General Assembly Approves State Budget Adjustment

Lawmakers in the House of Representatives gave final approval to a $19.76 billion state budget during a Special Session on Friday, May 13, closing a nearly $1 billion deficit.

The House voted 74-70 to approve SB 501, An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2017, and the budget implementer bill, SB 502, An Act Concerning Revenue And Other Items To Implement The Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2017. All 62 Republicans in the House voted against the budget, along with eight Democrats.

The measure, which was approved by the Senate on May 12, now heads to Governor Dannel Malloy for his signature.

It provides $120 million in supplemental payments to hospitals for FY 2017 (approximately $108 million in inpatient supplemental payments and $12 million for the Small Hospital Pool). It also creates a separate and distinct line item for hospital supplemental payments. SB 501 also contains continued reductions to mental health and substance use treatment, and programs.

A problematic provision in the implementer bill, SB 502, was deleted before the House and Senate voted on the bill. That provision would have limited decisions by the Department of Social Services (DSS) that could have been appealed by hospitals. Hospitals, as opposed to all other providers, would have been limited in the scope of their appeals.

The budget also imposes significant cuts to the personnel and salary accounts in most state agencies, which may require the Governor to reduce the state workforce beyond the 2,600 currently projected reductions the Administration is trying to achieve through layoffs, retirements, and attrition.

Additionally, Section 34 of the budget authorizes the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to reduce spending to achieve a General Fund targeted savings lapse of approximately $69 million, and while the section does not specify where or how such reductions should be made, it does prohibit OPM from reducing hospital supplemental payments and education equalization grants. Finally, Section 35(d) authorizes OPM to reduce spending to achieve General Fund savings of $94.5 million. That section also does not specify where or how such reductions should be made, but prohibits OPM from making reductions to municipal aid or reductions of more than 1% of any appropriation. It does not contain a prohibition on reducing any other line items.

The House deferred action on a bonding package approved by the Senate that cancels about $1 billion in previously approved borrowing. The House is expected to take up the bonding package in the coming weeks.

Additionally, two bills of interest were signed into law by Governor Malloy on Tuesday, May 17: HB 5450 (PA 16-23), An Act Concerning The Palliative Use Of Marijuana, which becomes effective on October 1, 2016; and SB 97 (PA 16-24), An Act Concerning The Private Occupational School Student Protection Accounts, which becomes effective on July 1, 2016.

Certificate of Need Taskforce Meets for Second Time

The Certificate of Need (CON) Taskforce met for the second time on May 16 to hear a presentation about national CON perspectives and an overview of healthcare-related initiatives in Connecticut.

The Taskforce, which was established by executive order in February, is charged with examining the state's oversight process for the establishment, termination, transfer, acquisition, and expansion of hospitals and medical service providers.

During the meeting, taskforce members heard a presentation from Thomas Piper, CEO, Macquest Consulting.
Asthma Study Shows Readmission Rates Linked To Social Determinants

According to a study published online by JAMA Pediatrics, African American children are more than twice as likely to be readmitted to the hospital due to asthma than white children because of socioeconomic and other social determinant risk factors.

The study, which was part of the Greater Cincinnati Asthma Risks Study, looked at nearly 700 children ages 1 to 16 who were admitted to an urban children’s hospital for asthma or wheezing. There were 441 African American children and 254 white children in the study group and the median age was 5.4 years.

The study found that African American children were 2.26 times more likely to be readmitted to the hospital than white children and that socioeconomic hardships explained 53 percent of the disparity. Biologic, environmental, disease management, and access to treatment variables also played a large role in the disparity.

Eliminating healthcare disparities is a goal for CHA and Connecticut hospitals. The Connecticut Asthma Initiative (CAI), which formally launched its implementation phase in January 2016, is working to address the social determinants that so heavily affect asthma outcomes across Connecticut. The vision of the initiative is to eliminate mortality due to asthma and ensure that no one in Connecticut unnecessarily limits his or her life because of asthma. The goals are to improve access and appropriate care by partnering with the community, reduce asthma hospitalizations and ED visits, and significantly advance progress toward health equity for asthma care and outcomes by 2017.

Bristol Hospital Awards Hospital Champion Honors to Legislative Delegation

Bristol Hospital presented its first Hospital Champion Awards to members of its state delegation on Wednesday, May 11.

The ceremony was part of the quarterly President’s Forum event, which is hosted by Kurt A. Barwis, FACHE, President and CEO of Bristol Hospital and Health Care Group, and John J. Leone Jr., Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bristol Hospital and Health Care Group.

The Hospital Champion Award recipients included Sen. Henri Martin (R-31), Rep. Whit Betts (R-78), Elizabeth “Betty” Boukus (D-22), Frank Nicastro (D-79), and Rep. Cara Pavalock (R-77).

The Hospital Champion Awards were created to honor the delegation’s tireless work at the State Capitol on behalf of the Bristol Hospital community including its patients, families, and employees.
**Education Updates**

**CHA Nurse Preceptorship Program**  
Monday, May 23, 2016  
8:30 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.  
[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.

