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*SIM Project Director and Healthcare Advocate Vicki Veltri, with Associate Project Directors Mark Schaefer, Ph.D., and Michael Michaud.*

Earlier this year, Connecticut received a \$2.8 million State Innovation Model (SIM) design grant from the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) – an entity within the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) created under health reform to support the development and testing of innovative healthcare payment and service delivery models. As a stakeholder in reforming the delivery of care, CHA has been monitoring the development of the state's SIM grant proposal and on Tuesday, July 23, SIM Project Director and Healthcare Advocate Vicki Veltri, along with Associate Project Directors Mark Schaefer, Ph.D., and Michael Michaud, met with hospital leaders to discuss their work on the grant design process and the recommendations provided to the SIM steering committee from the four work groups (Care Delivery, Payment Reform, Health Information Technology, and Workforce Task Force).

Recommendations from the Care Delivery Work Group include a focus on population health management and whole-person-centered care; enhanced access to team-based, coordinated, comprehensive care; performance management; and new ways to engage consumers.

Recommendations from the Payment Reform Work Group include a two-track approach – pay for performance and total cost of care – and the development of a quality scorecard with which providers would track and be rewarded for performance improvement, as well as absolute performance.

The Health Information Technology Work Group recommendations include payer tools to analyze claims data to manage performance and payment; the ability for patients and providers to access and submit health information; provider tools and analytics to coordinate medical services for patients; and integrated clinical data exchange among providers via a secure electronic network. The Workforce Task Force has yet to issue recommendations.

Members engaged in a conversation with the SIM project directors on scope of practice, social determinants of health, payment reform, and the need for a continued dialogue between the project directors and the hospital community around the SIM proposal and overall health reform and healthcare delivery. It is expected that a final model design application will be submitted by the state to CMMI this fall. Additional information on the state's engagement with the SIM design grant can be found [here](#), and additional information from CMMI can be found [here](#).

**Backus Corporation and Hartford HealthCare Form Affiliation**

Backus Corporation and Hartford HealthCare have received state approval to affiliate. The William W. Backus Hospital will become a member of Hartford HealthCare, and the organizations will create an integrated healthcare delivery system for Eastern Connecticut's patients and their families.

"We are delighted to have such a successful partner in our system," said Elliot Joseph, President and Chief Executive Officer of Hartford HealthCare. "With Backus, we will be able to provide a higher level of coordinated care for patients in this important region. This is truly 'win-win.' Patients in Eastern Connecticut will have greater access to the right care at the right place. Providers can share best practices and innovative technologies."

To improve care coordination and access in Eastern Connecticut, Hartford HealthCare will establish a newly defined East Region, composed of system members Backus and Windham Hospital. Hartford HealthCare and its affiliates in the East Region will develop a strategic plan to advance the delivery of healthcare services.

To better coordinate care delivery between the two East Region acute care hospitals as part of the affiliation, Backus President and Chief Executive Officer David Whitehead will also become CEO of the Hartford HealthCare East Region, including both Backus and Windham hospitals. Mr. Whitehead will also become a Senior Vice President of Hartford HealthCare.

Windham CEO Stephen W. Larcen, PhD, will become the new Senior Vice President of Hartford HealthCare's Behavioral Health Network and will continue in his role as President and CEO of Natchaug Hospital. Dr. Larcen will oversee the system's behavioral health and substance abuse programs (which include The Institute of Living, Natchaug Hospital, and Rushford), as well as coordinate the behavioral health programs at Hartford HealthCare's acute care hospitals.

"This affiliation is a very positive step forward for Windham Hospital and all who rely on us for their care," Dr. Larcen said. "Under Dave Whitehead's leadership, Backus has demonstrated great success at every level — clinically, strategically and financially. His leadership in aligning the services and expertise of these two acute care hospitals will improve care delivery in our region."

"This is a great day for patients in Eastern Connecticut," said Mr. Whitehead. "This affiliation creates a very bright, sustainable future for healthcare right here, close to home. Our goal throughout this very deliberate process has been to create far more coordinated care at every level for our patients and their families. This is a giant step forward toward achieving that vision."

Under the agreement, Backus Hospital and Windham Hospital will retain their names, identities, medical staffs, and separate hospital and affiliate licenses. Read more [here](#).

## Yale New Haven Health System and VA CT Healthcare System Recognized for Healthcare Equality



The national Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation has recognized Yale New Haven Health System hospitals and the VA Connecticut Healthcare System for their commitment to equitable, inclusive care for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) patients and their families, who can face significant challenges in securing adequate healthcare.

Bridgeport Hospital, Greenwich Hospital, and Yale-New Haven Hospital, along with the VA Connecticut Healthcare System, are among 464 healthcare facilities nationwide named "Leaders in LGBT Healthcare Equality" in the Healthcare Equality Index 2013, an annual survey conducted by the HRC Foundation, the educational arm of the country's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender organization.

"We're honored to receive this recognition, which reflects our commitment to providing compassionate, patient- and family-centered care to every member of the diverse population we serve," said Peter Herbert, MD, Senior Vice President, Medical Affairs, Yale New Haven Health System.

Leaders in LGBT Healthcare Equality meet key criteria for equitable care, including non-discrimination policies for LGBT patients and employees, a guarantee of equal visitation for same-sex partners and parents, and LGBT health education for key staff members.

