CHA Advancing Hospital Priorities in Hartford and Washington, D.C.

CHA staff members began meetings with state and federal lawmakers to advance Connecticut hospitals' priorities prior to the February 6, 2008 start of the Connecticut General Assembly session and the release of President Bush's Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 budget.

In Hartford, Jim Iacobellis, CHA Vice President of Government Relations, Brian Cournoyer, CHA Manager of Government Relations, and Stephen Frayne, CHA Senior Vice President of Health Policy, held meetings with Senator Toni Harp (D-New Haven), chair of the Appropriations Committee, Sen. Jonathan Harris (D-West Hartford) and Rep. Peter Villano (D-Hamden), co-chairs of the Human Services Committee, to discuss the CHA proposal for increasing Medicaid and State-Administered General Assistance (SAGA) rates to cover the full cost of providing care, and continuous eligibility for the HUSKY program. The chairs agreed to raise CHA proposals and on Thursday, February 7, 2008, the Committee unanimously raised a bill to increase Medicaid and SAGA to cover the cost of providing care.

Stephen Frayne will testify before the Appropriations Committee on Governor Rell's proposed 2009 Midterm Budget Adjustments. CHA will provide more information on the hearing in next week's Update.

In a letter dated Friday, February 1, 2008, Jennifer Jackson, CHA President and CEO, thanked Governor M. Jodi Rell for her continued attention to the needs of Connecticut’s hospitals and urged the Governor to implement the 29 recommendations put forth in the Hospital System Strategic Task Force report and to increase funding to hospitals during the 2009 budget deliberations.

At the federal level, Iacobellis and Frayne met with Reps. Chris Murphy (CT-5) and Joseph Courtney (CT-2) to ask for their assistance in seeking a change that would allow SAGA days to be counted in Medicare Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) calculations, which would increase hospitals’ Medicare reimbursements. Both Congressmen are supportive of this proposal and have agreed to work with the Connecticut Congressional Delegation and their other congressional colleagues on this issue.

Legislative Leaders Concerned About Slow Implementation of New Provider Rates

On Friday, February 7, 2008, Office of Policy and Management Secretary Robert Genuario gave a briefing to the Appropriations Committee on Governor Rell’s proposed FY2009 Midterm Budget Adjustments. After the secretary’s presentation, Committee members asked several questions focusing on the Governor’s proposal to impose a cap on municipal property tax increases. Committee Co-Chairs Denise Merrill (D-Mansfield) and Toni Harp (D-New Haven) questioned Secretary Genuario about the status of last year’s Medicaid rate increases for providers. Secretary Genuario assured the co-chairs that all of the rate increases initiated by the legislature and signed into law by the Governor would be implemented as provided for in last year’s budget. The series of questions highlighted the frustration many legislative leaders have expressed about the administration’s slow implementation of new provider rates.
provided updates on the HUSKY program transition from the at-risk MCO model to the non-risk Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs); the pharmacy carve-out that was implemented February 1, 2008; and the letters designed to inform HUSKY members and providers of the WellCare/Preferred One and HealthNet Healthy Options. The letters discuss communication efforts and provide DSS phone and email contacts.

Parrella confirmed that the department’s continued participation with the Anthem BlueCare Family Plan (BCFP) would help avoid the drastic decline of network providers initially forecasted, and result in fewer members defaulting to DSS fee-for-service.

It was also reported that HUSKY A enrollment stood at 314,314 and HUSKY B at 16,400, for a total enrollment in HUSKY of 330,714.

Mary Alice Lee of Connecticut Voices for Children presented “Preventive Care & Emergency Care In HUSKY A: 2006.” Lee concluded that many children in HUSKY A use emergency care, including visits for treatment of conditions that could have been managed or avoided with primary care, and that emergency care utilization is not reduced by well-child care.

The next Medicaid Managed Care Council meeting will be held March 14, 2008.

CHA 13th Annual Human Resources Forum

On Tuesday, February 26, 2008, CHA will host the 13th Annual Human Resources Forum. Jo Manion, PhD., Founder and Principal Consultant, Manion & Associates, will set the stage during her keynote address for a full-day review of strategies for evaluating the internal climate of an organization and creating a positive workplace. Jan Emerson, Vice President, External Affairs at the California Hospital Association, will also present a session on the California nursing ratio experience, describing the impact of staff ratios on hospitals since ratios were implemented in 2004.
Other sessions and speakers for this full-day program include:

- **Driving Mission Achievement: The Strategic Human Resources Plan**, presented by Elizabeth Conrad, Vice President, Human Resources, Hospital of Saint Raphael/Saint Raphael Healthcare System.

- **Achieving Organizational Buy-In for Greening the Cleaning**, presented by Mark Blaire, Director, Environmental Programs, Hackensack University Medical Center (HUMC).

- **Hospital Employee: Cost or Asset? Getting Health Providers to Walk the Walk**, presented by Daniel McCarthy, PhD., Chief Clinical Officer, Magellan Health Services.

- **Do You Know Who You’re Hiring? The Benefits of Behavioral Interviewing**, presented by Phyllis Zappala, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Danbury Hospital/Danbury Health Systems.

- **Increasing Employee Engagement and Retention Through Appreciative Inquiry**, presented by Michael Feinson, Principal, Innovation Partners International.

The program’s speaker, Andrea Clark, is a prominent health information management consultant who focuses specifically on outpatient coding and billing systems, charge capture, data integrity, and outpatient compliance training services.

This program has been approved for five continuing education units for use in fulfilling the continuing education requirements of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA).

The program will be held from 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at CHA. To register, visit the education section of the CHA website. For more information, contact Susan Distasio at (203) 294-7257 or distasio@chime.org. To register, click here.

**Chargemaster: Beyond the Basics**

On Tuesday, March 11, and Wednesday, March 12, 2008, CHA will host **Chargemaster: Beyond the Basics**. This comprehensive and practical two-day workshop will focus on the chargemaster’s relationship to the hospital’s revenue cycle, and will cover chargemaster review strategies, implementation, charge capture, and an explanation of regulatory compliance. The program will also include revenue cycle management with a hands-on approach to actual auditing of claims and billing information.

Program speaker Roy Grubaugh, R.N., is a senior manager of revenue integrity services at Health Revenue Assurance Associates, Inc. He has conducted numerous seminars on charge capture strategies and has authored several articles on revenue management.

This program will be held both days from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at CHA. For more information, contact Susan Distasio at (203) 294-7257 or distasio@chime.org. To register, click here.