Connecticut Participating In Hurricane Relief Effort

The Department of Public Health (DPH) has issued a memorandum to Connecticut’s acute care hospitals requesting them to solicit volunteer healthcare professionals to aid in the response to effects of Hurricane Katrina. The DPH request is part of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) effort to put in place up to 40 “medically enhanced” shelters on the periphery of the areas affected by Katrina.

The Governor’s office is coordinating the state’s hurricane relief response, and has been in contact with other states around the country through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) to assess the situation and needs of states affected by Katrina. EMAC establishes a mutual partnership with other states to provide aid and assistance in times of emergency.

Meanwhile, as part of the state’s response to the relief effort, Mark Prete, M.D., Vice President of Medical Affairs at The Charlotte Hungerford Hospital and Chief Medical Officer for the state’s Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), was deployed to the area affected by the hurricane along with four other Connecticut DMAT members (two paramedics, a nurse, and a communications specialist).

According to Michael Zanker, M.D., Medical Director of the Office of Emergency Medical Services and DMAT Commander, the Connecticut contingent were providing emergency care to victims in a hard-hit Mississippi coastal town as of yesterday, and all were “safe and in good spirits” despite the challenging conditions. The remaining members of the state’s 120-member Connecticut DMAT are currently on alert status awaiting further information as to where and when they may be deployed to assist in the relief efforts.

In addition to working with DPH to solicit volunteers for the hurricane relief effort, Connecticut hospitals are engaged in a number of other related efforts to help. CHA has learned that Griffin Hospital has established a special Hurricane Katrina relief fund through its foundation; Yale-New Haven Hospital has provided a group of community physicians with antibiotics and other supplies for the group’s planned trip to Mississippi next week; and Milford Hospital has provided supplies to one of its orthopedic surgeons who is planning to participate in an American Medical Response-sponsored relief effort. CHA will provide a summary of additional hospital-based initiatives to help the victims of Katrina next week.

CHA Testifies At OHCA Hearing

Pat Monahan, CHA General Counsel and Vice President, Patient Care Services, testified at the public hearing held by the Office of Health Care Access (OHCA) Tuesday as part of OHCA’s declaratory ruling proceeding to define the term “imaging center” for purposes of Certificate of Need (CON) application and OHCA reporting requirements.

OHCA is attempting to clarify the definition of “imaging center” through the declaratory ruling proceeding to include within OHCA’s jurisdiction any provider that “purchases, leases, or accepts donation of any imaging, scanning or other similar equipment utilizing such technology.”
CHA testified in support of OHCA’s proposed definition, pointing to the statutory and policy reasons that support CON jurisdiction over non-hospital providers of imaging services. After considering the testimony and written submissions offered by participants, OHCA is scheduled to issue a decision on the definition of “imaging center” in November 2005.

**CMS Updates Hospital Compare Website**

The Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) updated its hospital performance reporting website yesterday with July - December 2004 data, which, combined with the January - June data that had previously been posted, now reflects hospitals’ overall performance related to the care of patients with heart attack, heart failure and pneumonia for the full calendar year.

CMS has made some cosmetic changes to the presentation of the data on the Hospital Compare website, including changing the designation of hospitals with small sample sizes from a red triangle – which reportedly has been interpreted by some consumers as a sign to be cautious about the hospital's quality – to a blue dot.

CHA has been releasing the most recent quarter of performance data for Connecticut hospitals on its website on an ongoing basis – before the data is released by CMS – in order to present the information in a manner that is easier for consumers to understand and to enable hospitals to provide timely information to the public about improvements in performance.

**Stamford Hospital Named State’s Third Magnet Hospital**

The Stamford Hospital has been named a recipient of the Magnet™ award of excellence in nursing services by the American Nursing Credentialing Center (ANCC). Less than three percent of the nation’s hospitals – a number that includes two other Connecticut hospitals, Middlesex Hospital (which was redesignated as a Magnet hospital last week) and Hartford Hospital (designated in 2003) – have qualified for the prestigious Magnet designation.

The Magnet Recognition Program recognizes healthcare organizations that demonstrate excellence in nursing philosophy and practice, adherence to national standards for improving patient care, leadership and sensitivity to cultural and ethnic diversity. The Stamford Hospital underwent a rigorous evaluation that included extensive interviews and reviews of nursing services, clinical outcomes and patient care.

“The Magnet designation recognizes the excellence of our nursing staff and the quality patient care they deliver on a daily basis,” said Brian Grissler, President & Chief Executive Officer of The Stamford Hospital. “We are proud to be among the elite group of hospitals nationwide to achieve this ultimate benchmark of nursing performance.”

**Lawrence & Memorial Hospital Announces Appointment Of New CEO**

Bruce D. Cummings, President and CEO of the 182-bed Olean General Hospital in western New York, has been named Lawrence & Memorial Hospital's new President and CEO. Cummings will replace William T. Christopher, who is retiring this fall after 17 years as the hospital’s leader.

The hospital's board of directors voted unanimously for Cummings, who was “selected from a very strong pool of candidates,” said Thomas R. Castle, chairman of the hospital’s board.

Cummings, who is scheduled to assume his new post in December, has served in his current position at Olean General Hospital since April 2002. Prior to that he was President of Blue Hill Memorial Hospital in Maine for 11 years.

**CHA To Offer Corrective Coaching Program**

Corrective coaching is one of the most challenging responsibilities faced by any manager, possibly because providing and receiving corrective feedback is often uncomfortable for manager and employee alike. To help healthcare managers overcome these barriers and improve their skills in this critical area, CHA will offer Managing Performance: A Manager’s Toolkit for Corrective Coaching and Implementing Progressive Discipline, from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Thursday, October 6, 2005.

This program is designed for managers and supervisors at all levels who are charged with the responsibility of achieving results through the efforts of their employees. It presents a simple, step-by-step method for formulating praise and corrective feedback, emphasizing two skills essential for corrective coaching. The first is how to describe performance so that coaching includes specific examples that will be easily understood. The second is how to formulate feedback and put your perceptions into words effectively.

To register, or for more information on the program, visit the education section of the CHA website or contact Rhonda Bates at (203) 294-7267 or bates@chime.org.