdD, RN, Vice President, Health Equity, CHA, spoke at a symposium on racial and ethnic disparities in readmission rates presented by the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) and the Connecticut Health Foundation.

Dr. Spivey discussed CHA’s Diversity Collaborative. Now in its fourth year, the collaborative advances a broad approach across all Connecticut hospitals in partnership with their communities to eliminate disparities and improve health equity. "Ensuring integrated, equitable care is a high priority of Connecticut hospitals," said Dr. Spivey.

Dr. Spivey focused on objectives of the Collaborative, describing how hospitals are engaged and the need for collaboration across partners to accomplish more.

The symposium utilized data from a CSMS study that found pronounced disparities in the 30-day readmission rates for Black and Latino patients compared to White patients across most acute care sites in Connecticut. These disparities were significant, regardless of patient age, gender, payer, facility volume, co-morbidities, and other demographic factors and patient characteristics.

In addition to Dr. Spivey, CHA representatives Anthony Dias, Vice President, Data Services, Mary Cooper, MD, Vice President and Chief Quality Officer, and Elizabeth Beaudin, PhD, Senior Director, Nursing, Health, and Workforce, participated in the program by facilitating four breakout sessions with discussion groups. Using key questions, they generated feedback and strategy suggestions from healthcare providers, patients, and families regarding the clinical areas in which disparities were found in readmissions.

The program featured other national, regional, and local speakers on health equity and healthcare access including Robert Russo, MD, President, CSMS; Patricia Baker, CEO, Connecticut Health Foundation; Robert Wah, MD, President, American Medical Association; Robert Aseltine Jr., PhD, Professor and Interim Chair, Division of Behavioral Science and Community Health Deputy Director, Center for Public Health and Health Policy, UConn Health; Lawrence Sanders Jr., MD, President, National Medical Association; and Matthew Katz, EVP/CEO, CSMS.

CHA Provides Testimony Related to Coverage of Abuse-Deterrent Opioid Analgesics

On February 5, Lawrence Sanders Jr., MD, President, National Medical Association; and Matthew Katz, EVP/CEO, CSMS, provided testimony related to coverage of abuse-deterrent opioid analgesics.
On February 5, CHA provided testimony in support of **SB 21, An Act Concerning Health Insurance Coverage Of Abuse-Deterrent Opioid Analgesics**. SB 21 would require health insurance policies that provide coverage for prescription drugs to provide equal coverage for abuse-deterrent opioid analgesics.

The testimony cited CHA Board of Trustees-approved voluntary opioid prescribing guidelines developed to help Emergency Department (ED) staff treat patients with chronic pain conditions. CHA's testimony supports a statewide strategy to combat opioid abuse that includes the requirement that health insurance policies provide equal coverage for prescription drugs for abuse-deterrent opioid analgesics.

CHA also stated that the availability of insurance coverage for these drugs will increase opportunities for long-term substance abuse recovery for patients who suffer as a result of the misuse of prescription opioids, as well as provide a valuable tool for healthcare providers to treat patients suffering from chronic pain while minimizing the potential for addiction and abuse.

**Influenza Update**

According to the Connecticut Department of Public Health, statewide emergency department visits attributed to the "fever/flue syndrome" has increased during the past week to the highest level observed this season. To date, there have been 1,775 reports of influenza and 638 hospitalizations in Connecticut. Twelve deaths have been reported.

Vaccination is a best practice for patient and healthcare worker safety, and in 2011, the CHA Board adopted a statewide policy endorsing mandatory influenza vaccination for hospital personnel as part of CHA hospitals’ commitment to patient safety. To date, 24 acute care hospitals in Connecticut have implemented a mandatory participation or mandatory vaccination program.

**Education Updates**

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

- **Session 1**: Wednesday, February 11, 2015
- **Session 2**: Wednesday, February 18, 2014
- **9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**
- Participants must attend both sessions.

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 roadblocks 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.

