Program Focuses on Improving Sepsis Care in Connecticut

On February 25, CHA hosted a full-day conference dedicated to improving sepsis care across the continuum of care in Connecticut.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sepsis is the body’s extreme response to an infection and occurs when an existing infection triggers a chain reaction throughout the body. Without timely treatment, sepsis can lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and even death. Each year, 1.7 million adults in the U.S. develop sepsis, and nearly 270,000 people die from sepsis.

The conference opened with Ciaran Staunton, who, along with his wife Orlaith, founded The Rory Staunton Foundation for Sepsis Prevention after the tragic death of their 12-year-old son Rory from sepsis. As a result of advocacy in the wake of Rory’s death, in 2013, New York became the first state in the nation to establish a statewide mandate requiring all hospitals to adopt sepsis protocols. Known as Rory’s Regulations, the protocols were designed to improve rapid identification and treatment of sepsis.

"These regulations have saved more than 5,000 lives," Mr. Staunton told the 140 participants.

Keynote speaker Mitchell Levy, MD, a founding member and executive leader of the Surviving Sepsis campaign, a global initiative to improve the care of patients with severe sepsis, shared his expertise and the latest recommendations on the care of patients with sepsis.

“Time to treatment is key,” Dr. Levy emphasized, noting that the international campaign recommends timed treatment protocol bundles for patients identified as having sepsis. “Every hour in delay in treatment increases the risk of mortality.”

Tracy Wodatch, Vice President of Clinical and Regulatory Services for the Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home, noted the importance of educating home care providers and their patients about prevention and early identification of sepsis symptoms.

Mary Lyon, Vice President of Integrated Health Information, and Roxann Ieraci, Director of Clinical Informatics at CHA, presented data from Hospital Compare that show Connecticut ranks 45th out of 50 states for sepsis care. To address the need for continued work in this area, CHA, in partnership with Qualidigm, launched a statewide Sepsis Task Force to develop training programs for healthcare providers in all settings using evidence-based tools and resources. The Task Force is charged with improving sepsis care in Connecticut by increasing public awareness, promoting early identification of sepsis, and assuring early and correct treatment. The Task Force comprises healthcare providers from across the continuum of care including home health, long-term care, acute care, physician offices, pharmacists, and others.

Patricia Srenaski, Hartford HealthCare at Home; Christine Jenkins, Marlborough Health Care Center; Steven Wexler, MD, Chairman Emergency Medicine, Day Kimball Hospital; and Moderator Carol Dietz, Qualidigm, comprised a panel that highlighted sepsis education and protocols in each of their facilities.

Peter Smethurst, MD, from St. Joseph Hospital of Orange, California, shared the hospital’s latest initiatives from development of an interdisciplinary team to a dedicated sepsis nurse. Through its Code Sepsis initiative, the hospital has treated more sepsis patients because they are being identified earlier in the care process. Dr. Smethurst provided an overview of St. Joseph’s implementation of a Code Sepsis that brings a multidisciplinary team to the patient immediately upon suspicion of sepsis.

“You have to find the solution that works for you,” he noted, “but getting your team there early is how we save lives.”

CHA Testifies on Hospital-Related Bills

CHA provided testimony at the Capitol on a number of hospital- and healthcare-related bills this week.

On February 25, CHA provided testimony to the Public Health Committee on several bills:

