Raise Your Voice in Support of Hospitals

With the special session scheduled to occur during the last week of June, we are asking all hospitals and healthcare supporters to join our electronic letter-writing campaign to oppose steep cuts and taxes in the state budget. The budget as passed expands the hospital tax from $269 million to $315 million per year and cuts Medicaid and other funding by $56 million per year.

Today we offered the following statement to the media:

Right now, healthcare is undergoing a huge transformation, and our hospitals are leading the way to make care better for patients. There is no sector of the Connecticut economy that has made more change, contributed more significantly, and is more essential to Connecticut and its long-term future than its hospitals.

The health of the citizens of Connecticut is the number one priority of our hospitals and their caregivers. We hope legislators make it a priority during the special session too. We need them to restore the funding cuts and reduce taxes on hospital care.

The special session is intended to be time for legislators to complete the unfinished business of the regular session, and most notably the bills to implement the budget.

CHA Meets with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on Data Issues

On June 10, CHA representatives, as well as members of the New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA) and BESLER Consulting, met with senior officials of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in Baltimore. Multiple divisions within CMS were present, each having a role in the management and oversight of the agency’s Medicare claims and eligibility data systems – specifically, the Common Working File (CWF) and the HIPAA Eligibility Transaction System (HETS). CMS invited CHA to discuss the challenges that hospitals will face if and when the agency implements its previously-announced plans to eliminate the CWF query capability and replace that database with HETS as the primary source to confirm Medicare beneficiary eligibility for billing and related purposes.

The meeting was both positive and productive, and CMS was sensitive to the obstacles that hospitals will face should the agency follow through on its plans regarding the CWF and the HETS transition. CMS appreciated the opportunity to hear about the hospital industry’s challenges and seemed open to working with stakeholders to develop a mutually beneficial solution.

At the request of CMS, a position paper is being developed by CHA, NJHA, and BESLER Consulting that will both articulate the hospitals’ issues and set forth proposed solutions.

CHA to Participate on Children’s Mental Health Board

Carl Schiessl, JD, Director, Regulatory Advocacy, CHA, is among those who will participate as a chair of the Children’s Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health Plan Implementation Advisory Board. Established by legislative statute, the Board will advise state entities on the execution of the comprehensive children’s behavioral health plan, including cataloguing the mental, emotional, and behavioral health services for Connecticut families and children.

The Board will also pursue the adoption of standard definitions and measurements for the services delivered, and foster collaboration among agencies, providers, advocates, and others interested in the well-being of Connecticut’s children and families.

Joette Katz, Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families, endorsed Mr. Schiessl to serve as a chair. Steven C. Rogers, MD, Emergency Medicine Physician, Injury Prevention Center, Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, was also appointed to serve on the Board.

The Board will meet quarterly and report annually to the Committee on Children of the Connecticut General Assembly.

Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven and Saint Francis Care Announce the Launch of New Partnership in Hartford

Saint Francis Care, parent of Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, and Yale-New Haven Hospital announced the launch of a new partnership at Saint Francis, creating an integrated oncology services program to better serve the greater Hartford community. This new partnership brings the clinical program of Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven to the Saint Francis campus.

The partnership gives Saint Francis patients enhanced access to groundbreaking clinical trials, broader screening and diagnostic tools,
treatment options, expanded psychosocial support, and enhanced pain management therapies. Clinicians at Saint Francis will now follow expanded treatment planning procedures and patient support systems that have been so successful at Smilow in meeting high standards for patient satisfaction and national quality of care targets.

“Saint Francis is known for exceptional patient and family centered cancer care,” said Thomas Lynch, MD, Director, Yale Cancer Center, and Physician-In-Chief, Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven. “The cultural fit with Smilow is perfect – both institutions have outstanding doctors, nurses, and caregivers, and are laser focused on research designed to cure more cancers. Smilow at Saint Francis will define the very best in cancer care, incorporating cancer genetics and personalized precision medicine to bring more cures to more patients.”

“This opportunity to work with Smilow Cancer Hospital creates a model of integration that will transform cancer care at state, regional, and even national levels,” said Christopher M. Dadlez, President and CEO, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center.

Smilow Cancer Hospital and Yale Cancer Center are leading research that is improving the cure rate of advanced cancer and defining the future of personalized cancer medicine. In addition to this exciting new campus, Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven operates 11 cancer care centers across the state. The care centers enable Smilow clinicians to deliver high-quality healthcare to patients in ambulatory settings close to home. Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven is one of the most comprehensive cancer facilities in the country. It is affiliated with Yale Cancer Center, a National Cancer Institute Comprehensive Cancer Center, and one of only 41 in the nation and the only one in Connecticut with this designation.

CHA’s 97th Annual Meeting - Hospitals: Leading the Journey to Better Care, Better Health, Lower Costs

The Connecticut Hospital Association will hold its 97th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 30, 2015, at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington. This year’s theme, Connecticut Hospitals: Leading the Journey to Better Care, Better Health, Lower Costs, is illustrative of the ways in which hospitals are leading the charge to take healthcare into the future.

The meeting will feature CHA’s annual awards, including the Connecticut’s Healthcare Heroes Awards, the AHA Grassroots Champion Award, the CHA Honorary Membership Award, the Connecticut’s Hospital Community Service Award, and the John D. Thompson Award for Excellence in the Delivery of Healthcare Through the Use of Data.

Katty Kay, lead anchor, BBC World News America, will be the keynote speaker. Kay’s reports on the latest U.S. economic and political news are viewed on nearly 300 Public Broadcasting Stations that carry BBC World News America broadcasts, giving her a vast and diverse international audience. The daughter of a British diplomat, Kay grew up in the Middle East and began her career with the BBC in Zimbabwe, where she also covered the end of apartheid in South Africa. Her assignments as a BBC correspondent began in London, and later Tokyo, where she reported on stories including the Japanese economic recession.

As someone who has lived in and reported from the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe and now Washington D.C., Kay offers a fresh perspective on American politics and global affairs – looking beyond the headlines to provide clear insights on critical political and economic issues. Kay is also a frequent guest commentator on NBC’s Meet the Press as well as a regular guest and substitute co-host on MSNBC’s Morning Joe.

CHA gratefully acknowledges the generous Annual Meeting sponsorship of our Platinum Sponsor, Credit Suisse.