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On February 7, the General Assembly convened the 2018 Legislative Session. The three-month short session takes place in even numbered years. House and Senate leaders offered introductory remarks in an effort to set the tone for the General Assembly. The regular session will adjourn on May 9.

In a break with legislative tradition, Governor Malloy released his mid-term budget adjustments on February 5, prior to yesterday's Opening Day session and speech. He focused his Opening Day remarks to legislators on the broad policy agenda he has pursued since his election in 2010.

Following comments on the state's transportation needs and his efforts to balance the state budget, the Governor framed his narrative around the concept of fairness. During a 35-minute speech, the Governor addressed familiar themes, including affordable healthcare, pay equity, workers' benefits, human rights, homelessness and affordable housing, gun control, the environment, and juvenile criminal justice reforms.

The Governor also called on the legislature to preserve the Affordable Care Act, saying it has significantly reduced the number of uninsured Connecticut residents.

"We must take action to ensure stability in our insurance marketplace and to contain premium costs for consumers," he said. "Together, let's pass a bill that preserves the most vital elements of the Affordable Care Act – including the individual mandate. Let's make it clear that in Connecticut, healthcare is a fundamental right."

In the coming days, legislative committees will convene to raise bills for public hearings on an array of proposals.

On Friday, February 9, OPM Secretary Ben Barnes will provide a high-level [presentation](#) of the Governor's proposed budget adjustments. The Appropriations Committee will then schedule state agency presentations and public hearings on these proposals starting the week of February 12, 2018.

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

[Update Archives](#)**Democrats Outline Priorities, Support For Community Hospitals**

On February 6, Senate and House Democrats held a press conference to highlight their legislative [priorities](#) for the 2018 Legislative Session. Their agenda, entitled "The Democratic Values Agenda," described the policy priorities that will be their focus during the 2018 Legislative Session; the agenda includes supporting community hospitals and protecting women's healthcare.

Citing community hospitals as vital healthcare providers and major employers, the Democratic agenda will "work to support and grow our hospitals and ensure that all residents have access to quality medical care."

Calling healthcare a right and not a privilege, the agenda calls for the introduction of legislation aimed at protecting women's health services from federal cuts.

The Democratic agenda was released a day before the start of the session with no specific details of the policy and budget language. Details of proposed policy priorities will become better known once bills are raised and amended through the committee process and debate is held on the floor of each legislative chamber.

Governor Malloy Releases Changes To FY 2019 Budget

In a break from the tradition of releasing a mid-term budget adjustment on the first day of session, Governor Dannel Malloy presented his SFY 2019 budget proposal on February 5. The release of the budget came two days prior to the start of the 2018 Legislative Session.

The Governor's budget proposal contains several provisions of interest to hospitals. Specifically, the budget:

- Maintains the Supplemental Payments and Medicaid rate increases provided for in the bipartisan budget.

- Eliminates Medicaid Payments for Graduate Medical Education, for a \$21.1 million reduction in funding to hospitals.
- Reduces enhanced reimbursement for primary care providers by \$3.5 million.
- Funds the Office of Health Strategy.
- Recommends that the previously proposed new restrictions on the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) be enacted.
- Transfers the State Unit on Aging and the Office of the Long-term Care Ombudsman to the Department of Rehabilitation Services.
- Reduces grants for mental health and substance abuse services by approximately \$3 million.

The Governor also proposed making revenue changes to reduce “out-year budget gaps.” Specifically, he proposed:

- Maintaining the hospital tax at the FY 2018 and FY 2019 levels while failing to provide any corresponding supplemental payments.
- Eliminating the restoration of the municipal revenue savings accounts.
- Eliminating the \$200 property tax credit.
- Eliminating newly established tax exemptions for pension and social security income.

Budget documents can be found [here](#) and [here](#). The Governor’s press release can be found [here](#).

In other legislative news, the General Assembly met in session on January 31 to override Governor Dannel Malloy’s [veto](#) of **HB 7601, An Act Concerning Adjustments To The State Budget Regarding The Medicare Savings Program And Eligibility Therefor**. The Governor’s veto was overridden in the House on a vote of 131-4, with 15 not voting, and in the Senate on a vote of 30-1, with five not voting.

