CHA Testifies at Public Hearing of State Tax Panel

On September 16, the State Tax Panel held a public hearing in Hartford to solicit public comment related to the state’s tax system. Carl Schiessl, Director, Regulatory Advocacy, CHA, provided testimony on behalf of Connecticut hospitals. In his testimony, Mr. Schiessl stressed the harmful impact of the hospital tax and imposition of a property tax on hospitals, stating, “Connecticut hospitals cannot endure these taxes.” He asked that the Panel recommend to the General Assembly that it eliminate these taxes, noting that taxing healthcare services, whether through the state hospital tax, local property tax, or by any other means, is bad policy and is no solution for balancing state or local budgets.

During the public hearing, the panel heard from individuals and organizations on a variety of tax issues and policies, including sales and use tax, estate and gift taxation, personal income tax, property tax, tax exempt properties, payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT), business personal property taxation, and local option taxes.

Panel members questioned Mr. Schiessl on issues including hospital margins, local property taxes, PILOT, and executive compensation. CHA emphasized the importance of protecting the fiscal stability and health of hospitals so they can invest in new equipment, open clinics, and attract the most talented clinicians and administrators.

The State Tax Panel, created through Section 137 of PA 14-217, is charged with considering and evaluating options to modernize the state’s tax policy, structure, and administration, including looking at local property taxes and the state’s PILOT program. Through its charge, the Panel may also consider assessing a “community benefit fee” on any tax-exempt property, thus taxing property of not-for-profit hospitals, colleges, and universities, and requiring these entities to report the value of their real and personal property.

The panel is scheduled to continue its work throughout the fall and into the winter, with a goal of meeting its reporting deadline on December 31, 2015.

Program Focuses on Leading in a Volatile Healthcare Environment

On September 17, CHA, in partnership with the Organization of Nurse Executives Connecticut (ONE-CT), presented the program Leadership Skills in a VUCA Environment: Maintaining Engagement When the Work is Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous. Sarah Campbell Arnett, Cone Health, presented to the group of 100 nursing leaders from across the state.

VUCA was named by the War College in the late 1990’s, and is a concept used to train members of the military to lead in uncertain environments. Ms. Arnett applied the concept to the current volatile healthcare environment.

"Change has never happened so fast. But change is not the problem. It’s the transition and all the emotional and psychological reactions that come with it.” In discussing complexity, Ms. Arnett said “We are in a time when there is a shift from problems to dilemmas with no single answer. Leadership is about navigating the dilemmas and finding the best answer for the scenario at the time.”

Ms. Arnett discussed leadership strategies and tactics that nursing executives can use to lead while maintaining a sense of personal direction. She also described key attributes one needs to lead in a complex and changing environment: vision, understanding, clarity, and agility. Ms. Arnett also highlighted the importance of taking time to be present and mindful, and maintain a non-judgmental state.

High Reliability Leaders Trained as Trainers

On September 17, staff from Connecticut healthcare organizations who have been identified as leaders in high reliability participated in a program to prepare them to train others in the safety behaviors and tools of high reliability. Educators, front-line managers, and senior leaders were among those participating in the training program.

"Patient Safety is at the crux of everything,” said Doreen Beattie, VP, Nursing Services, The Hospital at Hebrew Healthcare. “As the geriatric population ages, safety becomes and more and more of a concern. This must be the focus of our organization, and set the culture for our facilities and our workers.”

Culture change in complex, high-risk areas is at the heart of high reliability. Everyone in an organization is empowered to speak up when they see a potential safety issue.

Since the high reliability program began in Connecticut three years ago, tens of thousands of hospital staff have been trained, and there has been a reduction in Serious Safety Events. Hospitals are learning, sharing, and applying nationally recognized, evidence-based practices to achieve the highest standards of quality and safety – and serving as a national model for positive culture change, innovation,
and leadership in patient safety.

High reliability is being introduced into post-acute care, nursing homes, ambulatory practices, and to patients and families directly.

“We want to align the physician practices with the hospitals and reach a common language and set of expectations,” said Grace Boucher, Director of Quality and Performance Improvement, UConn Health Ambulatory Practices. “Our goal is to achieve a level of employee engagement so that we can be safe, and where our patients trust us to come for their care.”

