Hospitals Testify in Support of CHA-Initiated Mental Health Proposal

On March 18, CHA and Connecticut hospitals testified before the General Assembly’s Public Health Committee in support of SB 1088, An Act Concerning Mental Health Services. The bill includes several recommendations developed by the CHA Subcommittee on Mental Health of the Committee on Government.

The bill would call on state agencies to work with hospitals to create a shared savings model for behavioral health services, as well as develop transparent health outcomes and quality measures for state-operated and state-funded facilities. It would increase reimbursement rates for Medicaid, fund coordinated community care, and address the need for patient beds for mental healthcare.

Carl Schiessl, Director, Regulatory Advocacy, CHA, testified that across Connecticut, “hospitals are teaming up with other community-based healthcare providers and providers of wraparound social services to establish Community Care Teams (CCTs) or to engage in other related community coordination initiatives. These teams work collaboratively to enhance patient screening, ensure timely release of information, establish patient-centered intensive case management plans, and engage patients in social wraparound support services.” Mr. Schiessl urged legislators to support a $4.8 million investment over the biennium to support grants to hospitals across the state for CCTs and related care coordination services.

Tait Michael, MD, Western Connecticut Health Network, testified that since the Norwalk CCT was put in place, hospital’s CCT. She testified that Middlesex Hospital witnessed a dramatic reduction in Emergency Department visits and costs once the CCT plan was put in place. Terri DiPietro, Director, Center for Behavioral Health, Middlesex Hospital, discussed with Committee members the success of the hospital’s CCT. She testified that Middlesex Hospital witnessed a dramatic reduction in Emergency Department visits and costs once the CCT plan was put in place. Tait Michael, MD, Western Connecticut Health Network, testified that since the Norwalk CCT was put in place, Emergency Department usage decreased by 32 percent for the high-utilizer population.

Steve Larcen, PhD, President of the Behavioral Health Network of Hartford HealthCare, and co-chair of the CHA Subcommittee on Mental Health, testified in support of a Medicaid shared savings program as an incentive to healthcare providers to improve the quality and decrease the costs of care, including requirements that quality standards ensure the improvement and coordination of care.

Frank Fortunati, MD, Yale New Haven Health System, testified in favor of transparent reporting of health outcome data for state-owned or state-operated facilities to ensure the interdependent web of community service agencies operates effectively to coordinate care, reduce admissions, and maximize limited healthcare resources. Charles Herrick, MD, Western Connecticut Health Network, called for better dissemination of admission criteria, admission procedures, and program capacity of state-funded and state-operated facilities.

James F. O’Dea, PhD, MBA, Regional Director, Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network, addressed the need for funding intermediate care beds. “Intermediate care is much more than simply extending the length of time that a patient is treated on an inpatient setting. While a lengthier time is part of this level of care… that time allows for the deployment of specialized individual, group, and family therapies that are not customarily available in standard inpatient care.”

CHA would like to thank the hospitals that provided testimony, which included Bristol Hospital, Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, Day Kimball Healthcare, Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network, Johnson Memorial Hospital, Lawrence + Memorial Hospital, Middlesex Hospital, St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center, Western Connecticut Health Network, and Yale New Haven Health System.

Issues Raised by CHA Addressed in Legislative Proposal

On March 17, CHA testified before the Human Services Committee in support of HB 6960, An Act Concerning Medicaid Prescriptions Written By Hospital Resident Physicians And Interns And The Implementation Of Electronic Health Record Standards. The bill would prohibit the Department of Social Services (DSS) from requiring Medicaid claims to include the National Provider Identifier (NPI) numbers for both the supervising physician and the intern/resident, a process that is inconsistent with Medicare.

The bill would also make changes to Connecticut’s current electronic health record incentive program, to align providers’ public health reporting requirements with the federal program standards. HB 6960 includes several recommendations developed by CHA staff in an effort to solve some ongoing issues that hospitals are having with DSS.

In testimony, Karen Buckley-Bates, Director, Government Relations, CHA, stated, “HB 6960 seeks to remedy two separate problems negatively affecting hospitals and healthcare providers because certain processes used by the Department of Social Services have the unintended result of being inconsistent with requirements providers must observe for Medicare.”

