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President Obama Signs Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act



Photo courtesy: whitehouse.gov

On July 10, President Obama signed the *Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act*, legislation that includes provisions to help ease critical drug shortages.

Connecticut's hospitals worked on this issue with Senator Richard Blumenthal last year following a rise in drug shortages, informing him of the impact drug shortages were having on patient care. Last May, members of Sen. Blumenthal's staff met with pharmacy directors at CHA and discussed the issues.

Upon Congressional approval of the measure on June 26, Sen. Blumenthal praised its passage, saying, "In the greatest nation on earth with the best medicines known to man, there is no excuse for shortages of life-saving, cancer-fighting drugs or drugs essential for emergency anesthesiology – and that is why I championed measures to prevent such drug shortages. I listened to people in Connecticut who are victims of these problems, and helped forge bipartisan coalitions in the

Senate to fight them."

Blumenthal championed thirteen of the provisions included in the bill – provisions that improve federal policy related to antibiotic development, drug shortages, medical devices, medical gases, and synthetic drugs.

Town Hall Meeting Spotlights Health Disparities



On June 28, the Curtis D. Robinson Men's Health Institute at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center and the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts hosted a riveting debate and lively discussion between some of the nation's top medical and research experts about eliminating health disparities in cancer-related illnesses.

Discussion focused on the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force's controversial studies advising against the routine practice of mammograms for women under age 50, and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) screening for prostate cancer in healthy men.

Colin McEnroe, WNPR talk show host, weekly columnist, and blogger for *The Hartford Courant*, moderated a discussion debate among panelists that included Peter Albertsen, MD, Professor of Surgery, University of Connecticut Medical Health Center; Timothy Church, PhD, Professor, Department of Environmental Health Sciences, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota; Clayton C. Yates, PhD, Assistant Professor, Prostate Cancer Researcher, Tuskegee University; Kristen A. Zarfos, MD, FACS, Medical Director, Comprehensive Breast Health Center, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center; and Courtney M.P. Hollowell, MD, FACS, Chairman, The Cook County Health & Hospital System Division of Urology, Chicago.

Connecticut Medicaid Director Among Six Selected for Medicaid Leadership Institute Class of 2013

On July 9, the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) announced that six Medicaid directors have been chosen to participate as fellows in the 2013 class of the [Medicaid Leadership Institute](#). Among them is Mark Schaefer, PhD, Director of the Division of Health Services for the Department of Social Services.

"Medicaid directors are ideally positioned to lead the way in reforming our healthcare system," said Andy Hyman, JD, Senior Program Officer and Coverage Team Director at RWJF. "We are proud to support the professional development of these dedicated leaders who are guiding efforts to deliver high-quality, cost-effective healthcare for millions of Americans."

Dr. Schaefer is currently leading an array of health service delivery and purchasing reforms to improve the care experience, quality, and cost-effectiveness for all of the department's Medicaid beneficiaries. At the Department of Social Services, Dr. Schaefer previously coordinated the design and implementation of the Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership, a joint initiative with the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, to develop an integrated behavioral health service system for the Medicaid, CHIP, and Charter Oak programs. He is currently involved in projects including care coordination for individuals eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare, and the Person-Centered Medical Home initiative.

The Foundation has formally notified Governor Dannel Malloy of Dr. Schaefer's selection, said DSS Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby.

The 2013 class of the Medicaid Leadership Institute is the fourth group of Medicaid directors chosen for this prestigious executive training program. Since 2009, directors from 17 states serving nearly 33 million beneficiaries – roughly 53 percent of the national Medicaid population – have participated in the year-long curriculum designed to enhance the strategic thinking, substantive knowledge, individual leadership, and technical skills that directors need to effectively lead and foster innovation in their state Medicaid programs.

Update Summer Schedule



Update will be published on a bi-weekly schedule throughout July and August, returning after Labor Day to a regular weekly schedule on September 6.