**CHA’s High Reliability Program Expands to Patients and Families**

The high reliability safety movement, which has resulted in more than 25,000 staff and physicians in Connecticut trained in high reliability safety behaviors since 2011, is now expanding to engage patients and families in quality and patient safety.

As part of this work, hospitals and patient care advocates are collaborating, through CHA, to build and strengthen patient family advisory councils. The kickoff event for this effort is **Partnering with Patients for Better Healthcare: Establishing and Sustaining Patient Family Advisory Councils to Help Eliminate Harm**, a program that will be held at CHA on Tuesday, September 29, 2015.

The program will feature keynote speakers Kim Blanton, Volunteer Patient Advisor at Vidant Health System, and Rosemary Gibson, Senior Advisor at The Hastings Center. Two breakout sessions, presented by representatives from Planetree and the Institute for Patient-Family-Centered Care, will focus on establishing and sustaining patient family advisory councils. A panel discussion will focus on patient and family engagement efforts. The panel will be moderated by Debra Abromaitis, Director of Quality, Regulatory Compliance and Patient Support, UConn Health John Dempsey Hospital.

There is no fee for this program, but pre-registration is required. Registration will be limited to five attendees per organization. Organizations are encouraged to register both patients and staff.

This program is co-sponsored with the Connecticut Center for Patient Safety, Qualidigm, the Connecticut Partnership for Patient Safety, and the Connecticut Association of Healthcare Executives. Continuing education credits will be awarded. See the brochure for details.

**Hospital for Special Care President and CEO John Votto to Retire; Lynn Ricci to Become President and CEO**

After 18 years as president and chief executive officer of Hospital for Special Care (HSC), John Votto, DO, FCCP, announced on September 16 that he will retire Oct. 1, 2016. The Center for Special Care (CSC), HSC’s parent organization, has appointed Lynn Ricci, FACHE, to succeed him effective Oct. 1, 2015, culminating a six-year succession plan.

Dr. Votto will remain as president and CEO of the Center for Special Care until Oct. 1, 2016, when Ricci will become president and CEO of both entities. Dr. Votto is credited with building the specialty care hospital into a national model of care for complex populations. Dr. Votto, a well-respected national expert in the field, is frequently called upon to offer technical opinions to government payers and policy makers. For many years, he has represented HSC and the National Association of Long Term Care Hospitals on Capitol Hill, providing testimony to the Center for Medicare Services and the U.S. Congress.

Ms. Ricci will become HSC’s fourth CEO. Since joining the specialty care hospital in 2007, she has assumed increasing levels of responsibility, serving as Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer from 2011 to 2015, and Vice President of Administration from 2009 to 2011.

“As a progressive organization, we have carefully planned for a leadership transition,” said David Kelly, Chairman of the Board, Center for Special Care, Inc. “The board unanimously endorsed Lynn as John’s named successor based on her nearly 25 years of long-term healthcare leadership experience and impressive record of accomplishments at HSC.”

“I am honored to be selected as HSC’s next president and CEO,” said Ms. Ricci. “It’s a privilege to lead an organization that is closely guided by its commitment to the community and passion to deliver care that improves the quality of people’s lives. I also want to thank John Votto for his support and guidance and for the tremendous impact that he has made on each and every one of us at Hospital for Special Care.

As part of the transition plan, Dr. Votto will serve as president of the CSC and will remain with the organization over the next year. Dr. Votto will continue to lead advocacy programs at the national level focusing on research and healthcare policy initiatives.

Most recently, Ms. Ricci led the planning and 2014 opening of the Maximilian E. & Marion O. Hoffman Foundation Outpatient Center which handles more than 30,000 outpatient visits each year across a spectrum of chronic and rehabilitative conditions, including spinal cord and brain injury, neuromuscular disease (muscular dystrophy and ALS-Lou Gehrig's disease), pulmonary disease, and rehabilitation.

In 2012, Ms. Ricci spearheaded the development of the Autism Center at Hospital for Special Care in response to a rising need to care for children living with autism. The center became the nation’s first and only patient-centered specialty practice for autism recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance in 2015.

