DSS Proposes to Eliminate Hospital Inpatient Inflationary Increases

The Department of Social Services (DSS) has issued a proposed State Plan Amendment (SPA) to repeal the inpatient inflationary increases that are due on October 1 of each of the next two years.

Inflationary updates, the update necessary for hospitals and other providers to help cover the cost increases they experience when purchasing goods and services used to provide care, are critical to ensuring that providers have sufficient resources to meet the needs of the patients they serve.

The elimination of these updates means hospitals will lose $38.78 million. This loss would come in addition to the recent $550 million in cuts from the state budget. This is not the first time DSS has eliminated the inflation updates for hospitals. In the past 11 years, hospitals only received one increase – in 2008. The value of that increase was offset by the provider tax, instituted in 2011, which taxes hospital inpatient and outpatient revenue.

CHA has filed a comment letter opposing the SPA and asking that it be withdrawn.

Connecticut Department of Public Health Holds Community Forum

On September 10, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) held the first of eight community forums on community health. The forums are part of DPH’s effort to engage the public in discussions about improving the health status of all residents by 2020.

The forum, held at Rockville High School, focused on how the health of Tolland County residents compares to the rest of the state. During the hour-long presentation, DPH staff, including Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA, provided an overview of DPH’s work to create a State Health Assessment – a comprehensive document being drafted in collaboration with other state agencies and organizations from across the state. The community forums are designed to gather additional feedback from residents prior to the publication of a final State Health Assessment.

Based on findings of the State Health Assessment, a State Health Improvement Plan will be developed to provide a roadmap for improving community health and ensuring that all people in Connecticut have the opportunity to attain their highest potential for health by 2020. The plan will focus on health improvement through prevention efforts, as well as the promotion of health equity.

Community discussion during Tuesday’s forum focused on improving physical education in schools, school lunches, and nutritional standards in the school lunch program; eliminating “food deserts;” regulating smoke-free public housing; and ensuring access to healthcare services within Tolland County.

Upcoming Community Forums:
Windham County: September 12, 2013, EASTCONN Capitol Theater, Magnet High School, 896 Main St., Willimantic
Hartford County: September 24, 2013, Legislative Office Building, Room 2C, 300 Capitol Ave., Hartford
Litchfield County: September 26, 2013, Torrington City Hall, Council Chambers, Rm. 218, 140 Main St., Torrington
Fairfield County: October 8, 2013, Discovery Magnet School Cafeteria, 4510 Park Ave., Bridgeport
New Haven County: October 10, 2013, Hill Regional Career High School, Auditorium, 140 Legion Ave., New Haven
New London County: October 17, 2013, Three Rivers Community College, Multipurpose Rm. F117, 574 New London Turnpike, Norwich
Middlesex County: October 21, 2013, Connecticut Valley Hospital, Paige Hall Solarium, 1000 Silver St., Middletown

Municipal Party Primaries Held For Fall Elections

On Sept. 10, residents in several communities across the state voted in municipal party primaries for the office of mayor and first selectman. The results of two Democratic primaries – in New Haven and Stamford – are particularly notable, as they involve two current state legislators seeking their party’s nod for mayor.

In New Haven, Toni Harp, longtime state senator and co-chair of the Appropriations Committee, received almost 50 percent of the vote in a multi-candidate party primary. City Alderman Justin Elicker came in second, but said he will continue to seek the office of mayor on the November ballot as an independent candidate. The general election will be held on November 5. A special election to fill Sen. Harp’s New Haven-based state seat will be held if she prevails in the November election.

In Stamford, Rep. William Tong lost his bid in the Democratic primary for the office of mayor. Rep. Tong lost to the party’s endorsed candidate, David Martin. Mr. Martin will now face Michael Fedele, former state representative and lieutenant governor, who won the Republican primary.

Hospital Job Growth Lower in August

In Stamford, Rep. William Tong lost his bid in the Democratic primary for the office of mayor. Rep. Tong lost to the party’s endorsed candidate, David Martin. Mr. Martin will now face Michael Fedele, former state representative and lieutenant governor, who won the Republican primary.
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were nearly 33,000 new healthcare jobs in August, but of those, hospitals added only 900 jobs. Hospitals are adding an average of 1,000 new jobs a month this year, which is a big drop from 2012, when hospitals averaged about 6,000 new jobs per month.

To help hospitals address their rapidly changing workforce needs and develop more efficient planning models, the AHA Workforce Center recently released a report with data, insights, and an assessment tool. The report is intended to help hospitals better define their needs and find new ways to improve recruiting, sourcing, retention, retirement, and onboarding.

New Report: Family Physicians Top the “Most Recruited” List

For the seventh year, family physicians top the list of the most highly recruited doctors, according to a new survey from Merritt Hawkins. Merritt Hawkins is a leading physician search firm that works with CHA’s Shared Services Program.

Merritt Hawkins’ 2013 Review of Physician and Advanced Practitioner Recruiting Incentives tracks more than 3,000 recruiting assignments it conducted between 2012 and 2013. More searches were conducted for family physicians than for any other type of doctor; physicians specializing in general internal medicine were second on the list.

The new survey confirms the trend toward increasing hospital employment of physicians. In 2004, only 11 percent of Merritt Hawkins’ search assignments featured hospital employment of physicians. In 2013, that number grew to 64 percent.

The 2013 survey also suggests that physician compensation models are changing. In 2011, fewer than seven percent of Merritt Hawkins’ recruiting assignments that offered physicians a production bonus included payments based on quality of care metrics. In the 2013 survey, that number increased to 39 percent, underscoring a shift from rewarding physicians for the volume of services to rewarding them for the value of services.

For your copy of the report, contact Kurt Mosley, Vice President, Strategic Alliances, Merritt Hawkins and Staff Care, at 469-524-1446, or via e-mail at kurt.mosley@amnhealthcare.com.

Twitter Chat on Patient Engagement Features WCHN

The American Hospital Association (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 Benjamin K. Chu, MD, AHA Board Chairman, and leaders from Mid-Columbia Medical Center. Discussion will focus on progress being made, challenges hospitals face, and new strategies for engaging healthcare users.

We encourage you to participate in the chat by following @ahahospitals on Twitter. At 11:00 a.m. on September 16, follow the #AHAengage hashtag and watch the real-time stream on Twitter. Should you wish to tweet during the conversation, tag your tweets with the #AHAengage hashtag.

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.

Register by clicking here.
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.

View Brochure | Event Registration

Prevention of Hospital Acquired Pressure Ulcers (HAPU)
Wednesday, October 2, 2013
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

During this program with national and local content experts, participants will be instructed in the latest evidence-based interventions and data collection strategies that will help prevent pressure ulcers. Use of these strategies will lead to reductions in the cost of HAPU care and improvements in the quality of life for those impacted. Barbara Cass, Connecticut Department of Public Health, will present Innovations in Connecticut: Pressure Ulcer Prevention and Care. Kathleen Vollman, MSN, RN, CCNS, FCCM, FAAN, will present It’s Not Just About Pressure Anymore: Eliminating Health Care Acquired Skin Injuries. Pat Posa, RN, BSN, MSA, will present The Forgotten Organ: A Team Approach for Skin Care of the Critically Ill Patient. Two panels of acute and sub-acute care hospitals will discuss their experiences preventing HAPU.

Event Registration