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CHA Weekly Update Returns From Hiatus



The Connecticut Hospital Association's (CHA) Weekly Update, which publishes each week on Thursday, is returning from hiatus. The CHA Weekly Update was temporarily suspended in early April as hospital focus shifted to the response to COVID-19. In the intervening time, CHA issued an almost nightly COVID-19 Update and developed a COVID-19 Update Center to provide information on COVID-19 from state and federal partners. As the pandemic has eased in Connecticut and attention gradually begins to include non-COVID-19 matters, the CHA Weekly Update will return to its regular, weekly publishing schedule.

CHA Members Meet with Office of Health Strategy Executive Director to Discuss Cost Growth Benchmark

In January 2020, Governor Ned Lamont issued Executive Order No. 5 (EO 5) requiring the Office of Health Strategy (OHS) to develop cost growth benchmarks for initial implementation in 2021, extending through 2025. EO 5 also requires the cost growth benchmarks to account for an increase in primary care spending to 10% of total spending by 2025 and for the development of quality measures for implementation in 2022.

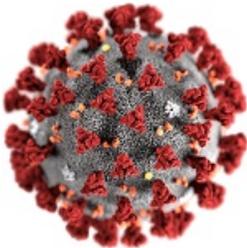


As key stakeholders in this work, CHA and its members have been engaged in OHS's process for development of the benchmark including the participation of CHA members on OHS's Stakeholder Advisory Board.

This week, members of CHA's Subcommittee on Executive Order 5 had the opportunity to discuss the implementation of the cost growth benchmark with OHS Executive Director Vicki Veltri. Members described the hospital sector's commitment to coalescence around a sustainable growth rate for healthcare expenditures while outlining important key elements of implementation. Those included preserving and expanding access to care; developing spending targets that appropriately reflect and promote healthcare's important role in the state's economy; outlining a non-punitive, collaborative process for implementation; and ensuring transparency in the benchmark's application.

The cost growth benchmark spending targets are slated to take effect January 1, 2021. For more information on the program, see OHS's cost growth benchmark website.

Congress Returns to Deliberations of Additional Federal COVID-19 Relief



In a letter last week, CHA thanked our Congressional delegation for their support for prior legislation providing substantial financial relief to hospitals, noting that the support has been extremely important in sustaining hospital response to COVID-19, as well as supporting hospital commitment to the care and wellbeing of all patients. Hospitals in Connecticut have forecasted more than \$2 billion in lost revenue and incremental expenses between March and September of this year.

The letter noted, however, that additional federal assistance is critical and urged Congress to consider additional, direct financial relief as well as areas of further assistance, including pension funding relief.

The CHA letter outlined the following priority issues:

- Provide additional funding to the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (PHSSEF)
- Provide funding relief for pension plans
- Provide loan forgiveness for Medicare accelerated and advance payments
- Create a fund to provide assistance for essential workers
- Establish liability protections for facilities and frontline healthcare providers treating patients amid the COVID-19 crisis

Care Can't Wait PSA



Recognizing a concerning trend of "medical distancing" resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Ned Lamont has filmed a public service announcement encouraging Connecticut residents not to neglect their routine and emergency healthcare. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 48% of Americans have said that they skipped medical care because of concerns about the pandemic, and 11% said that medical conditions worsened as a result of the delayed care.

The Governor's Care Can't Wait PSA acknowledges that some residents are afraid of being exposed to COVID-19 when they go to their healthcare providers, and reassures the public that healthcare providers' facilities are safe, and that delaying routine and emergency care can be harmful and dangerous.

The 60 second PSA is being circulated broadly by CHA and hospital members on social media channels, and is also getting airtime on radio and television stations across the state.

LEADERSHIP FORUM: Healthcare Reimagined Virtual Webcast

CHA has collaborated with the Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association to present a virtual webcast featuring local and national thought leaders to discuss innovative breakthroughs, health equity, and the 2020 elections. [Click here for details and registration information.](#)