Supreme Court Upholds Healthcare Law

Earlier today, the Supreme Court rejected a lawsuit against the Affordable Care Act (ACA), thus preserving financial assistance for millions of people who depend on the healthcare law. At issue was a phrase in the ACA that said federal subsidies to help the poor with their healthcare costs are available to people who purchase insurance on "an exchange established by the state." A number of states allowed the federal government to run their exchanges, which led to the legal question. Because Connecticut has a state-run exchange, the ruling would not have affected our state's residents directly.

The American Hospital Association’s President Rich Umbdenstock released the following statement on the ruling:

"The AHA welcomes today’s Supreme Court decision. There were more than six million good reasons for it because it ensures continued access to health insurance subsidies for so many Americans. In the short time the subsidies have been available, hard-working people who are sick, need care for chronic conditions, or want preventive care have been able to seek care more easily. Most significantly, providing access to primary and preventive care helps improve the health and well-being of individuals, family and communities.

Today is a significant victory for protecting access to care for many of those who need it. America's hospitals will continue to advocate for coverage for all, an essential part of better health and better health care for Americans."

Special Session of the General Assembly Expected Next Week

CHA continues its advocacy to restore the cuts and address the hospital tax in the new state budget. The 2015 Special Session is scheduled for Monday, June 29, and Tuesday, June 30. CHA and hospitals have been meeting with Democratic and Republican lawmakers to urge them to fix the budget for hospitals. The House Democrats caucused on Tuesday, June 23, to discuss budget alternatives. Specifically, legislators are discussing hospital cuts and taxes, business taxes, and across-the-board cuts proposed by the Governor, which would impact a host of social service programs.

In these final days prior to the Special Session, we have activated a new letter-writing campaign. The letter asks legislators to tell their leadership not to vote for a budget implementer unless it eliminates the $58 million in funding cuts to hospitals and returns the $46 million in new taxes back to hospitals, so the funds can be used as they were originally intended – for healthcare.

Legislators with whom CHA has spoken have indicated that these letters are having an impact. If you have not yet joined the letter-writing campaign, please do so now by clicking here.

Perinatal Quality Collaborative Meets at CHA

On June 17, the Connecticut Perinatal Quality Collaborative (CPQC) met at CHA to discuss progress in its efforts to improve perinatal safety. In partnership with the state, this clinical collaborative, which kicked off in May with support from the March of Dimes, will both advance population health and position Connecticut for future opportunities aligned with national healthcare goals.

In recent years, Connecticut hospitals have participated in a variety of activities to improve perinatal patient outcomes. Hospital activities have focused primarily on hospital-based interventions that affect postpartum and neonatal patient outcomes. Specifically, efforts have included work to prevent non-indicated early elective deliveries (EED) prior to 39 weeks gestation, recognize early and manage pre-eclampsia and maternal hemorrhage, and prevent infant falls.

Through the CPQC, hospitals are becoming engaged in an effort to improve breastfeeding rates. The meeting on June 17 focused on evidence-based practices to promote breastfeeding, as well as challenges and interventions. Speakers included Bernadette Hillman, MD, Attending Neonatologist, The Hospital of Central Connecticut; Sandra Motta, MD, Connecticut Children’s Medical Center; and Carl Schiessl, Director, Regulatory Advocacy, CHA. Mr. Schiessl discussed CHA’s work in collaboration with the Department of Children and Families on a new campaign, the Keeping Infants Drug Free Core Team, that aims to coordinate Connecticut’s efforts to address the needs of substance-exposed infants, their mothers, and families. He also shared information on the new legislation that requires hospitals to share with new parents the American Academy of Pediatrics’ Safe Sleep recommendations.

The CPQC work will position Connecticut for CDC Perinatal Quality Collaborative (PQC) grant consideration. As of 2014, the CDC has awarded six states with PQC status. PQCs are networks of perinatal providers and public health professionals working to improve pregnancy outcomes for women and newborns by advancing evidence-based clinical practices. The next set of awards will be granted in 2016.

CHA to Participate on the Infectious Disease Action Team for the Healthy CT 2020 State Health Improvement Plan
In recognition of its involvement in the development of the State Health Improvement plan, CHA was invited to participate on the Infectious Disease Action Team for the Healthy CT 2020 State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). The SHIP, developed by the Department of Public Health (DPH) with participation from a broad coalition of partners, provides a framework for health promotion and disease prevention in the current decade, with overarching themes of improving health equity and addressing the social determinants of health.

The Infectious Disease Action Team will focus on vaccine-preventable diseases, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis C, vector-borne diseases, foodborne illness and infections, water-borne illness and infections, healthcare-associated infections, and emergency preparedness for emerging infectious diseases.

Infectious disease prevention and control is among the areas of focus. Other areas include maternal, infant and child health; environmental risk factors and health; injury and violence prevention; mental health, alcohol, and substance abuse; and health system policy. CHA also participates on Maternal, Infant and Child Health Action Team.

CHA is also lead convener, in partnership with the Chronic Disease division at the DPH, for the Chronic Disease Prevention and Control component of the SHIP. As well, CHA has a seat on the SHIP Advisory Council, along with Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, Yale New Haven Health System, and Griffin Hospital's Valley Parish Nurse Program. The Advisory Council provides guidance, oversight, and management of the SHIP.

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. Read about the 2015 award winners by clicking here.

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.