This two-session program will explain the value of applying Lean principles and methodology to improve healthcare—by providing examples of specific benefits that accrue when the people that actually do the work look at the details of processes and fix things where the work is done. Starting with a basic definition of Lean concepts and management methods, participants will learn how to define value for the patient (the customer) and eliminate common wastes in healthcare. Because one of the essential tools in applying Lean thinking is Value Stream Mapping (VSM), participants will learn how to use this technique through an interactive mapping exercise, which will have immediate "back home" application for understanding process flow and its impact on making measurable improvements.

Continuing education credits will be awarded. See the brochure for details.

**HIPAA Privacy and Security Basics**

- **Thursday, February 12, 2015**
- **9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

This program will review the current HIPAA Privacy, Security, and Breach Rules, with an emphasis on recent enforcement actions by the Office for Civil Rights and an overview of the newly announced government audit targeting HIPAA compliance. The program information includes strategies for maintaining continuous compliance, a review of business associates rules, and practical tips and solutions for remaining compliant with HIPAA as the transition from paper to EHR accelerates. We will also cover emerging issues in privacy liability, including costs associated with breach events and a new Connecticut Supreme Court case that is likely to increase liability and risk for HIPAA covered entities.

Continuing education credits will be awarded. See the brochure for details.

**Demonstrating the Financial Impact of Quality Initiatives**

- **Thursday, February 19, 2015**
- **9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

Healthcare leaders in all disciplines recognize the need to identify, analyze, and demonstrate the financial benefit of quality initiatives. However, those involved in such initiatives, clinicians and non-financial managers, often find it difficult to articulate the positive financial outcomes that accrue to quality improvements. This program will help clinicians and non-financial managers involved in quality improvement initiatives understand the intersection between quality and cost, and how to "connect the dots" from quality improvement to financial benefit.

Presenter: William J. Ward, Jr. is the director of the MHS Degree Program in Health Finance and Management at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health for which he teaches accounting and finance, and a principal with Healthcare Management Resources, Inc., a Baltimore-area consulting firm.

Continuing education credits will be awarded. See the brochure for details.

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

- **Thursday, February 26, 2015**
- **9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

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. See the brochure for details.

**2015 Patient Safety Summit**

- **Tuesday, March 10, 2015**
- **8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

Please join us for CHA’s 13th Annual Patient Safety Summit, co-sponsored with Qualidigm. We are pleased and excited to announce that David B. Nash,
MD, MBA, and Dean of the Jefferson School of Population Health will deliver the keynote address at this year’s Summit.

The 2015 Patient Safety Summit will focus on health outcomes, health distribution within a population, health determinants, and the policies and strategies needed to improve population health in the transition from volume to value. The program will be held at CHA in Wallingford. Complete details will be available over the next few weeks.

**HRO Leadership Method Training for Ambulatory Practices**
Thursday, March 12, 2015
9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
[Event Registration](#)

This ambulatory session will be held at CHA and all ambulatory participants are welcome to join us. Leadership sessions teach the science of safety and behaviors and practices of High Reliability organizations.

**HRO Creating Sustainability for High Reliability Organizations**
Monday, March 16, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
[Event Registration](#)

This session is for leaders in the organizations that have trained staff in high reliability behaviors and practices and are looking for techniques to improve the likelihood that high reliability does not become a flavor of the month.

**HRO Fair and Just Accountability**
Monday, March 16, 2015
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
[Event Registration](#)

Fair and Just Accountability is for anyone who manages people and the course trains staff how to use the Performance Management algorithm and why Fair and Just Accountability is important to creation of a safety culture.

**HRO Train-the-Trainer for Hospitals**
Tuesday, March 17, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
[Event Registration](#)

Train-the-Trainer will be open to hospitals. After leadership training takes place with hospitals this spring, individuals should be chosen from those organizations who embody a commitment to high reliability. Those are the trainers of the next generation of high reliability participants.