Connecticut Hospitals Serve Patients Throughout Hurricane Sandy

Connecticut hospitals benefitted from good planning and communication throughout Hurricane Sandy. They were in constant contact with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and other response agencies to provide status updates, share information, and coordinate response efforts to meet the needs of Connecticut's residents.

As a result of emergency preparedness planning and coordination, Connecticut hospitals were able to continue to provide a majority of their services during the duration of the storm.

During the lead-up to the storm and at its height, most Connecticut hospitals closed their outpatient clinics and canceled elective surgeries, but reported no major problems. In most cases, main hospital facilities were not impacted by severe or prolonged power outages or widespread emergency department overcrowding, nor were they inundated with patients who are medically-dependent, seeking non-emergency services.

At the time of publication, hospitals report that they are doing well and do not have any major storm-related issues.

CHA Hosts Successful 12th Annual Nurse Leadership Forum

Nurse leaders from across Connecticut participated in CHA’s 12th Annual Nurse Leadership Forum on Friday, October 26, 2012. Carl Hammerschlag, MD, psychiatrist, author, and nationally acclaimed speaker, opened the full-day program with a keynote presentation on the future of healthcare. Dr. Hammerschlag said that people in the United States have traditionally thought of health as the absence of illness. However, from his many years of experience and exposure to healers from around the world, he shared his perspective that health is also the balance of mind, body, and spirit.

In his presentation, William J. Ward Jr., Director of the Master of Health Administration Degree Program at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, said that nurse leaders and clinicians are integral to helping shape the business of healthcare, and a strong partnership between the chief nursing officer and the chief financial officer translates to both good patient care and good organizational health.

The Forum's two concurrent sessions focused on building healthier communities by strengthening the relationship between primary and acute providers and systems, presented by Margaret Flinter, APRN, PhD, Senior Vice President and Clinical Director of the Community Health Center, Inc., and developing culturally competent leadership, presented by G. Rumay Alexander, RN, BSN, MSN, EdD, Clinical Professor and Director, Office of Multicultural Affairs at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Nursing.
New England Health Equity Council Meets to Develop Priorities

The New England Regional Health Equity Council (RHEC), co-chaired by Marie Spivey, EdD, RN, MPA, CHA Vice President, Health Equity, met on October 24th to discuss the next steps toward creating transformational change through a strategic framework to eliminate racial/ethnic health disparities and improve health outcomes throughout the region. The board has identified areas of focus for 2013 to be: the impact of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act on health equity, community-wide resource mapping, and effective evidence-based practices to improve cultural and linguistic competence in the healthcare workforce.

The New England RHEC was formed in 2011 by the United States Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Minority Health. Council members representing the six New England states are exploring a regional approach to address health disparities and the social factors that determine health outcomes including education, employment, housing, and the environment. In the last year, the 10 RHECs across the country have made strides in developing strategic plans to improve health equity.

Between now and January 2013, when the New England RHEC board meets again, the subcommittees will meet regularly to prioritize their work, which will address the areas of focus decided upon and create steps to be incorporated into an overall long-term plan for the region.

In Connecticut, Dr. Spivey also chairs the Connecticut Commission on Health Equity, which has conducted public forums to gather information from community members at-large regarding health inequities and disparities, collaborated with state agencies as they develop and strengthen health equity plans toward the creation of a statewide plan for Connecticut, and worked collaboratively through CHA and the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health on the development of a Community Health Needs Assessment tool template for use in conducting health improvement plans.

Ameridose Voluntarily Recalls Products

Ameridose LLC, a sister company to the New England Compounding Center, which closed after a nationwide outbreak of fungal meningitis related to three lots of injectable epidural steroid medication, has voluntarily recalled all of more than 2,000 unexpired products in circulation, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The recall was recommended by FDA “out of an abundance of caution” after preliminary findings from an inspection of Ameridose’s facility raised concerns about a lack of sterility assurance for products produced at and distributed by the facility. Healthcare professionals currently do not need to follow up with patients who received Ameridose products, but should stop using the products and return them to the firm, the FDA said. A list of the company’s products is available at www.ameridose.com.

Under a voluntary agreement with the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Pharmacy, the company agreed to cease all pharmacy and manufacturing operations on October 10, 2012. Ameridose said it was notifying customers of the recall by fax and arranging for product returns. Customers with questions are directed to call 888-820-0622 during business hours.

Education Updates
Leaping From Staff to Management: The Next Steps
Wednesday, November 7, 2012
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Whether recently assigned to the role of manager or a seasoned veteran, it is important to determine how well your problem-solving and decision-making skills are keeping pace with the ever-changing healthcare environment. For those who attended “Leaping from Staff to Management: You’re a Manager. Now What?” in September, this second course in the two-part program provides additional development for all managers who want to continually improve their skills.

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

View the brochure here. Click here to register.

Focus on Care: Healthcare for Diverse Patient Populations
Monday, November 12, 2012
8:45 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

CHA is pleased to offer a full-day of compliance education as part of its Diversity Collaborative. The program will begin with a focus on effective communication with the deaf and hard-of-hearing population. Representatives from Inova Health System, located in Virginia, will talk about their experience with the Department of Justice during a recent investigation that concluded with the hospital entering a consent decree for providing future healthcare services to deaf and hard-of-hearing patients. The second segment of the program will focus on issues related to, and responsibilities for implementing, the Connecticut gender identity and expression law. Presenters will provide insights and practical guidance on educational, legal, operational, enforcement, and personal perspectives to help members establish the policies and systems needed to provide healthcare services to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community (LGBT or LGBTQ), an umbrella term that generally refers to a group of people who are diverse with regard to their gender identity and sexual orientation.

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

View the brochure here. Click here to register.

Eliminating Preventable Harm Through FMEA
Wednesday, November 14, 2012
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Failure mode and effects analysis (FMEA) is a proven tool among proactive patient safety improvement initiatives. Beyond meeting Joint Commission standards, FMEA has turned out to be a very effective process improvement strategy. In this workshop, participants learn how to harness the power and benefits of FMEA for their organization by avoiding common pitfalls and concentrating efforts on identifying and addressing potential high-risk processes.

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

View the brochure here. Click here to register.

CHA Nurse Preceptorship Program
Tuesday, November 20, 2012
8:30 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

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. The curriculum for the Nurse Preceptorship Program was developed by a team of educators from area hospitals and schools of nursing and is designed to provide core content that is foundational for the role of nurse preceptor. The 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, evaluating competence, delegating effectively, and more. 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. Please see the brochure for details.

View the brochure here. Click here to register.