State to End Fiscal Year With A Surplus

Governor M. Jodi Rell announced this week that the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008 will show a $22 million surplus. The Governor is proposing using the surplus to establish a special emergency heating fund to help residents pay for the anticipated high home heating costs this winter.

Many expected FY 08 to end with a deficit. Governor Rell credits the surplus to the success of her cost-cutting measures, including a hiring freeze, a ban on out-of-state travel paid for with state funds, and limits on state gasoline usage. The surplus also resulted from slightly higher-than-expected income tax payments for June and lower-than-expected income tax refunds.

Governor Rell praised the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program and Operation Fuel, but expects many more families will need help this fall and winter. “We anticipate receiving assistance requests from those who have never asked for help before,” commented Rell. “I am particularly fearful for our senior citizens, who are already struggling with high utility and other costs. They must be a special focus of our efforts for heating assistance.”

Earmarking the surplus for specific purposes requires approval by the General Assembly. The Governor has called for a special session to enact her proposal. Legislative leaders are considering the Governor’s request as well as other measures for fuel and energy relief.

Connecticut Hospitals Recognized for Excellence

Recent rankings published by US News and World Report commended several Connecticut hospitals for excellence. As reported in last week’s edition of Update, Yale-New Haven Hospital was listed on the Best Hospitals Honor Roll. Yale-New Haven Hospital was also recognized in the specialty rankings in the categories of Cancer, Heart & Heart Surgery, Ear, Nose and Throat, Kidney Disease, Endocrinology, Neurology and Neurosurgery, Gastrointestinal Disorders, Psychiatry, Geriatric Care, Respiratory Disorders, and Gynecology. The Hospital of Saint Raphael was included in the specialty ranking in the Ear, Nose and Throat category. Hartford Hospital’s Institute for Living and Yale-New Haven Hospital were recognized for Psychiatry. In the pediatric specialty area, Yale-New Haven Hospital and the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center received mention in the Digestive Disorders category. US News and World Report analyzed data on 5,423 medical centers to produce the specialty rankings.
Save the Date!

CHA will be offering an exciting array of educational forums in the months ahead. Here’s a preview of upcoming events and featured speakers.

Nursing Leadership Forum
October 23, 2008

- **Peter Buerhaus**, leading nursing researcher and healthcare economist, will be the keynote speaker for this year’s Nursing Leadership Forum. Dr. Buerhaus will present information from his latest work on the impact of the new Medicare payment rules on nursing, as well as results and analysis of the just-completed 2008 national random sample survey of nurses.

  Dr. Buerhaus is the Valere Potter Professor of Nursing at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing and Director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Health Workforce Studies at the Institute for Medicine and Public Health at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. He maintains an active research program involving studies on employment and earnings of nursing personnel, implications of an aging RN workforce, nurse staffing and quality of patient care, and public opinion on issues affecting the delivery of healthcare.

- We are pleased to announce that **Emily Friedman**, a preeminent independent writer, lecturer, and health policy and ethics analyst based in Chicago, will be the closing speaker for the forum. One of healthcare’s most prolific writers and an engaging and provocative speaker, Ms. Friedman is most noted for her work in health policy, healthcare trends, health insurance and managed care, the social ethics of healthcare, ethics issues for healthcare providers and leaders, and the relationship of the public with the healthcare system. In April 2005, the editors of *Modern Healthcare* named her one of the "Top 25 Women in Healthcare."

Patient Safety Summit
March 13, 2009

- **Brent C. James**, MD, world-renowned in the area of quality and patient safety, is Executive Director of the Institute for Health Care Delivery Research and Vice President of Medical Research and Continuing Medical Education at Intermountain Health Care. For more than 20 years, Dr. James has championed the standardization of clinical care through data collection and analysis on a wide variety of treatment protocols and complex care processes. Dr. James feels strongly that the time has come to shift from the "craft-based" practice to evidence-directed teams focused on patient care.

- **Susan E. Sheridan**, MIM, MBA, CAPS Co-founder and President of Consumers Advancing Patient Safety, will relate her compelling story of how she became involved in patient safety through two family tragedies. Her husband, Pat, died in 2002 after his diagnosis of spinal cancer failed to be communicated. Their son, Cal, suffered severe brain damage called kernicterus five days after his birth in 1995 when his neonatal jaundice was untreated. Participants will be moved and engaged by Ms. Sheridan’s presentation.