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CHA CEO Discusses Healthcare Science on Panel at Capitol



On July 7, Jennifer Jackson, President and CEO, CHA, participated in a panel about how science is driving change in healthcare. The panel, held at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, was hosted by Rep. John Larson (D-1) and moderated by Bob Patricelli, chairman and CEO, Women's Health USA. Other panelists included Ed Liu, President and CEO, Jackson Lab; Joseph Zubretsky, Senior Executive Vice President, National Businesses, Aetna; and Dick Salmon MD/PHD, National Medical Director, Performance Measurement and Improvement, Cigna.

"Connecticut, as you know, is a trendsetter, especially in the area of healthcare," said Rep. Larson. "Today, we're able to gather the brightest and best minds together to discuss the problems and challenges in our healthcare system and how to address them in an economic and efficient manner."

Each panelist was asked to describe a way in which science was improving care and quality. Edison Liu, President and CEO, Jackson Lab, began by describing how dramatic scientific advances are allowing doctors to pinpoint genetic mutations in peoples' cancers to use treatments more effectively, and at a much lower cost than in the past.

Jennifer Jackson then described how the science of high reliability is making care safer across the state.

"There are countless instances of how advances in technology and science are combined with the art of caring in our hospitals throughout this state and they are really remarkable," said Ms. Jackson. "[High reliability] is a leadership driven journey and we're working together to implement prevention behaviors and strategies for performance reliability. Our aim is to hardwire high reliability into the culture of not just hospitals but healthcare throughout the state; doing the right thing for each patient every time he or she interacts with the healthcare system is the goal."

During the discussion, Joseph Zubretsky, Senior Executive Vice President, National Businesses, Aetna, discussed how consumers want more transparency and information. He stressed the need to have continuity of care and a strong post-acute care model. Mr. Zubretsky said the system needed to be modernized, which he suggested can be done by changing behavior, digitizing information, and by using financial incentives.

Ms. Jackson agreed that consumers and providers are frustrated around the issues of coordinating care and said that hospitals are working across the continuum to ensure that the consumer is educated and involved in decision making, and that there is strong patient-family engagement.

Dick Salmon MD/PHD, National Medical Director, Performance Measurement and Improvement, Cigna, agreed, saying that Cigna and hospitals now have people who connect with patients after they are discharged to ensure there is appropriate follow up – an act that is proven to reduce readmission rates. He stressed the need for patients to make informed decisions and take ownership of their health.

"All of these technology advances can only be used appropriately if people are informed about the choices they have and are at the center of decision making," he said.

Ms. Jackson also discussed the hospitals' focus on providing culturally competent and equitable care, and their commitment to population health despite dwindling resources.

The forum included questions from advocates and consumers on the shifting healthcare landscape and the challenges of reimbursement, especially in the area of mental health and the inclusion of alternative treatment in the delivery of care.

Watch a video of the panel [here](#).

Saint Mary's Hospital To Join Tenet Healthcare



Saint Mary's Hospital and Tenet Healthcare Corporation have announced plans for Saint Mary's to be acquired by a subsidiary of Tenet, a leading healthcare services company that operates 79 acute care hospitals and 193 outpatient centers in 16 states. The transaction is subject to the execution of a definitive transaction agreement, state and federal regulatory approvals, and other conditions.

Following approval and completion of the transaction, Saint Mary's Catholic heritage and the Ethical and Religious Directives under which the hospital currently operates will be honored and maintained. In addition, Saint Mary's will continue to abide by the same charity care and uncompensated care policies as in the past and will fulfill the community benefit standards required of tax-exempt hospitals, which include improving access to care and the health status of the elderly, the poor, immigrants and other at-risk populations.

A Local Advisory Board will be established, and will provide input and oversight of hospital operations. The Advisory Board will have reserve powers

[Update Archives](#)

regarding proposed subsequent transactions involving Saint Mary's. In addition, the proposed terms of this transaction provide that all employees will be offered employment at the closing.

Proceeds from the transaction will be used to fully fund the Saint Mary's pension and eliminate debt. When the transaction is completed the Saint Mary's Foundation will receive a significant cash infusion to support local health needs. Tenet has also agreed to invest additional capital in Greater Waterbury to support strategic advancement in technology, clinical care, physician alignment, and facilities.