"We are honored to be recognized by the Human Rights Campaign for our commitment to LGBT veterans served by the VA Connecticut Healthcare System," said Lynette Adams, PhD, Program Director - Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence, VACT Healthcare System. "Providing an affirming and open environment benefits everyone, and VA Connecticut is dedicated to serving all Veterans with respect, compassion, and dignity."

"LGBT patients deeply appreciate the welcoming environment provided by a Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality," said HRC Health & Aging Director Shane Snowdon. "It makes a big difference to know that your local healthcare facility is fully committed to giving you the same care it gives your neighbors and co-workers."

For more information about the Healthcare Equality Index 2013, or to download a free copy of the report, click [here](#).

## Connecticut Hospitals and Health Systems Among Nation's Most Wired

Connecticut hospitals and health systems ranked among the country's "Most Wired," according to Hospitals & Health Networks Health Care's Most Wired 2013 Survey.

Danbury Hospital, Hartford Hospital, Middlesex Hospital, MidState Medical Center, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, Waterbury Hospital, The William W. Backus Hospital, and Yale New Haven Health System were designated Most Wired.

Most Wired hospitals and healthcare systems were applauded for making great strides in establishing the basic building blocks for creating robust clinical



information systems aimed at improving patient care. This includes adopting technologies to improve patient documentation, advance clinical decision support and evidence-based protocols, reduce the likelihood of medication errors, and rapidly restore access to data in the case of a disaster or outage.

"This year's Most Wired organizations exemplify progress through innovation" said Rich Umbdenstock, president and CEO of the American Hospital Association. "The hospital field can learn from these outstanding organizations ways that IT can help to improve efficiency."

Key findings:

- Sixty-nine percent of Most Wired hospitals and 60 percent of all surveyed hospitals report that medication orders are entered electronically by physicians.
- Seventy-one percent of Most Wired hospitals have an electronic disease registry to identify and manage gaps in care across a population compared with 51 percent of total responders.
- Sixty-six percent of Most Wired hospitals share patient discharge data with affiliated hospitals, in comparison to 49 percent of the total responders. Thirty-seven percent of Most Wired hospitals do so with non-affiliated hospitals versus 24 percent of total responders.

Roughly 30 percent of all U.S. hospitals responded to the Health Care's Most Wired Survey. Read the July H&HN cover story detailing the results [here](#).

## CT Partners for Health to Host First Patient-Engagement Conference in Connecticut



The [CT Partners for Health](#), of which CHA is a participating member, will host the conference [Better Health: Everyone's Responsibility](#) on September 17, 2013, at Hartford's CT Convention Center.

Speakers will discuss the nation's emerging patient engagement ("e-patient") movement in which patients are becoming their own medical advocates and partnering with physicians to make medical decisions. The term "e-patient" describes those who are "equipped, enabled, empowered, and engaged" in their health, healthcare decisions, and in transforming healthcare.

"Our healthcare industry is undergoing an unprecedented evolution, giving rise to a confusing marketplace of consumer options. Central to successfully managing this change is engaging patients and healthcare providers to communicate in improved ways that empower patients to actively assist in managing their own health through informed choices. These choices will be aided by face-to-face discussion, technology, online communities, and knowledge networks," said Tim Elwell, Qualidigm CEO. "Healthcare remains a local endeavor and innovation is a contact sport. Our hope is that by providing a venue for patients and providers to interact, unanticipated innovation and mutual understanding will result."

*Better Health: Everyone's Responsibility* is intended to inform and empower Connecticut consumers to proactively manage their own health and become a true partner with their medical team. Additionally, the conference will offer tangible insights to healthcare providers on how to more effectively communicate with patients, enabling them to better manage their own healthcare and outcomes.

CT Partners for Health is a group of more than 40 key healthcare stakeholders working together to align healthcare quality improvement and patient safety initiatives in Connecticut to assure efficient, cost-effective, and coordinated efforts among its healthcare providers and stakeholders.

## American College of Surgeons Releases Book on Quality and Patient Safety

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) has released a new book, [Inspiring Quality Tour: Lessons Learned in the Pursuit of Quality Surgical Health Care](#).

The book is a compendium of highlights from a series of ACS Surgical Health Care Quality Forums that convened across the country. Highlights from the April 26 forum held in Hartford are not included in this book, as it was finalized earlier in the year, but information from that meeting will be included in future editions. The full video from the Hartford forum is available [here](#).

The ACS forums, part of the Inspiring Quality Campaign, were intended to create a national dialogue about surgical quality and patient safety. ACS launched the Inspiring Quality Campaign two years ago to raise awareness of proven models of quality improvement that can help improve patient outcomes and increase the value of healthcare.

## Guide Provides Patient/Family Engagement Strategies



A new guide from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) offers proven strategies for engaging patients and families for better care through improved communications.

The [Guide to Patient and Family Engagement in Hospital Quality and Safety](#) is a tested, evidence-based resource intended to help hospitals work as partners with patients and families to improve quality and safety.

The Guide:

- Describes critical opportunities for hospitals to engage patients and families and to create partnerships between patients, families, and hospitals around the same goals.
- Addresses real-world challenges.
- Helps hospitals engage patients and families, which in turn can help improve quality and safety, respond to healthcare reform and accreditation standards, improve CAHPS® Hospital Survey scores, improve financial performance, and enhance market share and competitiveness.
- Facilitates implementation and evaluation of each strategy with detailed guidance and customizable tools.

Patient satisfaction scores improved at the three hospitals that field tested the guide, while hospital staff reported improved time management and more positive views of patient- and family-centered care.