Connecticut Office of Health Strategy Officially Established



The Connecticut Office of Health Strategy, a new state office created through the consolidation of several existing resources as part of the bipartisan state budget adopted in October, was officially established on February 1, 2018.

The mission of the Office of Health Strategy is to implement comprehensive, data-driven strategies that promote equal access to high quality healthcare, control costs, and ensure better health for the people of Connecticut.

The office will be led by Victoria Veltri, JD, LL.M., who will serve as Executive Director. Ms. Veltri previously served as Chief Health Policy Advisor in the Office of Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman, where she coordinated the state’s healthcare reform initiatives, and serves as a member of the Board of Directors for Access Health CT, the state’s healthcare exchange, as well as on the board of Connecticut Partners for Health.

The new office combines resources and personnel from several existing state offices, including the state’s Chief Health Policy Advisor from within the Lt. Governor’s Office, the State Innovation Model Project Management Office, the Health Information Technology Office, the Office of Health Care Access, and the All Payers Claims Database. By combining experts, data, and goals, the new office, which resides within the Department of Public Health for administrative purposes, will provide integrated, comprehensive leadership to improve healthcare systems and health in Connecticut.

To learn more about the Office of Health Strategy, please go to <http://portal.ct.gov/ohs>.

Trinity Health Of New England Announces Reginald J. Eadie to be CEO

Trinity Health Of New England has announced that Reginald J. Eadie, MD, MBA, will be the system’s new President and Chief Executive Officer beginning on March 26, 2018. Dr. Eadie will replace Roger Spoelman, who has served as interim President and CEO since Christopher Dadlez stepped down at the end of 2017.

“The Trinity Health Of New England Board of Directors conducted a national search to identify our next leader,” said Kevin J. O’Connor, Board Chairman. “Dr. Eadie’s successful senior executive leadership and particular expertise in hospital integration and transformation over the past ten years made him a compelling choice to lead our health system.”



Dr. Eadie joins Trinity Health Of New England from Detroit Medical Center (DMC), a \$2 billion regional healthcare system comprising seven hospitals and affiliated with two Michigan universities. Most recently, Dr. Eadie has served as Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for DMC. Previously, he was President/CEO at a number of DMC’s hospitals, including Detroit Receiving, Harper University, Hutzel Women’s, and Detroit Sinai-Grace. He also served as Chief Medical Officer at Harper University and Hutzel Women’s Hospitals.

“For our colleagues and the people we serve in New England, Dr. Eadie will bring his vision, compassion, and commitment to people-centered care,” said Benjamin Carter, Executive Vice President at Trinity Health. “Dr. Eadie is a steadfast champion for better care, better quality, and lower costs in U.S. healthcare, and Trinity Health is pleased he is on our team.”

“Trinity Health Of New England is a regional leader with a remarkable team and a strong future,” said Dr. Eadie. “I look forward to working with the entire community to advance the Trinity Health Mission in New England.”

Dr. Eadie is certified by the American Board of Emergency Medicine and earned his medical degree from Wayne State University School of Medicine. He holds an Executive MBA from Michigan State University Broad Business School and a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and chemistry from South Carolina State University. He is a published author of books and articles on the subject of obesity and has been nationally recognized by numerous organizations for his leadership excellence.

DPH Reports 63 Flu-Related Deaths



The worst flu season in years has resulted in the deaths of 63 Connecticut residents and has led to thousands of hospitalizations across the state, according to the state Department of Public Health (DPH).

Flu activity in Connecticut remains high and widespread, according to DPH, with a total of 1,360 patients hospitalized with confirmed cases of flu between August 27, 2017 and February 3, 2018. Of the 63 deaths attributed to the flu, 52 were among patients over the age of 65, six were 50-64 years of age, three were 25-49 years of age, and one was between 5-17 years of age. A total of 3,895 influenza positive laboratory tests have been reported so far this season.