Subsequent to the hearing, representatives from CHA met with Committee leaders and representatives from DSS. As a result of that conversation, CHA and DSS plan to collaborate to reach out to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to resolve remaining issues as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Bill Opposed by CHA Dies in Committee

The Labor and Public Employees Committee failed to act on a piece of legislation opposed by CHA prior to its reporting deadline. HB
An Act Concerning Predictable Scheduling For Employees, would have required employers to provide work schedules 21 days in advance of the first day of such work schedule, obtain written consent from employees should a change to the posted schedule be made, and pay “predictability” pay should changes in the schedule be made.

CHA testified that such scheduling requirements are not realistic for acute care hospitals and others in the healthcare environment. The very nature of acute care hospitals is unpredictable, and requires a great deal of flexibility to ensure the safe care of patients. Other factors include patient census variation and the need to respond to a sudden increase in patients requiring hospitalization. Read CHA's testimony here.

CT Supreme Court Rules in Favor of Hospitals

On March 11, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled unanimously in favor of the hospital position in its decision in the FAIRPAY Solutions case.

In 2012, CHA submitted an amicus brief supporting several CHA hospitals in a workers' compensation action against FAIRPAY Solutions, a firm providing specialty bill review services for workers' compensation carriers and employers.

FAIRPAY Solutions had been establishing claim-specific hospital costs for the hospital service being billed. Workers’ compensation carriers and employers that used FAIRPAY made claims payments based on the FAIRPAY’s re-priced claims, and hospitals needed to seek relief by appealing each claim to the Workers’ Compensation Commission.

Workers' compensation carriers had claimed that they are liable only for the hospital’s actual cost. Hospitals argued that both case law and subsequently enacted OHCA statutes require workers' compensation carriers and employers to pay charges, or enter into a contractual relationship with the hospital, for a discounted rate.

The Connecticut Supreme Court concluded:

With respect to the reserved issue, we are persuaded that, in the absence of a negotiated agreement pursuant to § 19a-646, a workers' compensation commissioner determines an employer's liability for hospital services on the basis of the hospital’s filed rates that it is required to charge "any payer" under § 19a-646 (b), and, accordingly, these cases are remanded to the board with direction to affirm the decisions of the commissioner.

The decision applies to services provided prior to April 1, 2015.

CHA Annual Meeting Awards - Deadline Approaching

The deadline for the CHA Annual Meeting awards entries is next Friday, March 27, 2015. 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/nominations are linked below.

The 2015 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.

The 2015 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.

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.

All entries must be received by Friday, March 27, 2015. Winners will be honored at the CHA Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 30, 2015. If you have questions, please contact Michele Sharp at (203) 294-7213 or via e-mail at sharp@chime.org.

Education Updates

HRO Rounding to Influence
Monday, March 23, 2015
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Event Registration

Rounding to Influence is for leaders who want to learn how to be more effective up on the units, when they are coaching staff and reinforcing behaviors.

HRO Safety Coach Training
Monday, March 23, 2015
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Event Registration

Wednesday, April 1, 2015
1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
Event Registration

Safety Coaches are peer mentors who help remind employees about the safety practices and behaviors that your organization has adopted.
HRO Leadership Method Training for Hospitals
Tuesday, March 24, 2015
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Event Registration

This Leadership session is for new Level 3 hospitals and any new hires in previously trained Level 3 hospitals. Leadership sessions teach the science of safety and behaviors and practices of High Reliability organizations.

Basics of Budgeting for Healthcare Managers
Tuesday, March 31, 2015
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
View Brochure | Event Registration

Many healthcare department managers have traditionally risen from the professional ranks as successful clinicians or technicians but with little or no formal business financial training. As a result, many are thrust into a chaotic environment without the necessary 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. In a very real sense, these represent survival skills for both managers and institutions.

This member-requested management development program provides managers with the skills and tools they need to prepare better budgets, identify problems and solutions, achieve the mission, and succeed in today’s chaotic healthcare environment. Participants will gain a working knowledge of operating and capital budgets, as part of developing performance planning skills.

Continuing education credits will be awarded. See the brochure for details.