- **SB 96**, An Act Establishing A Working Group To Enhance Physician Recruitment In The State, is a bill that would establish a task force to examine the recruitment and retention of primary care providers in the state. CHA supports the bill.
- **SB 388**, An Act Concerning A Person’s Intersex Status Or Characteristics, is a bill that would, among other provisions, prohibit any licensed healthcare provider from engaging in medically unnecessary surgeries on an intersex person without such person's consent. CHA raised concerns with the bill.
- **SB 377**, An Act Prohibiting The Use Of Noncompete Clauses In Physician Employment Contracts, is a bill that would prohibit the use of noncompete clauses in a physician employment contract. CHA opposed the bill.
- **SB 396**, An Act Concerning Sudden, Unexpected Death In Epilepsy, is a bill that would require a medical examiner to make a determination as to whether a deceased person with epilepsy or a history of seizures suffered a sudden, unexpected death. CHA opposed the bill.
Vaccination is a best practice for patient and healthcare worker safety. In 2011, the CHA Board adopted a commitment to patient safety. The vast majority of acute care CHA member hospitals in Connecticut have implemented a mandatory participation or mandatory vaccination program. Vaccination is a best practice for patient and healthcare worker safety. In 2011, the CHA Board adopted a commitment to patient safety. The vast majority of acute care CHA member hospitals in Connecticut have implemented a mandatory participation or mandatory vaccination program.

On February 25, CHA provided testimony to the Transportation Committee in support of HB 6161, An Act Requiring The Use Of Helmets By Motorcycle Operators And Passengers Under Twenty-One Years Of Age, a bill that would require the use of helmets by motorcycle operators and passengers under 21 years of age.

On Febrary 26, CHA provided testimony before the Labor and Public Employees Committee to exclude hospitals from the provisions of HB 6924, An Act Prohibiting On-Call Shift Scheduling, a bill that would require employers to give an employee at least 24 hours prior notice if the employee is not needed to work a scheduled shift. Also, CHA provided testimony before the Human Services Committee opposing SB 896, An Act Establishing Rational Hospital Pricing, a bill that would require the Commissioner of Social Services to seek a federal Medicare waiver to change the way hospitals are reimbursed for their services.

Today, CHA provided testimony before the Committee on Children in support of HB 5975, An Act Concerning The Online Sale And Delivery Of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems And Vapor Products, a bill that would require a signature of someone 18 or older to receive vaping products delivered. In testimony, CHA requested a clarification of the definition of vapor product to ensure certain medical devices are not included.

Special Elections Held To Fill Vacated General Assembly Seats

Special Elections were held on Tuesday, February 26, to fill five legislative seats vacated when three State Senators and two State Representatives opted to join Governor Ned Lamont’s Administration instead of being sworn into office at the beginning of January. Democrats retained three of the five legislative seats.

• In the 3rd Senate District, South Windsor Democratic Mayor Saud Anwar, MD, beat Republican Sarah Muska. The 3rd Senate District includes East Hartford, East Windsor, South Windsor, and part of Ellington.

• In the 5th Senate District, Democratic State Representative Derek Slap beat former State Representative Republican Bill Wadsworth and Independent Party candidate Jeff Przech. The 5th Senate District includes Burlington and West Hartford, and parts of Bloomfield and Farmington.

• In the 6th Senate District, Republican Gennaro Bizzarro beat Democratic State Representative Rick Lopes. The 6th Senate District includes Berlin and New Britain, and part of Farmington.

• In the 39th House District, Democrat Anthony Nolan beat Republican Kat Goulart, petitioning candidate Jason Catala, and Green Party candidate Mirna Martinez. The 39th House District includes East Hartford.

• In the 99th House District, Republican Joe Zullo beat Democrat Josh Balter. The 99th House District represents East Haven.

A Special Election will be called for the House seat now being vacated due to State Representative Slap winning the 5th District Senate seat. Under state law, the Governor is required to issue a Writ of Special Election within 10 days of a vacancy in the General Assembly, and a special election must be held 46 days after its issuance.

With the elections, the Democrats now hold majorities of 22-14 in the Senate and 90-60 in the House.

Influenza Continues to be Widespread in Connecticut

Last week, Connecticut experienced its first pediatric flu death of the season, bringing the total number of flu-associated deaths in Connecticut to 30. It comes as flu cases continue to rise in Connecticut and across the nation.

Statewide Emergency Department visits attributed to the “fever/flu syndrome” are at 10.7 percent, which is well above the level of 5 percent statewide, which is generally considered the minimum threshold when there are elevated influenza-associated ED visits.