CHA's Nurse Preceptorship Program has routinely received positive feedback. It features a curriculum 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, and evaluating competence. 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.

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

**HRO Train-the-Trainer**  
Thursday, June 2, 2016  
9:00 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.  
[Event Registration]

The model for sharing high reliability training with the rest of the staff is Train the Trainer. The training is scripted. It requires an enthusiastic participant who is willing to make time to train others within the organization. Other hospitals in Connecticut have trained educators, front-line managers, and senior leaders, including the CEO, as part of their training contingent. Train-the-Trainer sessions are for hospitals and ambulatory practices. Medicine, Nursing, Quality, and Radiology continuing education credits are offered for these sessions.

**HRO Rounding to Influence**  
Friday, June 3, 2016  
9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.  
[Event Registration]

The program teaches leaders how to go out on the units to coach, mentor, and sustain high reliability habits and practices. Medicine, Nursing, and Quality continuing education credits are offered for this session.

**HRO Top Ten Problem Lists and Action Plans**  
Friday, June 3, 2016  
1:00 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.  
[Event Registration]

When issues are identified in Safety Huddle, how do you solve them and maintain the other projects you are doing? Problem Solving with the Top 10 is a tool for prioritizing and implementing projects without losing sight of the core value of safety. Medicine, Nursing, and Quality continuing education credits are offered for this session.

**Lean Principles: Process Flow and Value Stream Mapping in Healthcare**  
Session 1: Friday, June 3, 2016  
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
[View Brochure] | [Event Registration]

As the demands of health reform drive change in all areas of healthcare delivery, hospital leaders are focused on transforming their organizations through strategies that simultaneously increase revenue and sharply reduce costs. Lean principles offer leaders a management system and methodology that improves team engagement, eliminates road blocks, and allows hospitals to improve the quality of care for patients by reducing errors and waste streams, including wait times. It is a systematic approach to reducing costs and risks, while simultaneously setting the stage for growth and expansion.

Please note: this is a two-session program, participants should plan to attend both sessions.

Continuing education credits are offered for this session.

**Financial Skills for Managers**  
Friday, June 10, 2016  
9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.  
[View Brochure] | [Event Registration]

Because healthcare delivery methods and payment systems are changing rapidly, carefully managing the financial health of the organization is more important than ever. Resources are scarce and stretched to the breaking point. Doing more with less is routine. The
need for sound business and financial management tools—survival skills—is paramount for all managers. These include planning and budgeting, financial analysis, and maximizing resources, all of which are essential if managers are to achieve the institution’s mission and contribute to “bottom line” results. Bill Ward, a popular and dynamic lecturer on financial management in healthcare, is back by member request to present the program.

Continuing education credits are offered for this session.

HEN 2.0 – Reducing Adverse Drug Events: Strategies to Accelerate Improvement Webinar - Anticoagulation Safety
Monday, June 13, 2016
2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Event Registration

Reducing Adverse Drug Events is a topic area for focused improvement efforts nationally. Join Frank Federico, IHI, as he reviews key strategies proven to assist hospitals in managing their high-risk medication safety programs related to opioid, insulin, and anticoagulation usage.

The program is being presented as part of the Partnership for Patients HEN 2.0 educational series.

Cross Cultural and Diversity Inclusiveness Training
Session 1: Friday, June 17, 2016
Session 2: Friday, June 24, 2016
8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

In partnership with the Hispanic Health Council, the Saint Francis Center for Health Equity, and the Connecticut Association of Healthcare Executives, CHA is again pleased to offer Cross Cultural and Diversity Inclusiveness Training (CC&DIT) - a unique, comprehensive, and interactive program to achieve the goal of improving cultural competence in the delivery of care and addressing healthcare disparities.

The curriculum was developed in direct response to member requests for help in providing diversity education. It is structured as a two-module program; each session is five hours in duration—delivered once each week over a two-week period. Training content is based on current research that emphasizes the idea that cultural competence is not achieved through a single training event—but is a lifelong commitment to learning and professional skills development. With more than 200 members completing the training, program evaluations have been consistently positive about the value of this training.

The program provides an opportunity for hospitals who have taken the AHA #123for Equity Pledge to Act to Eliminate Healthcare Disparities to meet the requirement for training staff in cultural competence.

Please note: this is a two-session program, participants should plan to attend both sessions.

This program is being held at the Connecticut Institute for Primary Care Innovation (CIPCI) in Hartford.

HEN 2.0—Reducing Readmissions Through Medication Management
Wednesday, June 22, 2016
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

A cause of readmission, and medication errors, is the incomplete dissemination of information about patients’ medications and the lack of medication management by patients and care providers during the transition from hospital to home. Come hear innovative solutions to apply in your organization from experts in the field of medication management.

The program is being presented as part of the Partnership for Patients HEN 2.0 educational series.