Sterile Compounding: A Blueprint for Best Practices (for Hospital Engineers)
Tuesday, March 31, 2015
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM
View Brochure | Event Registration

This training—which is designed for hospital engineers—will include an explanation of current facility, environmental, and personnel metrics requirements for compounding sterile preparations in compliance with USP and the CETA Guidelines. A description of how primary and secondary engineering controls contribute to airflow velocity, direction, and ultimately ISO classification will also be provided.

Registration for this session includes access to CriticalPoint's eLearning course Engineering Controls for Sterile Compounding. These two lessons and post tests must be completed by all participants prior to the scheduled training. *Login information will be e-mailed to all registrants.

This live-training session will be submitted for continuing education credits.

Sterile Compounding: A Blueprint for Best Practices (two-day training for Hospital Pharmacists)
Tuesday, March 31, 2015
Wednesday, April 1, 2015
8:00 AM - 5:15 PM
View Brochure | Event Registration

This two-day, interactive training is designed for hospital pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, and will provide best practice education and the skills necessary to perform USP Chapter <797> compliant sterile compounding. Specific areas that will be addressed are: the rationale for sterile compounding quality management systems (historical perspective), an overview of USP <797> as well as best practice standards.

Registration for this session includes access to CriticalPoint's eLearning courses Fundamentals of Sterile Compounding and Engineering Controls for Sterile Compounding, comprising 12 lessons and post tests (14 hours of ACPE-approved CE). The 12 lessons and post tests must be completed by all participants prior to the scheduled training. *Login information will be e-mailed to all registrants.

This live-training session will be submitted for continuing education credits.

2015 Corporate Compliance Conference
Thursday, April 2, 2015
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
View Brochure | Event Registration

Join us for CHA's Corporate Compliance Conference, which will feature the keynote presentation "The Era of Compliance Transparency – Ensuring Compliance Professionals Can Stay Ahead of the Curve" by Greg Radinsky, Vice President and Chief Corporate Compliance Officer for the North Shore-LIJ Health System (NS-LIJ) in New York.

The full-day conference will include additional presentations on high-stakes communication and key compliance issues in physician practices.

Please see the attached brochure for program details.

Continuing education credits will be awarded. See the brochure for details.

HRO Using High Reliability to Improve the Patients' Experience
Tuesday, April 7, 2015
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Event Registration

Tuesday, April 7, 2015
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Event Registration
Lynn Pierce of HPI, an alumna of Baptist Hospital in Pensacola FL (home of the 2003 Malcolm Baldridge Quality Award), will be our instructor.

**Overview of USP Chapter <797> Sterile Compounding (for Quality Professionals and Infection Preventionists)**

Friday, April 10, 2015
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
[View Brochure | Event Registration](#)

This half-day program will provide the history and an overview of the <797> standards. This session is intended for the accreditation, regulatory, and quality/infection prevention experts in your organization who oversee survey preparedness for your hospital, as well as anyone else who wants an introduction to the standards.

This training will be provided by Attorney Jennifer Osowiecki of Cox & Osowiecki, LLC, a Hartford law firm representing all levels of healthcare institutions and providers in regulatory, litigation, licensing, and business matters.

This session will be submitted to the National Association for Healthcare Quality for continuing education credits.

**CHA Nurse Preceptorship Program**

Tuesday, April 14, 2015
8:30 AM - 3:45 PM
[View Brochure | Event Registration](#)

Supporting and strengthening the work of nurse preceptors is critical to the development of new nurses and retention of the highly skilled staff registered nurses who teach them at the bedside.

Curriculum for the Nurse Preceptorship Program, was developed by a team of educators from hospitals and schools of nursing and is designed to provide core content that is foundational for the role of nurse preceptor. This one-day program includes presentations and interactive sessions that cover topics such as roles and responsibilities, characteristics of a professional role model, basics of teaching and learning, tools and strategies for effective communication, principles of constructive feedback delivery, evaluating competence, and delegating effectively. The Nurse Preceptorship Program will serve to start new nurse preceptors off with critical information and also may be of interest to nurse preceptors that have not had this content, or would like to be refreshed on these concepts.

Breakfast and lunch will be provided.