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Update Archives

Hospitals Testify at Budget Hearing

On February 16, Connecticut's hospital representatives gathered to provide united and impassioned testimony before the Appropriations Committee on the Governor's FY 2018-2019 Department of Social Services (DSS) budget proposal, which includes a provision that would allow municipalities to levy a property tax on not-for-profit hospitals.

Throughout the hearing, which went late into the night, hospital leaders urged legislators to reject any budget proposals that would advance the Governor's initiative to impose new taxes on hospitals or that would make continued cuts to hospitals and community-based behavioral health services. Citing the challenges hospitals face, leaders emphasized the need for legislative and budgetary policies that advance, not undermine, the mission of Connecticut's hospitals.

Hospital leaders emphasized that hospitals serve as a safety net for their communities and work to increase access to care. They expressed fears that more taxes and cuts will devastate that which they strive to build – a healthier community. Hospital leaders also spoke of the broken promises and faulty premises associated with the current hospital tax.

Earlier in the day, legislators questioned DSS officials on the history of the hospital tax and the mechanics of the new proposal from the Governor to allow municipalities to tax the real property of hospitals. Legislators expressed concern about placing yet another burden on hospitals after many years of taxes and cuts.

Under the Governor's new property tax proposal, the state would reduce payments to municipalities by about \$56 million and require them to pay the state roughly \$408 million to cover their share of the Teacher's Retirement System. In return, the state would remove hospitals' property tax exemption, and allow municipalities to tax hospitals approximately \$212 million per year.

Although state officials have proposed offsetting the new property tax by increasing hospitals' supplemental Medicaid payments, CHA and its member hospitals argue that the plan is based on an elaborate and ultimately unworkable series of financial transactions. Connecticut hospitals already pay a provider tax to the state of \$556 million per year, and only \$118 million is appropriated back to hospitals in the form of Medicaid reimbursement.

"The administration proffers that this would help hospitals since the new funding would be more than the new tax and hospitals would be better off by about \$26 million per year," said Stephen Frayne, Senior Vice President, Health Policy, who testified at the hearing. "We don't need a new property tax and new pools to receive \$26 million in additional hospital support. If you want to provide hospitals an extra \$26 million in support, just increase the existing supplemental payments by \$26 million."

Thank you to the following hospitals and health systems that testified at the hearing: Bristol Hospital, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Day Kimball Hospital, Gaylord Hospital, Griffin Hospital, Hartford HealthCare, Hospital for Special Care, The Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Johnson Memorial Hospital, Middlesex Hospital, St. Vincent's Medical Center, Stamford Hospital, Trinity Health - New England, Western Connecticut Health Network, and Yale New Haven Health.

A complete list of testimony from the public hearing can be found [here](#).

CHA Provides Testimony on Legislative Proposals

At the time of publication, CHA was providing [testimony](#) before the Appropriations Committee on the Governor's FY 2018-2019 Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) budget proposal, which would reduce grants for mental health and substance use services by \$4.7 million in each fiscal year.

Additionally this week, CHA provided comment on a number of proposals before legislative committees.

On Tuesday, February 21, the General Law Committee held a public hearing. CHA provided qualified opposition to:

- **SB 829, An Act Allowing The Commission Of Pharmacy To Place Conditions On Pharmacy Licenses, Permits And Registrations**, a proposed bill that would allow the Commission on Pharmacy to place conditions on a license or temporary permit to practice, operate a pharmacy, or register a pharmacy intern or technician. CHA's testimony can be found [here](#).

CHA provided testimony in support of:

- **HB 7052, An Act Preventing Prescription Opioid Diversion And Abuse**, a bill that seeks to prevent and combat the inappropriate use and abuse of prescribed opioid drugs. CHA's testimony can be found [here](#).