Ms. Ricci holds a bachelor’s, master’s and sixth-year degree in Psychology and served 20 years as a licensed Long-term Healthcare Administrator. She is actively involved in the community through both professional and civic organizations. She is a past Rotarian, an executive board member of the New Britain Academy for Health Professions, a board member of the Connecticut Alliance for Long Term Care, CCARC, and the Community Foundation of Greater New Britain. In 2015, Ms. Ricci was named a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), the nation’s leading professional society for healthcare leaders.
Education Updates

CHA Nurse Preceptorship Program
Tuesday, October 6, 2015
8:30 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

Supporting and strengthening the work of nurse preceptors is critical to the development of new nurses and retention of the highly skilled staff registered nurses who teach them at the bedside.

Curriculum for the Nurse Preceptorship Program, was developed by a team of educators from hospitals and schools of nursing and is designed to provide core content that is foundational for the role of nurse preceptor. This one-day program includes presentations and interactive sessions that cover topics such as roles and responsibilities, characteristics of a professional role model, basics of teaching and learning, tools and strategies for effective communication, principles of constructive feedback delivery, and evaluating competence. The Nurse Preceptorship Program will serve to start new nurse preceptors off with critical information and also may be of interest to nurse preceptors that have not had this content, or would like to be refreshed on these concepts.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

HRO Using High Reliability to Improve the Patients' Experience
Wednesday, October 7, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Event Registration

Wednesday, October 7, 2015
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Event Registration

In Patient Family Engagement, the focus is on highly reliable staff behaviors which enhance patient satisfaction and HCAHP scores. Lynn Pierce of HPI, an alumna of Baptist Hospital in Pensacola FL (home of the 2003 Malcolm Baldridge Quality Award), will be the instructor.

We are offering Medicine, Nursing, and Quality continuing education credits for this session.

HRO Fair and Just Accountability
Wednesday, October 14, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Event Registration

Fair and Just Accountability is a session for your Human Resources Executives and anyone else who manages people. This session trains staff to review performance from a standardized perspective when there is an adverse event; to focus on the behavior rather than the outcome.

We are offering Medicine, Nursing, and Quality continuing education credits for these sessions.

HRO Rounding to Influence
Wednesday, October 14, 2015
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Event Registration

Rounding to Influence teaches leaders how to go out on the units to coach, mentor, and sustain High Reliability habits and practices.

We are offering Medicine, Nursing, and Quality continuing education credits for this session.

Revenues, Costs, Resources: A Strategic Look at the New Normal
Wednesday, October 14, 2015
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

Like it or not, the transformation of healthcare continues to demand dramatic and fundamental changes in delivery models and payment methods. Decreasing payments, increasing regulation, and new competitive pressures frame the landscape. Scarce resources are being stretched to the breaking point. Doing more with less has become the routine. The need for a sound understanding of the “new normal” is essential for managers and leaders at all levels of healthcare organizations.

This new program provides an overview of the changes and challenges along with approaches that can help bend the cost curve at both the national and hospital level. Bill Ward, a popular and dynamic lecturer on financial management in healthcare will present this program.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

Trauma Registrar Specific ICD-10 Training
(Two-day course)
Thursday, October 15, 2015 and Friday, October 16
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

This two-day course includes a focused, in-depth assessment and review of the ICD-10-CM and ICD-10-PCS coding systems, with a focus on the trauma registrar’s unique needs. The first day of training will focus on ICD-10-CM injuries and e-codes, while the second day will focus on ICD-10-PCS procedures.

note: sharing manuals with a classmate is also an option.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

**HRO Leadership Method Training**  
**Thursday, October 15, 2015**  
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
[Event Registration](#)

Leadership training is for organizations that are new to High Reliability or for new management employees in organizations that are already on the High Reliability journey. Both hospital and ambulatory organization leadership practices will be addressed. The seven-hour Leadership sessions are designed to teach your hospital or ambulatory leaders the concepts of high reliability science and behaviors. The sessions are structured for leaders at the manager level and above.

We are offering Medicine, Nursing, Quality, and Radiology continuing education credits for this session.

**HRO Safety Coach Training**  
**Friday, October 16, 2015**  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
[Event Registration](#)

Friday, October 16, 2015  
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
[Event Registration](#)

Safety Coaches are peer mentors, designed to recognize and acknowledge good high reliability behavior and to remind people about opportunities to improve behavior that does not stay true to high reliability concepts.

We are offering Medicine, Nursing, and Quality continuing education credits for this session.