Additionally, DPH reports that statewide emergency department visits attributed to the “fever/flu syndrome” have increased to 14.2%, which is the highest weekly level observed in Connecticut since the 2009 H1N1 pandemic.

“We have heard from individuals concerned about reports of a shortage of rapid flu tests. This is not surprising for this time in the flu season, especially with the volume of patients presenting with flu symptoms. Fortunately, our hospitals have other ways to test patients hospitalized with severe symptoms of influenza,” said DPH Commissioner Dr. Raul Pino.

Nationally, the flu hospitalization rate rose last week to 51.4 per 100,000 people, the highest rate for this point in the year since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began enhanced surveillance of laboratory-confirmed flu hospitalizations during the H1N1 flu pandemic in 2009-2010, according to the federal agency.

The H3N2 strain that is predominant this flu season has been associated in past years with more hospitalizations and deaths in older adults and young children. Nearly 14,700 flu hospitalizations and 53 flu-associated pediatric deaths have been [reported](#) nationally so far this season.

If the current hospitalization rate continues, the CDC said, the 2017-2018 flu season could exceed the 710,000 hospitalizations for the 2014-15 flu season.

State and federal officials are urging people who have not yet received a flu vaccination to get one. Vaccination is a best practice for patient and healthcare worker safety. 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, the vast majority of acute care CHA member hospitals in Connecticut have implemented a mandatory participation or mandatory vaccination program.

CHA Annual Meeting Awards – Call for Nominations

CHA will hold its 100th Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 14, 2018. Nominations for Annual Meeting awards are now open. The awards are an important part of the CHA Annual Meeting and a valuable opportunity to showcase Connecticut hospital and staff achievements.

The *2018 John D. Thompson Award: A Commemorative Award for Excellence in the Delivery of Healthcare Through the Use of Data* recognizes outstanding achievement in patient care quality initiatives. All CHA acute care and other hospital members, as well as systems, are encouraged to apply. The award is sponsored by CHA's education and research affiliate, the Connecticut Healthcare Research and Education Foundation (CHREF). Please note that there is a two-year period of ineligibility for previous John D. Thompson Award winners.



[Click here](#) for an application.

The *2018 Connecticut's Hospital Community Service Award*, now in its 26th year, is an excellent opportunity for recognition of outstanding achievements in community service. The award is sponsored jointly with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and CHA. Hospital systems are permitted to apply for the Community Service Award, in addition to individual hospital applications. Please note that there is a two-year period of ineligibility for previous Community Service Award winners. (This represents a change from previous years, when the ineligibility period was three years.)

[Click here](#) for an application.

For CHA's centennial celebration, we intend to take a different approach to honoring our healthcare heroes, so there will not be a traditional application process for that award.

All entries must be received by Friday, March 23, 2018.

Education Updates

The Basics of Budgeting

Monday, February 26, 2018

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

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

Many healthcare department managers have traditionally risen from the professional ranks as successful clinicians or technicians but have little or no formal business financial training. As a result, many are thrust into a chaotic environment without the necessary knowledge or tools in financial management. Skills in planning and budgeting are essential if they are to achieve the institution's mission

and contribute to "bottom line" results, particularly in an environment of chronic federal and state underfunding. This management development program, part one of a two-part series, provides managers with an introduction to budgeting concepts, including calculating the volume budget and a revenue budget, tools to develop staffing plans, as well as salary and supply budgets, and information on how best to handle capital and equipment requests. Bill Ward, a dynamic lecturer on financial management in healthcare, returns at member request to present the program.

Part two of this program is planned for April 24, 2018.

Healthcare Financial Management - an Overview

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

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 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 financial results. Bill Ward will present the program.

Please note: This program was previously called Financial Skills for Managers and is targeted to those with limited exposure to financial management concepts.

Issue-Based Forum: Patient Access Rights and Release of Information

Thursday, March 22, 2018

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

[Event Registration](#)

CHA members are invited to attend an issue-based forum with a focus on assisting hospitals with achieving understanding and compliance related to patient access rights and release of information, including an emphasis on the nuances specific to substance use treatment records. There is no cost associated with this event, which is intended for a broad hospital audience.