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. The vast majority of acute care CHA member hospitals in Connecticut have implemented a mandatory participation or mandatory vaccination program.

CHA is participating in the fifth-annual United Against the Flu campaign, which uses social media outreach to bring national attention to the need for flu vaccinations. The American Hospital Association is partnering with national healthcare, patient advocacy, and other like-minded organizations for a four-month campaign encouraging the public to get an influenza vaccination.

CHA Program to Highlight the Physician Payments Sunshine Act

CHA will host a program to help physicians and physician leaders, compliance officers, medical staff office personnel, supply chain/materials management, and quality, legal, and risk professionals understand the Physician Payments Sunshine Act.

The Don’t Let the Sunshine Blind You! Be Prepared—Understanding the Physician Payments Sunshine Act and the Open Payments Program will be held on Tuesday, March 12, 2019, from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. To learn more and register, click here: View Brochure | Event Registration.

The program will be led by Patrick Kenney, MD, Medical Director of Corporate Supply Chain at Yale New Haven Health, Clinical Vice Chair of the Yale Department of Urology, and Clinical Program Leader for Genitourinary Oncology at the Smilow Cancer Hospital, and Tanya White, MBA, CHC, System Compliance Operations Officer.
The Physician Payments Sunshine Act, part of the Affordable Care Act, was established as a national disclosure program requiring medical product manufacturers to disclose to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) any payments or other transfers of value made to physicians or teaching hospitals.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) oversees the annual release of these data, which have been collected since 2013. A 45-day review and refute period begins on April 15, 2019, with the information being made public on June 30, 2019.

This program will:
- Provide tips and resources to help physicians and teaching hospitals review their Open Payments data
- Define Physician Preference Items and describe the impact on costs and relationships with the industry
- Discuss recent conflict of interest cases (COI) and what they mean for hospitals
- Recommend tools to help conduct investigations and implement effective COI management plans

Education Updates

Managing the Operating Budget
Thursday, March 7, 2019
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

Managing the Operating Budget is a day-long program designed to introduce managers to a variety of analytic tools (revenue and spending analysis, volume adjusted variance analysis, work process and root cause analysis, revenue and expense forecasting) as well as a number of strategies to improve revenue and expense performance. The program will assist managers in understanding revenue and cost behavior, how to analyze departmental performance, and how to modify performance to achieve budgeted operational and financial objectives.

Financial Analysis Tools for Managers
Friday, March 8, 2019
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

Financial Analysis Tools for Managers is a full-day program that offers managers and clinicians tools they can use to answer operational questions about current performance and strategic opportunities they are considering. The program will help managers and directors make and support operational decisions.

HRO: Safety Event Classification
Friday, March 15, 2019
9:00 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Event Registration

When events occur in the hospital or ambulatory practice, they must be evaluated to assess whether the event is a Serious Safety Event, a Precursor Safety Event, or a Near Miss Safety Event. This session will review how the classification scheme works, and how to utilize and standardize event classification.

Staff to Management: Starting the Transition
Monday, March 25, 2019
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

This program will provide guidance for staff transitioning to supervisor/manager. This significant step requires the ability to use diplomacy, negotiation, persuasion, and alliance-building skills. Managing the demands of an organization for high productivity and quality, combined with financial prudence and regulatory compliance, are only part of the equation. Participants will discover that those tasks must be balanced with an excellent grasp of human relations skills in working closely and collaboratively with others while managing change.

Conflict Management: Engaging the Difficult Employee
Tuesday, March 26, 2019
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

This full-day, interactive program, based on best practices in leadership theory, will provide communication methods and tools for navigating the challenging maze of different personalities and communication styles to better manage conflict. Different personalities, different work styles, cultural/ethnic norms, and differences in generational mix lead to the possibility of conflict surfacing at work. The program will explore the role conflict plays in the process of change and effective team problem solving—both major factors in improving organization performance.