Federal Officials Focus on Ebola Preparedness for Connecticut

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-3) and U.S. Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy held a press event on October 9 with Department of Public Health (DPH) Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, hospital representatives, and other healthcare stakeholders to discuss the state’s readiness to handle any potential cases of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).

During the discussion, Sen. Chris Murphy said the U.S. needs to help stop EVD in Africa to protect Americans and people around the world. He called on Congress to allocate $1 billion as requested by President Barack Obama.

Sen. Blumenthal echoed the sentiment, saying that it is critical that the U.S. invest in developing effective drugs to prevent and treat EVD.

Congresswoman DeLauro cited the national reductions in funding to the public health infrastructure, including funding for hospital preparedness, and said that agencies should be given the resources they need to plan, prepare, respond, and recover.

Jim Paturas, Director, Yale New Haven Health System Center for Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response, discussed how hospitals are collaborating with DPH through CHA to ensure that all efforts are coordinated. Commissioner Mullen thanked CHA for hospital leadership on this critical public health issue.

Jack Ross, MD, Director, Infection Control, Hartford HealthCare, discussed how Hartford HealthCare has engaged staff and trained them in the proper protocol for screening people for EVD at all points of entry to hospital facilities.

In collaboration with DPH, CHA shared with hospitals materials and resources related to Ebola detection, treatment, and response. CHA and hospitals began regular emergency preparedness coordination calls this week. Next week, hospital emergency preparedness stakeholders will participate in a statewide meeting and a DPH call. CHA has also established an Ebola Preparedness webpage with information for members of the public and healthcare providers.

DCF Commissioner Discusses Key Topics in Child Safety, Hospital Collaboration

On October 7, more than 100 people gathered for a day-long program to discuss the state of child welfare in Connecticut and some of the challenges around sex trafficking of minors, as well as children’s behavioral health issues. Department of Children and Families (DCF) Commissioner Joette Katz, the keynote speaker, discussed how the Department is partnering with hospitals to protect and enhance the lives of children. “Not only do hospitals serve as a key place for safety, but we at DCF only touch some children while hospitals touch nearly all of them,” she said. “I can’t think of better partners than Connecticut’s hospitals. It’s a partnership that I embrace and I’m optimistic we’ll make progress on many fronts so our children grow up healthy, safe, smart, and strong.”

Over the past few years, the Department has worked with hospitals to improve the recognition and reporting of abuse, raise awareness of public health issues related to child health, including safe sleep and brain injuries occurring from shaken baby syndrome, protect babies through the Safe Haven law, and improve responses to children who are the victims of sex trafficking. Hospitals are also working with DCF to find solutions for treating children who present at the ER with behavioral health issues. Hospitals worked with the Department as it developed a comprehensive, integrated plan to meet the mental, emotional, and behavioral health needs of all children in Connecticut. The Connecticut Children’s Behavioral Health Plan will increase capacity in the system, including addressing the unique treatment needs of children with autism spectrum disorder and behavioral health challenges in a holistic and supportive manner.

Commissioner Katz also discussed the culture change at DCF since 2011. The Department has focused on strengthening families and engaging them in the case planning process. Since 2011, the number of children in state care and congregate care decreased dramatically. Currently, in 80 percent of cases in which a child previously would have been removed from the home, DCF works with families to develop a plan to keep the child safe and remain at home. And in cases in which the child was removed, two thirds are now placed with a family member.

“DCF staff have implemented changes and made huge strides to improve the lives of children and families in Connecticut immensely,” she said. Panels throughout the day featuring hospital speakers, DCF staff, and professionals from Casey Family Programs, ValueOptions, and the Connecticut Community Provider Association focused on issues including detecting child abuse and neglect, building an integrated service system to meet the behavioral health needs of children, sharing best practices for treating children with behavioral health issues in the ED, and ending sex trafficking of children in Connecticut.
Legislative Leaders Convene Bipartisan Round Table On Hospitals And Healthcare

On October 9, legislative leaders from both parties convened for the first meeting of a panel to study issues related to hospitals and healthcare. The panel is being led by Senator Len Fasano (R-North Haven) and Senator Martin Looney (D-New Haven). The first meeting included a presentation by the Office of Legislative Research (OLR) that provided an overview of PA 14-168, a comparison of hospitals, conversion laws in other states, and a summary of the other provisions of the law.

The Committee laid out an agenda for the next few months that includes an update on the status of pending hospital conversions, physician acquisition, taxes and employment, facility fees, the Value Care Alliance model, and an overview of the lawsuit on hospital conversions in Idaho. It is expected that the panel will review the implementation of PA 14-168, An Act Concerning Notice Of Acquisitions, Joint Ventures, Affiliations Of Group Medical Practices And Hospital Admissions, Medical Foundations And Certificates Of Need, and may seek to make changes to the statute in the 2015 Legislative Session.

The formation of the panel was announced on October 2, with a stated goal "to reach out to policy makers, hospitals, physicians, hospital and health facility employees and staff, patient advocates, health insurers, local officials and other stakeholders to monitor the implementation of recent certificates of need legislation, discuss the rapid changes in the healthcare market, and develop policy recommendations to help ensure continued access to affordable quality care in Connecticut." The official name of the panel is Round Table on Hospitals and Health Care.

Connecticut Hospitals' Work to Reduce Harm Featured in HHS Report

Connecticut hospitals' work to reduce harm is featured in the 2014 Annual Progress Report on the National Strategy for Quality Improvement in Health Care, produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The National Quality Strategy is an initiative led by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) on behalf of HHS.