On Wednesday, February 22, the Public Health Committee held a public hearing. CHA provided testimony in opposition to:

- **[SB 326](#), *An Act Concerning Access To Medical Records And The Fees Charged For Medical Records*, a bill that would make changes to the statutes concerning access to medical records and the fees charged for medical records. CHA's testimony can be found [here](#).**

CHA provided testimony in support of:

- **[HB 6025](#), *An Act Allowing Medical Assistants To Administer Medication Under Supervision*, a bill that would permit medical assistants to administer medication under the supervision of a physician or an advanced practice registered nurse. CHA's testimony can be found [here](#).**

Collaborations of Care Partners Participate in Legislative Forums



Members of the Collaborations of Care Partners came together on Saturday, February 18, to participate in two forums hosted by U.S. Representatives John Larson (CT-1) and Joe Courtney (CT-2) to discuss concerns about a potential repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The forums, which were held in Berlin and Willimantic, drew crowds concerned about losing their health insurance coverage if the ACA is repealed by Congress. The events included question-and-answer sessions that allowed members of the public to speak directly with the congressmen.

Several members of Connecticut's congressional delegation have held town hall-style meetings since Congress broke last Friday for a week-long recess. The purpose of the forums is to showcase the importance of the ACA and demonstrate how many people oppose its repeal.

Rep. Larson's forum also included an hour-long panel discussion with members of the Collaborations of Care Partners about changes to the healthcare law. Participants included: Jim Iacobellis, Senior Vice President, Government and Regulatory Affairs, CHA; Matthew Barrett, President and CEO, Connecticut Association of Healthcare Facilities; Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut; Deborah Hoyt, President and CEO, Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home; and Ken Ferrucci, Senior Vice President, Government Affairs, Connecticut State Medical Society.

Connecticut State Medical Society.

CHA issued a statement last month expressing concern about how patients would be affected under a potential ACA repeal, saying it "leaves open questions about how healthcare will be delivered and funded" if cuts to Medicare payments to hospitals remain in place.

CHA's statement estimated that Connecticut hospitals would lose approximately \$5.4 million in Medicare funding as a direct result of the ACA being repealed, and stand to lose hundreds of millions in Medicaid funding each year.

"Connecticut's Medicaid reimbursement is already one of the lowest in the nation, with providers being paid less than half of what it costs to provide care," the statement concluded. "Ultimately, one in five people are on Medicaid in Connecticut. Low Medicaid reimbursement leaves them, and everyone else, with less access to care. Patient care and access are the top priorities of Connecticut hospitals. Repealing the ACA without a replacement causes great concern."

Special Elections Next Week: Evenly Split State Senate at Risk

Three Special Elections will take place on February 28, 2017, to fill two state Senate seats and one seat in the House of Representatives that were left vacant when three incumbent lawmakers declined to be sworn into office so they could pursue appointments to other jobs within state government. With a close margin in the House and a tied Senate, the Special Elections could result in a narrowing of the margin in the House and a shift in the balance of power in the Senate.

CHA featured candidate profiles for all three races in past issues of *CHA Update*. Today, CHA will provide a wrap-up of the Special Elections.



In the 115th House of Representatives District race, voters will have a choice to elect either Democrat Dorinda Keenan Borer or Republican Edward Granfield, both of whom are from West Haven. The 115th District includes the town of West Haven. Longtime state Rep. Stephen Dargan (D-West Haven) resigned his seat to accept a job on the Board of Pardons and Paroles. The candidate profile can be found [here](#).

In the 2nd State Senate District, current Democratic State Representative Douglas McCrory (D-Hartford) and Republican Michael McDonald (R-Windsor) are seeking to replace former Senator Eric Coleman (D-Bloomfield), who is currently seeking a judicial appointment. The 2nd Senate District covers the North End of Hartford and most of Bloomfield and Windsor. The candidate profile can be found [here](#).

In the 32nd State Senate District, current Republican State Representative Eric Berthel (R-Watertown) and Democratic candidate Gregory "Greg" Cava (D-Roxbury) are on the ballot trying to succeed State Senator Robert "Rob" Kane (R-Watertown). Mr. Kane stepped down from the Senate and was recently approved by the legislature to serve as the Republican State Auditor. The 32nd State Senate District includes the towns of Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Middlebury, Oxford, Roxbury, Seymour, Southbury, Washington, Watertown, and Woodbury. The candidate profile can be found [here](#).

CHA Annual Meeting Awards - Call for Nominations



CHA is accepting nominations for the Annual Meeting awards. The deadline for all applications is Friday, March 17, 2017. 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/nomination forms are linked below.

