



Thursday, June 4, 2015

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### General Assembly Adjourns 2015 Regular Session Sine Die: Joint Resolution Adopted For Special Session



Prior to adjourning *Sine Die*, the House and Senate passed a joint resolution calling for a Special Session. The Special Session will address bills dealing with law enforcement's use of excessive force (SB 1109), bond authorizations, state land conveyance, and school construction, as well as the budget implementer bills. The budget implementer bills contain the detailed outline of how the various agency budgets and line items are administered during the biennium.

### FY 2016-2017 Budget Passes General Assembly and is Transmitted to the Governor



At 5:20 a.m. on June 3, the House started its debate on [HB 7061, An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2017, And Making Appropriations Therefor, And Other Provisions Related To Revenue, Deficiency Appropriations And Tax Fairness And Economic Development](#), the FY 2016-2017 biennium budget. The budget debate lasted five hours before the budget passed on a vote of 73-70 (8 members did not vote). The Senate debated the budget for several hours before passing the bill at

11:30 p.m. on a vote of 19-17. Senator Joan Hartley (D-Waterbury) and Senator Paul Doyle (D-Wethersfield) joined every Republican senator in voting against the budget.

In total, the more than \$40 billion two-year spending plan calls for more than a billion dollars in new revenue over the biennium, including an expansion of the hospital tax from \$269 million to \$315 million per year, as well as cuts in the Medicaid program equaling \$30 million per year.

Jennifer Jackson, CEO, CHA, made the following statement to the media:

*We need to work together to develop strong public policy to achieve a sustainable healthcare environment in our state. These cuts, taxes, and regulatory burdens, which endanger our hospitals and their patients, are devastating and unsustainable.*

*The cuts and taxes contained in the state budget hurt all of us by hacking away at our state's fragile healthcare safety net. Cuts and taxes will negatively impact quality of care, programs and services offered by hospitals, jobs in hospitals and our communities, and our economy.*

*In a legislative session that delved into some of the most complex healthcare issues and challenges ever, we advocated for the essential needs of hospitals as they move forward in the new reality of healthcare delivery. While we appreciated discussion with legislators on a number of these issues, a host of new and unnecessary regulations will stifle hospitals at a time when they must be nimble to provide the best care to patients in the most appropriate setting.*

### Speaker Sharkey's Property Tax Bill Not Acted Upon in The Senate

[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, was called twice in the Senate on June 3, but was pulled from the floor each time prior to the Senate calling a final vote on the bill. As such, the bill died when the General Assembly adjourned *Sine Die*.

HB 6965 would have required 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 would have allowed 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.

### House Passes CHA-Supported Bill On DSS Audits, Senate Fails To Take Action



On June 3, the House of Representatives amended and passed [HB 6550, An Act Concerning Medicaid Provider Audits](#), a bill strongly supported by CHA and others in the provider community. As amended, HB 6550 would change the rules for DSS Medicaid audits. Specifically, HB 6550: restricts the way the Department can calculate repayment for clerical errors; sets clear parameters in governing the use of extrapolation; includes a three-year look-back period for audits; creates sampling stratification requirements; requires the use of a qualified statistician; and requires an administrative hearing instead of a clerical record review process.

Beginning last year, CHA led the provider community in working with legislative leaders to have DSS regulations pulled from the Regulations Review Committee and then to have a bill drafted, introduced, and passed by both chambers of the General Assembly. CHA and others in the provider community have long had issues with the DSS's Medicaid audit process and opted for a legislative remedy to address their concerns.

Due to partisan disagreements in the final hours of the session, HB 6550 was not acted on in the Senate. CHA and the Medicaid provider community will continue to work with legislative leaders, as well as with DSS and OPM officials, to resolve the Medicaid audit process.

### Developments in the Last Days of Session

Leading up to the end of session, *Sine Die*, legislators spent their time debating, amending, and passing legislative initiatives including bills related to the budget, criminal justice reform, and various state agencies' technical revisions. Of the several thousand bills raised, 18 were signed into law prior to the end of session, June 3, 2015. During the last several days of session, dozens of bills were passed and sent to the Governor for further action.

Bills of interest to hospitals that were approved by both the House and Senate and transmitted to the Governor for approval include:

- **HB 6708, An Act Concerning Various Revisions To The Mental Health And Addiction Statutes**, a bill that makes several changes to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) statutes, including to requirements related to data collection and the appointing powers of the DMHAS Commissioner.
- **HB 5771, An Act Authorizing Pharmacists To Dispense Drugs In Ninety-Day Quantities**, a bill that would allow pharmacists to refill non-controlled drug prescriptions for quantities of drugs not to exceed a 90-day supply.
- **HB 6892, An Act Concerning Hospital Training And Procedures For Patients With Suspected Dementia**, a bill that would require hospitals to train direct care staff in the symptoms of dementia.
- **HB 5793, An Act Establishing Safe Haven Day**, a bill that would designate April fourth of each year as Safe Haven Day to promote awareness of safe havens in the state.
- **HB 6283, An Act Regulating Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems And Vapor Products**, a bill that would impose restrictions on the use of "electronic nicotine delivery systems" and "vapor products" in certain establishments and public areas similar to existing restrictions on smoking in such public areas.
- **HB 6987, An Act Concerning Various Revisions To The Public Health Statutes**, DPH's annual bill that makes various revisions to the Public Health statutes.
- **HB 5903, An Act Concerning A Study Of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease**, a bill that requires the DPH Commissioner to study chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in consultation with the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS), a representative of the Connecticut Hospital Association, and any other national patient organization with expertise in COPD.
- **HB 6856, An Act Concerning Substance Abuse And Opioid Overdose Prevention**, a bill that would implement the Governor's budget recommendations relating to substance abuse and opioid overdose prevention programs.

### Save the Date: CHA Annual Meeting



### Education Updates

#### 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.

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

#### 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. See the brochure for details.

**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. See the brochure for details.