The Quality Strategy report highlights Connecticut hospitals' efforts to reduce harm in the delivery of care, particularly through participation in the national On the CUSP: Stop BSI Project, which saw 14 Connecticut hospitals achieve a 50 percent reduction in their central bloodstream infection rates. Connecticut hospitals are featured in the Priorities in Action section, which showcases selected communities, health systems, and organizations that show improvement in each priority area, illustrating how their successes demonstrate the potential impact of National Quality Strategy implementation.

The full report is available here, and the work of Connecticut hospitals through CHA is featured on page 7. To learn more about the National Quality Strategy, go to Working for Quality.

Hospitals Celebrate the Third Anniversary of the CHA Diversity Collaborative

On Thursday, October 23, 2014, CHA will celebrate with a symposium the third year of the CHA Diversity Collaborative. The Collaborative is a multi-year, statewide initiative designed to address health disparities, increase diversity, and improve cultural competence in the delivery of care.

The Third Annual Diversity Collaborative Symposium will feature a discussion of race and ethnic disparities in preventable hospitalizations, as well as an analysis of healthcare quality among priority patient populations.

Colleen O'Toole, PhD, will provide the keynote address. Dr. O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer of the Greater Cincinnati Health Council, the Health Improvement Collaborative, and HealthBridge, will discuss The Greater Cincinnati Health Council's continuing efforts to strengthen race, ethnicity, and language (REAL) data collection methodology and data integrity in pursuit of reducing disparities in care.

Other speakers include Christopher Dadlez, President and CEO, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center; J. Suzanne Wilson, RN, Director of Resource Management, AnMed Health System; Troy Cicero, President of MulticultuReal Communications; Robert Aseltine Jr, PhD, Professor and Interim Chair, Division of Behavioral Science and Community Health Deputy Director, Center for Public Health and Health Policy UCONN Health.

Continuing education credits will be awarded. Please see the brochure for more details.

New York Times Bestselling Author to Keynote Nurse Leadership Forum

New York Times bestselling author and national leadership consultant Cy Wakeman will be the keynote speaker for CHA's 14th Annual Nurse Leadership Forum, scheduled for Thursday, October 16, 2014. Ms. Wakeman will share her perspective on the need for an innovative and dynamic new look at leadership.

This year’s Nurse Leadership Forum will focus on leadership strategies and operational challenges such as leading during a time of change, nurse staffing, and ballot initiatives that have occurred in other states. Participants will also explore the transition from clinical to operational leadership, as well as the nurse leader’s critical role in effective change management.

Continuing education credits will be awarded. Please see the brochure for more details.

Education Updates

Medication Safety: Your Role on the Team

According to the FDA, it has received more than 30,000 reports of medication errors since 1992. Medication errors can occur at any point in healthcare, and involve patients, families, and professionals. Please join us for a multi-stakeholder approach to Medication Safety: Your Role on the Team. This program is open to consumers, patients, and families; hospital providers; continuum of care providers; retail pharmacies; Boards or senior leadership; healthcare organization staff; policy makers and staff of policy makers; media; and students and instructors in professional schools.

Speakers will include patient advocate Marian Hollingsworth from San Diego, discussing her father’s death and polypharmacy; clinicians from Yale University School of Medicine, Brown University, and University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy; nursing advocates from long-term care and home health care; representation from the Office of the Healthcare Advocate, and our keynote speaker, Dr. Allan Vaida from the Institute for Safe Medication Practices. Attendees will participate in break-out sessions to discuss a strategy for making Connecticut the safest state for medication use.
Continuing education credits will be awarded.

This program will be held at the Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University.

CSMS Program on Opioid Prescribing
Monday, November 10, 2014
5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

The CSMS Program on Opioid Prescribing will be held at the Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University.

HRO Using High Reliability to Improve the Patient Experience
Wednesday, October 15, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Event Registration

Wednesday, October 15, 2014
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Event Registration

Lynn Pierce of HPI, an alumna of Baptist Hospital in Pensacola FL (home of the 2003 Malcolm Baldridge Quality Award), will be our instructor.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

Financial Skills for Managers
Friday, October 17, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

As the demands of healthcare reform pick up speed, carefully managing the financial health of the organization is more important than ever. Resources are scarce and stretched to the breaking point. Doing more with less is routine. The need for sound business and financial management tools—survival skills—is paramount for all managers. These include planning and budgeting, financial analysis, and maximizing resources, all of which are essential if managers are to achieve the institution’s mission and contribute to “bottom line” results. Bill Ward, a popular and dynamic lecturer on financial management in healthcare is back by member request to present the program.

Continuing education credits will be awarded. Please see the brochure for more details.

Restrain and Seclusion Documentation and Chemical Restraints in the Hospital and Nursing Home Settings
Monday, October 20, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

Please join us for a program focusing on restraint and seclusion documentation and chemical restraints in the hospital and nursing home settings. Connecticut Department of Public Health’s Barbara Cass, Section Chief; Lori Griffin, Supervising Nurse Consultant; and Donna Ortelle, Public Health Services Manager, will present the most common issues found in hospitals and nursing homes regarding these focus areas. Additionally, experienced healthcare attorneys will provide an overview of the importance of adhering to restraint and seclusion guidelines to provide safe patient care in both settings.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.