Public Health Committee Holds Informational Forum on Hospital Conversions

Today, the General Assembly’s Public Health Committee held an informational forum on the state’s regulatory role in hospital conversions. The Committee heard presentations from the two state entities with regulatory and oversight roles during such conversions: the Office of Health Care Access (OHCA) and the state’s Attorney General’s Office (AG). Both state entities have statutory oversight of hospital conversions from not-for-profit to for-profit status. At the outset of the forum, Public Health Committee Co-chairwoman Susan Johnson (D-Willimantic) stated that the goal of the forum was to help legislators understand the law as it is currently constructed related to hospital conversions.

Perry Zinn-Rowthorn, Associate AG, and Bob Clark, Special Counsel to the AG, provided information on the AG’s role in hospital conversions. In their testimony, attorneys Zinn-Rowthorn and Clark stated that their office reviews several aspects of the transaction when material assets are transferred from a not-for-profit to a for-profit entity. The AG’s office explained that their authority to review the conversion is defined and outlined in the Nonprofit Hospital Conversion Act, which includes but is not limited to issues of fairness and due diligence, transparency, and fair market value of assets transferred to a foundation. When making a determination, it was noted that the AG is authorized to reject the conversion application, approve it, or approve it with modifications. The process also allows for appeals. The AG’s review does not entail any judgment about whether the transaction is the best possible transaction or whether for-profit healthcare is good or bad, and does not look at the conversion through the lens of any antitrust issues.

Of note, the Committee members inquired about regulatory authority and oversight into the continued appropriate staffing and the finances of for-profit entities.

Public Health Committee members requested that there be another forum with more detailed information from DPH and the AG about the specific conversation process so hospitals have a better understanding of the timelines and responsibilities of those involved.

Click here for the OHCA presentation.
Click here for the AG’s written testimony.

Program Review and Investigations Committee Studies ED Use and its Impact on State Medicaid Budget

The Program Review and Investigations (PRI) Committee, the committee of the General Assembly that conducts in-depth analysis on topics of interest to the legislature, is conducting a study on hospital emergency department use and its impact on the state Medicaid budget. CHA has been asked by PRI Committee staff members to assist them with the study, and is currently working with them to identify hospital emergency departments to tour.

The first draft of the study is expected to be presented on September 26, 2013. The PRI Committee will make the draft of the study available prior to the public hearing to allow for substantive comments by the public.

The group’s findings and recommendations will be submitted to the legislature in advance of the 2014 Legislative Session.

AHA Offers Guide on Patient and Family Engagement and Twitter Chat Featuring WCHN

The American Hospital Association (AHA) Hospitals in Pursuit of Excellence initiative recently released a new guide with evidence-based strategies to help hospital leaders promote patient and family engagement in their organizations.

The guide builds on an earlier report, Engaging Health Care Users: A Framework for Healthy Individuals and Communities, which highlights best practices from hospitals and health systems on how to effectively engage patients and families at the point of care, in the hospital and in the community, while striving to improve quality, service, and efficiency.

Additionally, AHA will host a Twitter chat focusing on patient engagement on Monday, September 16, 2013, from 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. ET. Dawn Myles, VP, Quality and Patient Safety, Western Connecticut Health Network, will participate in the Twitter panel along with Mid-Columbia Medical Center’s Benjamin K. Chu, MD, AHA Board Chairman.

We encourage you to participate in the chat by following @ahahospitals on Twitter. At 11:00 a.m. on September 16, follow the #AHAnengage hashtag and watch the real-time stream on Twitter. Should you wish to tweet during the conversation, tag your tweets with the #AHAnengage hashtag.
ECHN Signs Letter of Intent with Vanguard Health Systems and Yale New Haven Health System

Eastern Connecticut Health Network (ECHN) has signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) to explore an affiliation with Vanguard Health Systems and Yale New Haven Health System (YNHHS). ECHN believes that the proposed affiliation will enhance healthcare quality, access, and efficiency for residents of eastern Connecticut.

Under the terms of the LOI, the Vanguard Health Systems/YNHHS alliance will purchase the assets of ECHN and invest the capital resources necessary to ensure the ongoing local delivery of care. Vanguard will manage and operate Rockville General and Manchester Memorial Hospitals as well as the other ECHN affiliates. YNHHS will provide ongoing clinical support, quality, and service line management. The strategic relationship between Vanguard Health Systems and YNHHS provides a unique opportunity for ECHN to develop a strong clinical partnership with a leading academic medical center like YNHHS and, along with Vanguard Health Systems, continue to provide high quality care while preserving and expanding local access to care. Under the partnership, YNHHS and all of its delivery networks will remain an independent, not-for-profit health system.

“We are very pleased to be part of this unique partnership because we firmly believe that both Yale New Haven and Vanguard Health Systems bring significant support and an ongoing commitment to the provision of exceptional patient care,” said Peter Karl, President and Chief Executive Officer of ECHN. “At ECHN we are fully committed to preserving local access to world class healthcare. This partnership preserves the mission, vision and values of ECHN and allows us to build on a century of caring for our patients and their families east of the river.”

“This is a historic time for the healthcare industry and this represents a unique opportunity for Yale New Haven, Vanguard Health Systems, and ECHN,” said Marna P. Borgstrom, President and CEO of YNHHS. “In the wake of unprecedented challenges to healthcare organizations across the nation to manage costs and improve quality, this represents an innovative way to enhance access, improve quality and manage costs. Developing novel partnerships with organizations like Vanguard Health Systems and ECHN, which share our core values, will allow us to manage within this environment more effectively.”

The signing of the LOI represents the first round in this multistep process. It will allow YNHHS, Vanguard Health Systems, and ECHN to conduct additional due diligence and review the opportunity in greater detail, and negotiate a definitive agreement. Once these processes are complete, the parties will initiate a broader regulatory review of the transaction by appropriate state and federal agencies.

Education Updates

HRO: Fair and Just Accountability
Tuesday, September 17, 2013
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

A key aspect of a High Reliability Organization is having front-line staff who tell managers and administrators when there are opportunities to make care safer – even when they have done something wrong. That level of reporting comes in a Fair and Just Culture of Accountability, one in which repercussions for breaking the rules are meted out in a fair and just manner. Join us for this full day session to learn how to change your culture to one of Fair and Just Accountability. All CHA hospitals are invited to attend, and this session is especially useful for HR Executives, Physician Executives, and Patient Care Executives.

View Brochure | Event Registration

Staff to Management: Starting the Transition
Thursday, September 19, 2013
8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Making the transition from being a staff person one day to a supervisor/manager the next is a significant step. Being effective in a leadership role is far more challenging and complicated than ever before. Managing the demands of your organization for high productivity and quality, combined with financial prudence and regulatory compliance, are only part of the equation. You will discover that those tasks must be balanced with an excellent grasp of human relations skills in working closely and collaboratively with others, and managing change.

View Brochure | Event Registration

Conflict Management: Engaging the Difficult Employee
Friday, September 20, 2013
9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

It is clear to almost everyone that conflict is inevitable in life – in our personal lives as well as in the workplace. Yet managing staff to achieve organizational goals is a basic responsibility for all leaders. Personality and communication differences can make this a difficult task and consume hours of your time and energy. This highly interactive program, based on best practices in leadership theory, will present communication methods and tools for navigating the difficult maze of different personalities and communication styles to better manage conflict.

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