



Thursday, February 6, 2020

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General Assembly Convenes 2020 Legislative Session

On Wednesday, February 5, the General Assembly convened separately and in a Joint Session to mark the beginning of the 2020 Legislative Session. Individually, House and Senate members provided brief introductory remarks of guests they invited to the opening day ceremonies. Senate and House rules, as well as Joint Rules, were also adopted for the three-month legislative session - what is traditionally known as the 'short session.'

CHA anticipates the General Assembly to again tackle the issues of establishing tolls, legalizing recreational marijuana, and online sports gambling.

At noon, the General Assembly met in a Joint Session to receive Governor Ned Lamont's budget adjustment address. During the 43-minute speech, the Governor addressed themes of continuing progress on a wide range of issues. The Governor praised CHA and hospitals in his speech as good partners and important to the state's economy.

Specifically, the budget proposes the following:

With respect to supplemental payments, Medicaid rates, and the hospital provider tax, Governor Lamont's February 5, 2020, proposed Budget Adjustments for FY 2020 reflect the hospital settlement agreement.

The Governor's budget document states:

"The Governor took the lead in accomplishing a historic agreement in December with the state's hospitals to resolve legal claims that could have exposed the state to roughly \$4 billion in liability. The agreement was the result of a months-long effort between the Lamont Administration and the Connecticut Hospital Association to bring conclusion to various legal claims against the state. The agreement represents a new chapter in the relationship between the state of Connecticut and its hospitals, which serve a critical role in their communities, and eliminates the state's potential exposure to billions of dollars in liability, and removes fiscal uncertainty for years to come."

With respect to healthcare, the budget contains the following proposals:

- **Healthcare Cost Growth Benchmarking:** Establishes two positions and contracting authority in the Office of Health Strategy (OHS) to support actuarial and healthcare econometric expertise necessary to establish annual healthcare cost growth benchmarking in Connecticut, in the amount of \$577,000.
- **Connecticut's All-Payer Claims Database (APCD):** Authorizes Access Health CT to charge assessments or user fees to support the continued operation of this program.
- **Canadian Prescription Medication Reimportation:** Establishes a position in the Department of Consumer Protection to implement a program for reimporting Canadian prescription drugs to Connecticut.
- **Family Planning Services:** Provides state funding to replace eliminated federal funding for family planning services.
- **Newborn Screening and Clinical Laboratory Licensure Fees:** Expands the disorders tested. This proposal also increases the biennial licensure fee for clinical laboratories from \$200 to \$1,250, and creates a \$200 fee per blood collection facility to be paid by a clinical laboratory at the time of initial and renewal licensure.
- **Rent Subsidies:** Increases the use of rent subsidies to support transitions to more appropriate levels of care, which supports about 160 Department of Developmental Disability clients transitioning into residential placements.
- **Natchaug Hospital:** Continues FY 2020 rates to reimburse Natchaug Hospital for inpatient services at the hospital's current Medicaid inpatient per-diem rate, a reduction of \$454,000.
- **Office of Workforce Competitiveness:** Provides funding to strengthen support for the Governor's Workforce Council and to better align the existing state workforce development system, in the amount of \$300,000.
- **UConn Health Center:** Additional funding of \$33 million is provided to mitigate a projected operating shortfall.
- **Connecticut Valley Hospital:** Funding in the amount of \$3 million is provided to support community placements for approximately 20 individuals who are ready for discharge.

The budget also includes the following healthcare policy changes:

- **Vaping:** The budget calls for:
 - banning the sale of flavored electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and vapor products;
 - capping the maximum level of nicotine in ENDS and vapor products allowed to be sold in Connecticut at 35 milligrams per milliliter;
 - hiring two additional special investigators to conduct compliance checks to enforce the ban on flavored vaping products and monitor adherence to the nicotine cap sales restriction;
 - eliminating the current tax structure in favor of an across-the-board 50 percent wholesale tax on ENDS liquids; and
 - increasing penalties for sales to minors.
- **Incentivizing Less-Costly Alternatives to Emergency Department Visits:** Establishes maximum-allowable rates for licensed or certified emergency medical services (EMS) organizations or providers that treat and release patients without transporting them to an emergency department. EMS organizations and providers must provide these services within their scope of practice and following protocols approved by their sponsor hospital. Creating this rate will allow an EMS organization to bill an insurance company or accountable care organization for patient treatment and non-transport.
- **Legalizing Recreational Use of Cannabis by Adults:** The budget proposes the development of a regulatory structure to legalize the recreational use of cannabis in 2022.
- **Captive Insurance Industry:** The budget provides funding to the Department of Insurance to grow regulatory and service provider expertise regarding the captive insurance industry.

The budget would also:



- Repeal certain fee increases
- Extend the current corporation tax surcharge
- Modify the corporate capital base tax

It is expected that the Appropriations Committee will hold state agency presentations and public hearings on the budget starting on Tuesday, February 11, 2020, and conclude on Friday, February 21, 2020.

The text of the Governor's address can be found [here](#).

Budget documents released from the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) can be found [here](#).

The three-month session will adjourn on Wednesday, May 6, 2020.

