Bill to Compel Not-For-Profit Hospitals to Pay Property Tax Moves Forward

Despite opposing testimony from CHA and numerous hospitals, HB 5583, An Act Concerning The Payment Of Real Property Taxes By Certain Institutions Of Higher Learning And Hospital Facilities, was voted out of committee. The bill would make certain private institutions of higher education and hospitals liable for the payment of real property taxes and provide a mechanism for the state to provide grants to reimburse institutions and hospitals for such payments.

On March 21, CHA’s Carl Schiessl, Director of Regulatory Affairs, provided testimony in opposition to the bill. Other hospital advocates providing oral testimony included Alice Facente, RN, The William W. Backus Hospital; Daun Barrett, Director of Community Outreach and Parish Nursing, Griffin Hospital; Kelly Soukup, Revenue Enhancement Specialist, Johnson Memorial Hospital; William Stanley, Vice President, Development and Community Relations, Lawrence + Memorial Hospital; Catherine Rees, Manager, Community Benefit, Middlesex Hospital; Gary Dee, MD, MidState Medical Center; R. Christopher Hartley, Senior Vice President, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center; Augusta Mueller, Senior Community Benefits Administrator, Yale New Haven Health System; and Melvyn Colon, Executive Director, Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance.

At the time of publication, other hospital testimony posted on the Planning and Development website included that from Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, Gaylord Specialty Healthcare, Milford Hospital, Saint Mary’s Hospital, St. Vincent’s Health Services, Stamford Hospital, and Western Connecticut Health Network.

In addition to submitting testimony, CEOs of Connecticut hospitals signed a letter asking legislators to oppose HB 5583. The letter explained that Connecticut, like the rest of the nation, enacted the property tax exemption for hospitals in recognition of their critically important role in the community. The commitment of Connecticut hospitals to their communities has not wavered, despite the tumultuous changes in healthcare and increasing financial challenges. It is hospitals’ hope that the state will keep the current tax exemption and PILOT funding structure in place.

Measure to Regulate Hospital Consolidations Advances

The Public Health Committee amended and released SB 460, An Act Concerning Hospital Conversions And Other Matters Affecting Hospitals. Last week, CHA and hospitals testified in opposition to the bill, which would severely interfere with hospital operations and would have an extremely negative impact on the way hospitals provide care, irrespective of their current or future tax status. All hospitals will be impacted should this bill pass into law.

SB 460 would make numerous changes to the Certificate of Need (CON) and conversion process—irrespective of whether a hospital intends to merge, affiliate, or convert with another not-for-profit or for-profit hospital. SB 460 will be referred to other legislative committees for further action before being referred to the Senate and House floors for final consideration and action.

DPH Presents Healthy Connecticut 2020 - State Health Improvement Plan

On March 25, the Connecticut Department of Public Health unveiled the 2014 State Health Improvement Plan, a roadmap for improving the state’s health. The plan is based on findings from the Connecticut State Health Assessment, released in January 2013. Together, the assessment and plan compose Healthy Connecticut 2020, a state health planning initiative developed by more than 100 partners and contributing organizations, including CHA.

Joined by Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman and Paul Jarris, Executive Director of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, DPH Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA, presented the plan, recognizing the work of hospitals and other organizations in improving community health and noting the importance of collaboration and integrated efforts.

The plan provides a blueprint for collective action among a wide array of partners to address some of Connecticut’s most challenging health issues, including obesity, tobacco use, high blood pressure, falls, poor birth outcomes, and prescription drug misuse. It also recognizes the problem of health disparities and puts a renewed focus on eliminating disparities.

“While Connecticut meets or exceeds many national targets for health status and risk factors, many of our residents are dying prematurely from chronic diseases and injuries,” Dr. Mullen said. “Profound disparities in health exist among certain demographic and socioeconomic groups and even adjacent towns.”

The plan offers a common framework for organizations to use in leveraging resources, engaging partners, and identifying their own priorities and strategies for collective action. The statewide framework aligns well with the findings and priorities identified through Connecticut hospitals’ health needs assessments. CHA looks forward to continued collaboration among Connecticut hospitals, local health departments, federally qualified health centers, and other community partners in addressing health equity issues and improving population health.

The Healthy Connecticut 2020 state health improvement plan and additional materials can be found here.
CHA Releases New Video – Safe Care: Every Patient, Every Time

The Connecticut Hospital Association is pleased to release a new video, Safe Care: Every Patient, Every Time. The video highlights the work of Connecticut hospitals to become high reliability organizations – organizations in high risk fields that use high reliability science strategies to create cultures of safety, with a goal of no accidents, 100 percent of the time.

This video and others can be found on the website www.CareWeCanCountOn.org, which highlights the care provided by Connecticut hospitals. CHA wishes to thank the nurses, doctors, patients, and hospital volunteers who have contributed their voices to telling the hospital story. We encourage you to join us at www.CareWeCanCountOn.org and receive the latest hospital news on Facebook and Twitter.

Education Updates

HPI Level 3: Train-the-Trainer Session
Friday, March 28, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

This train-the-trainer session is designed for hospital trainers to learn how to teach the staff safety behaviors and error prevention tools.

Event Registration

HPI Level 3: Train-the-Trainer Session
Tuesday, April 1, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

This train-the-trainer session is designed for hospital trainers to learn how to teach the staff safety behaviors and error prevention tools.

Event Registration

HIPAA Privacy and Security Basics
Thursday, April 3, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

This program will review the current HIPAA Privacy, Security Rule, and Breach Rules, and will outline new rules and guidance from the Office of Civil Rights, much of which was published after the HITECH rules September 2013 implementation date. Recent enforcement actions and data breach situations will be reviewed. 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 as the transition from paper to EHR accelerates.

Target Audience: The program is designed for compliance professionals, privacy and security officers, chief information officers, risk managers, in-house counsel, and others with responsibilities for HIPAA compliance.

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

View Brochure | Event Registration

Cisco Healthcare I.T. Conference
Friday, April 11, 2014
2:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

CHA is extremely pleased to have Carlos Dominguez, Senior Vice President, Office of the Chairman and CEO of Cisco, join us for this conference and present on the future of healthcare I.T. His presentation will also include a deep dive into Cisco’s roadmap for developing Healthcare technologies and what these technology advancements mean to your organization.

Mr. Dominguez will be joined by Edward Kim, Collaboration Systems Engineer, Healthcare of Cisco, and Todd Wilson, Collaboration Architect, Healthcare of Cisco. These healthcare technology experts will provide interactive presentations on Cisco’s Telehealth/Telepresence technologies.

This program is designed for Chief Information Officers and I.T. professionals—and all those interested in the powerful and wide-ranging impact technology will have on the future of healthcare.

View Brochure | Event Registration

2014 Corporate Compliance Conference
Wednesday, April 30, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Connecticut healthcare professionals, like their colleagues nationwide are being asked to expand their knowledge and skills to respond to unprecedented challenges triggered by healthcare reform—including the ever-changing regulatory compliance landscape.

Please join us for CHA’s annual Corporate Compliance Conference, which will address several critical topics including the CMS 2-midnight presumption, documentation issues, and revenue cycle strategies. Additionally, there will be presentations covering physician-owned distributorships, the focus on transparency of industry physician financial relationships or the CMS Physician Payment Sunshine Act, and compliance strategies for both provider and patient health information exchange (HIE) portals. In addition to compliance, legal, and risk professionals, we also invite physicians, HIM, and other healthcare professionals to join us for a comprehensive conference.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

View Brochure | Event Registration