The *2017 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 *2017 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 17, 2017. Winners will be honored at the 99th Annual CHA Annual Meeting on Wednesday, June 14, 2017.

15th Annual Patient Safety Summit: Challenges and Opportunities in Healthcare



CHA's 15th annual *Patient Safety Summit*, co-sponsored with Qualidigm and the Connecticut Association of Healthcare Executives, will offer multiple sessions and perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of healthcare on a national and statewide level. The program is March 16, 2017, from 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

The keynote speaker is Tiffany Christensen, a nationally recognized patient advocate and the author of three books exploring advocacy, end-of-life planning, and partnership strategies in healthcare. Ms. Christensen is a Board member of the Beryl Institute and serves on the faculty of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

Her presentation, "Partnering with Patients: A Bed's Eye View of Safety," will weave together themes of partnership, patient safety, and patient satisfaction. During the afternoon session, Ms. Christensen will lead a workshop, "Partners in Quality: Utilizing Patient Family Advisors Outside the Meeting Room," which will provide information about how patient stories can help reduce staff burnout and be used in peer rounding.

The Summit will also feature a number of other speakers, including Rana Lee Adawi Awdish, MD, FACCP, Director Pulmonary Hypertension Program, Department of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, Medical Director, Care Experience, Henry Ford Health System, who will speak about the importance of human connection in healthcare; Charisse Coulombe, MS, MBA, CPHQ, Vice President, Clinical Quality, Hospital Engagement Network Project at the American Hospital Association, who will provide an overview of the quality and safety national agenda and offer guidance on where hospitals should focus resources to support the intersection of quality, patient safety, health equity and population health; and Sue Collier, MSN, RN, FABC, Clinical Content Development Lead, American Hospital Association, who will provide practical and innovative examples of how health equity and patient safety initiatives can be integrated to support reliable and safe care at all Connecticut hospitals.

Please see the [brochure](#) and [event registration](#) for details.

Education Updates

HIIN: Antibiotic Stewardship—Improving the Use of Antibiotics to Support Patient Safety Efforts

Monday, February 27, 2017

12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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

Antibiotics have transformed the practice of medicine. Once-lethal infections are now readily treatable and other medical advances, like cancer chemotherapy and organ transplants, are possible. The prompt initiation of antibiotics to treat infections has been proven to reduce morbidity and save lives, with a recent example being the rapid administration of antibiotics in the management of sepsis. However, 20-50% of all antibiotics prescribed in U.S. acute care hospitals are either unnecessary or inappropriate. Like all medications, antibiotics can have serious side effects, including adverse drug reactions and *C. diff* infection.

The program will cover how to improve the use of antibiotics, support patient safety efforts, and address this national public health issue.

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

Continuing education credits are offered for this session. Please see the brochure for details.

HIPAA Privacy and Security Basics

Tuesday, February 28, 2017

9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

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

This program will review the current HIPAA Privacy, Security, and Breach Rules, with an emphasis on patient access rights and stepped up enforcement activities by the Office for Civil Rights. 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. Also covered are: emerging issues in cyber security, trends in state enforcement, devices and technology issues, social media considerations, and the growing risks for HIPAA covered entities and business associates.

Continuing education credits are offered for this session. Please see the brochure for details.

Staff to Management: Starting the Transition

Monday, March 6, 2017

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

[View Brochure](#) | [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 relationship skills while working closely and collaboratively with others and managing change.

Continuing education credits are offered for this session. Please see the brochure for details.

Conflict Management: Engaging the Difficult Employee

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

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

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

It is clear that conflict is inevitable in life—in our personal lives as well as in the workplace. Different personalities, different work styles, cultural/ethnic norms, and differences in generational mix, all lead to an endless possibility of conflict surfacing at work.

What is not so clear is the role conflict plays in the process of change and effective team problem solving—both major factors in improving organization performance. How can one recognize and manage the sources and trigger points of conflict? When is conflict healthy—what makes it destructive? How can one reduce or defuse unnecessary conflict? What are the various styles of dealing with conflict, and the risks and benefits of each approach?

Continuing education credits are offered for this session. Please see the brochure for details.