Related to the budget, on Monday, February 3, state Comptroller Kevin Lembo [predicted](#) that the state would end the year with a \$58.8 million budget deficit.

Save The Date For CHA's Annual Meeting



CHA Hosts Forum on Creating Employment Opportunities for People with Criminal Backgrounds



On Friday, January 31, CHA hosted leadership from Johns Hopkins Hospital and Health System about the NAACP's national *One Million Jobs Campaign*.

The *One Million Jobs Campaign* aims to create employment opportunities for people with criminal backgrounds. The goal in Connecticut is to hire 10,000 formerly incarcerated individuals over the next three years.

CHA committed its support to the campaign earlier this year, as it aligns with the Association's focus on addressing the social determinants of health and health equity.

"Advancing health equity, and addressing social determinants of health, including employment, are critical elements of our strategic priorities as an association," stated Jennifer Jackson, CEO, CHA. "We are committed to this important initiative and pleased to partner with the NAACP and others throughout the state."

According to state NAACP President Scot Esdaile, employing the formerly incarcerated offers benefits to both the individual and the state, pointing to increased lifetime earnings and increased income tax revenues.

"We're striving to take fair-chance hiring to another level," Mr. Esdaile stated.

Yariela Kerr-Donovan, Senior Director of Strategic Workforce Development at Johns Hopkins Medicine, highlighted hiring strategies for businesses including establishing on-the-job training programs in place of work and education experience, so that those without the requirements typically listed in a job description - such as the formerly incarcerated - still have an opportunity to succeed.

Joseph Phelps, Background Security Screener, Johns Hopkins Medicine, Human Resources & Talent Acquisition, told program participants that Johns Hopkins Medicine has hired almost 700 justice-involved individuals over the past five years and that they have 80% retention. Johns Hopkins is one of the largest employers of the formerly incarcerated in the nation.

"Programs like this require leadership engagement," said Redonda G. Miller, MD, MBA, President, The Johns Hopkins Hospital. "It requires leaders to set the stage to say they are going to do this. This is a win-win for our communities, and for our employees."

CHA To Host Complete Count 2020 Census Issue-Based Forum

CHA is pleased to partner with Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz and the U.S. Census Bureau on the statewide Complete Count Committee, which is charged with ensuring high levels of participation in the 2020 Census. As part of this effort, CHA members are invited to attend a CHA Issue-Based Forum with a focus on how hospitals can assist with the 2020 Census activities. The Forum will be held at CHA on Friday, February 7, 2020, from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz will kick off the Forum by discussing the importance of the Census to state congressional representation and federal funding. The U.S. Census Bureau team will outline strategies to ensure employees are counted in the census, in addition to the vital role and best practices employed by hospitals in working with special populations to ensure that patients participate in the census. CHA staff will discuss communication resources for member hospitals that will assist in efforts to inform patients and their families, as well as employees, about the importance of responding to the census.

Data collected in the census will inform the distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal funds to states and communities each year for

United States
**Census
2020**

things like infrastructure, healthcare, and food assistance. Connecticut receives \$10.7 billion of federal aid per year based on census data. Registration in advance is required for this free program. [Click here to register online](#)

Student Career Fair to be Held at CHA

The Connecticut Association of Healthcare Executives will host its Third Annual Student Career Fair on Friday, February 28, 2020, at CHA from 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The event will include networking opportunities and a keynote presentation. Students who pre-register may also meet with a photographer for a headshot.

The career fair is a great opportunity for students to search for internships, fellowships and/or entry-level positions within Connecticut and New York's healthcare organizations and consultant firms.

For more information about registration for both students and employers, please click [here](#).

Education Updates

Lean Principles: Process Flow and Value Stream Mapping in Healthcare Monday, February 10, 2020

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

[View Brochure](#) | [Event Registration](#)

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 improves team engagement, eliminates road blocks, and allows hospitals to improve the quality of care for patients by reducing errors and waste streams, including wait times. It is a systematic approach to reducing costs and risks, while simultaneously setting the stage for growth and expansion.

Peer Supporter Refresher Training

Monday, February 24, 2020

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

[Event Registration](#)

Peer Supporter Refresher Training is for staff who have attended a *Peer Supporter Training* course at CHA or for those currently serving as a peer supporter for their organization.

Peer Supporter Training

Tuesday, February 25, 2020

9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

[Event Registration](#)

Gerald Lewis, PhD, will provide training for peer supporters and those who will train peer supporters in their organizations. Dr. Lewis has worked with national and international government agencies, healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and private businesses on a wide range of work, behavioral health, and organizational issues. His focus is facilitating organizational recovery and resiliency with the emphasis on "people-recovery."

MACRMI Simulation Training

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

[Event Registration](#)

The Massachusetts Alliance for Communication and Resolution following Medical Injury (MACRMI) will conduct simulation training for disclosure and apology as part of CHA's Communication and Resolution Program Collaborative.

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

2020 CHA Patient Safety Summit

Friday, April 3, 2020

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

[Event Registration](#)

CHA will host the 18th annual *Patient Safety Summit, Resilience and High Reliability*.