Final Full Week of Legislative Session

This is the final week of the 2015 Legislative Session, with sine die next Wednesday, June 3, 2015.

On May 26, the House met in session, but did not debate or vote on any bills of interest to the hospital community. The Senate did not meet.

On May 27, the House and Senate met and spent time debating and passing a number of bills. Specifically, the House amended and passed in concurrence with the Senate SB 467, An Act Concerning The Facilitation Of Telehealth, a bill for which CHA provided qualified support that would establish minimum standards of practice and health insurance coverage for telemedicine. It also passed in concurrence with the Senate SB 855, An Act Concerning Reports Of Nurse Staffing Levels, a bill that would require hospitals to report nurse staffing levels to the Department of Public Health (DPH), as well as report annually to DPH the number of workplace violence incidents occurring in any DPH-licensed institution with 50 or more full- or part-time employees. The House passed HB 5435, An Act Concerning The Commission On Health Equity, a bill that would allow the membership of the Commission on Health Equity to appoint an executive director within available appropriations.

SB 467 and SB 855 will be transmitted to the Governor for further action. HB 5435 will be transmitted to the Senate for further action.

The House and Senate were meeting in session at the time of publication of CHA Update. Any action taken on bills of interest to hospitals will be reported in the next edition of CHA Update.

State Budget Still Being Negotiated

At the time of publication, Democratic leaders from the Senate and House, along with members of the Governor’s budget office, were still in negotiations over the FY 2016-2017 biennium budget. Budget writers are trying to narrow the differences between their respective spending and revenue plans. It is not uncommon for negotiations to end quickly, as soon as key issues are resolved. With the General Assembly scheduled to meet over the weekend, it is possible that a budget agreement will be reached. The budget, along with all proposed legislation, must be acted on by the end of session, June 3, 2015.

Governor Signs Bills into Law

This week, Governor Malloy signed several bills into law. Bills of interest to the hospital community signed into law include:

- HB 5525 (PA 15-10), An Act Concerning Cytomegalovirus, a bill that will require a screening test for cytomegalovirus for newborns who fail a newborn hearing screening.
- HB 5913 (PA-15-11), An Act Concerning Persons Who Decontaminate Reusable Medical Instruments Or Devices, a bill that will establish licensure requirements for persons who decontaminate, inspect, assemble, or package and sterilize reusable medical instruments or devices in a healthcare facility.
- SB 850 (PA 15-15), An Act Amending The Code Of Ethics For Lobbyists To Redefine “Expenditure” And Raise The Threshold For Lobbyist Registration, a bill that, among other provisions, amends the code of ethics for lobbyists by increasing expenditure thresholds. The bill also exempts from the definition of “lobbying” certain expenditures associated with certain grassroots activities.

As of May 28, the Governor has signed 17 bills and vetoed one bill of the 2015 Legislative Session.

Hospital Roundtable Bill Passes Senate, Headed for House

On May 21, the State Senate released and voted on the consolidated “Hospital Roundtable Bill,” a proposal that will impact the delivery of care in every Connecticut hospital. Senate proponents of the bill, Senate President Pro Tempore Marty Looney (D-New Haven) and Senate Minority Leader Len Fasano (R-North Haven), consolidated the nine previously filed bills into one 91-page bill, SB 811, An Act Concerning Parity In Hospital Sales Oversight. The bill passed on a vote of 30-5 with Sens. Markey (R-Southington), Hartley (D-Waterbury), Boucher (R-Wilton), Hvlang (R-Fairfield), and Guglielmo (R-Stafford) voting “no.”

The proposal passed by the Senate would institute a host of onerous new regulations that will keep Connecticut hospitals from serving patients in the best way possible and moving forward to achieve the goals of healthcare reform.

The bill was transmitted to the House for further action.

CHA is meeting with House leadership and working with the Connecticut Association of Health Plans and the Malloy Administration – all of whom have expressed concerns and opposition to the bill – to make changes to the bill.

Property Tax Bill Passed by House, Heads to Senate

On May 22, the House passed HB 5434, An Act Concerning State Assistance In Presenting Local Property Tax Bills, a bill that will require the state to pay the local property tax bill once the property owner files a claim for a local property tax bill. The bill was passed in concurrence with the Senate SB 750, An Act Concerning Property Tax Relief.

The bill was transmitted to the Senate for further action.

Update Archives

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On May 21, the House of Representatives debated and passed HB 6965, An Act Concerning The Preservation Of Municipal Tax Bases, a priority bill for Speaker Brendan Sharkey (D-Hamden) and a bill strongly opposed by hospitals and private colleges/universities. HB 6965 passed on a vote of 82-60.

Originally, HB 6965 was brought to the floor for debate on May 14, but was pulled after bipartisan opposition to provisions of the bill that would impact hospitals. The new version of the bill was modified significantly to remove its retroactive application.

The version of the bill passed by the House on May 21 would require hospitals to pay taxes on real and personal property on taxable property acquired on or after October 1, 2015. The bill stipulates that the requirement to pay real and personal tax would not apply to property that is part of the hospital’s main campus. The tax status (either exempt or not) of hospital properties on a municipality’s grand list as of October 1, 2014 will remain in effect. Lastly, HB 6965 allows municipalities to enter into written agreements with medical foundations and health systems to determine and fix tax assessments of any newly taxable real and/or personal property.

HB 6965 was transmitted to the Senate for further action.

**Education Updates**

**Cross Cultural and Diversity Inclusiveness Training**

First Session: Friday, June 5, 2015
8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Second Session: Friday, June 12, 2015
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 & 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 CC&DIT curriculum was developed in direct response to member requests for help in providing diversity education and is structured as a two-module program, each session 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 over 150 members completing the training, program evaluations have been consistently positive about the value of this training.

Diversity Collaborative team members are encouraged to attend as a way to help achieve team goals in their organization.

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

**Overview of USP Chapter <797> Sterile Compounding**

Thursday, June 11, 2015
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
[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 has been approved by the National Association for Healthcare Quality for 2.0 continuing education hours.

**Transitioning From Staff to Management: What’s Next?**

Monday, June 15, 2015
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
[View Brochure] [Event Registration]

Whether recently assigned to the role of manager or a seasoned veteran, it is important to determine how well your problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making skills are keeping pace with the ever-changing healthcare environment. For those who attended “Staff to Management: Starting the Transition” in September or May, this is the second course in the two-part program and provides additional development for all managers who want to continually improve their skills.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

**Coaching Skills to Improve Performance**

Tuesday, June 16, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
[View Brochure] [Event Registration]

What does it take for a manager to be an effective coach? Is there a difference between managing and coaching employees for improved performance? Building trust, appreciating differences, encouraging growth, providing constructive criticism, and overcoming roadblocks to goal achievement are all part of the process.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.