"We are pleased to choose Tenet as our preferred partner after a lengthy selection process," said Saint Mary's CEO Chad Wable. "This is a dynamic time in healthcare, and we believe that Tenet is the best choice to help Saint Mary's achieve our goal to be one of the region's leading healthcare providers. Our community and our caregivers will benefit immensely from the capital and expertise that Tenet will bring to Saint Mary's."

"We are very pleased that Saint Mary's has selected Tenet," said Trip Pilgrim, Senior Vice President at Tenet. "This proposal offers Saint Mary's financial stability and sustainability, and offers the community the kind of high quality, comprehensive healthcare it deserves, all while retaining the heritage and legacy Saint Mary's has established over the last century."

Tenet has significant experience operating faith-based organizations, including Catholic facilities. Among its Catholic facilities is St. Vincent's Medical Center in Worcester, MA, which is operated with guidance from the local archdiocese. In addition, Tenet operates facilities with Catholic heritage in Tennessee, Missouri and Florida. The proposed Saint Mary's transaction is not subject to the completion of other potential transactions by Tenet in Connecticut.

Connecticut Hospitals Among Nation's Most Wired



Connecticut hospitals ranked among the country's most wired, according to Hospitals & Health Networks Health Care's Most Wired 2014 Survey. Bristol Hospital, The Hospital of Central Connecticut, Danbury Hospital, Hartford Hospital, Middlesex Hospital, MidState Medical Center, Norwalk Hospital, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, Waterbury Hospital, The William W. Backus Hospital, and the Yale New Haven Health System were honored as among the country's Most Wired hospitals.

The survey found that hospitals are utilizing information technology to better connect disparate care providers. Sixty seven percent of Most Wired hospitals share critical patient information electronically with specialists and other care providers. Most Wired hospitals also use IT to reduce the likelihood of medical errors. Among Most Wired hospitals, 81 percent of medications are matched to the patient, nurse, and order via bar code technology at the bedside.

"The Most Wired data show that shared health information allows clinicians and patients to have the information they need to promote health and make the most informed decisions about treatments," said Rich Umbdenstock, president and CEO of the American Hospital Association. "Hospitals, their clinicians, and their communities are doing tremendous work to enhance their IT systems in ways that support care and delivery improvement, and patient engagement goals."

Among some of the key findings related to improving quality and patient safety:

- Nurses and physicians share best practices for patient safety and use checklists at more than 90 percent of Most Wired organizations.
- To help consumers make better decisions about their healthcare, standard measures of individual hospital quality performance are reported and publicly available. Nearly half of Most Wired organizations share this information on their websites and 86 percent provide quality scores to clinical leaders on a regular basis as part of their performance improvement initiatives.

Health Care's Most Wired Survey, conducted between Jan. 15 and March 15, asked hospitals and health systems nationwide to answer questions regarding their IT initiatives. Approximately 1,900 hospitals completed surveys. Read the July H&HN cover story detailing results [here](#).

Senator Blumenthal Presses the Department of Veterans' Affairs for Additional Information

On July 7, U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) called on the Department of Veterans' Affairs to explain why newly released data shows a tripling of wait times in Connecticut and nationwide VA facilities. In a [letter](#) to Acting Veterans' Affairs Secretary Sloan Gibson, Sen. Blumenthal asked why the number of scheduled appointments beyond 30 days almost tripled in Connecticut between May 15 and June 15, from 998 to 2,727 individuals. The Senator further questioned whether the delays are attributed to a lack of administrative resources such as a shortage of doctors or other critical healthcare professionals, and whether the numbers themselves are valid and consistently reported.

In response to growing concerns regarding wait times experienced by veterans seeking healthcare through the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate passed separate bills. A House/Senate Conference Committee is currently trying to work out the differences between the two pieces of legislation. CHA has been in contact with the Connecticut delegation to voice its support of provisions as outlined in AHA's [letter](#) to U.S. House and Senate leaders. On the state level, CHA worked with the Connecticut Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs and legislative leaders to pass [HB 5294](#), a bill that would assist Connecticut veterans with access care and update laws relating to payment of funding for hospital services provided to veterans.

