Committee on Healthcare Associated Infections Meets

Last Friday, representatives from CHA and Connecticut hospitals participated in the second meeting of the Department of Public Health (DPH) Committee on Healthcare Associated Infections. The Committee is charged with recommending to DPH by April 1, 2007, a system for publicly reporting healthcare-associated infections.

Louise Dembry, MD, Co-Director, Quality Improvement Support, Yale-New Haven Hospital, provided a formal presentation that outlined the essential elements of an effective epidemiology program. She commented on the complexities of preventing and controlling infections, as well as the shortcomings of reporting data that are not first adjusted to reflect underlying risk. Dr. Dembry stressed the importance of including both process and outcome measures in any reporting system, since processes drive outcomes.

In future Committee meetings, presenters will include representatives from other states that have implemented healthcare associated infection reporting systems, as well as some of the national organizations that have issued guidance on implementing public reporting systems.

CMS Issues OPPS Final Rule

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released the 2007 hospital outpatient prospective payment system (OPPS) final rule yesterday. The final rule includes a 3.4% market basket update for hospitals, but – contrary to the originally proposed rule – does not tie the outpatient payment update to compliance with inpatient quality reporting requirements. CMS instead plans to develop new outpatient quality measures that it will require hospitals to report starting in 2009.

The OPPS final rule also includes expansion of the quality measures for inpatient hospital reporting of quality data for the fiscal year (FY) 2008 inpatient prospective payment system annual update. The proposed measures include:

- HCAHPS Patients’ Perspective of Care Measures;
- three additional Surgical Care Improvement Project measures; and
- 30-day mortality measures for patients with acute myocardial infarction, heart failure, and pneumonia.

Connecticut’s not-for-profit acute care hospitals, which have been collecting data on 21 quality measures for heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, and surgical care for submission to CMS, are preparing to collect data for the new measures.

The final rule is available on the CMS website and will be published in the November 24 Federal Register.
DPH is expected to implement a system based on recommendations of the Committee by October 1, 2007 and to begin publicly reporting healthcare associated infection information on an annual basis beginning October 1, 2008.

Five CT Hospitals Honored By HHS For Organ Donation Rates

Five Connecticut hospitals were recently awarded Medals of Honor for Organ Donation by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) at the Second National Learning Congress on Organ Donation and Transplantation in New Orleans.

Danbury Hospital, New Britain General Hospital, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, St. Vincent's Medical Center, and Yale-New Haven Hospital were among the 371 hospitals and 57 organ procurement organizations nationwide that received the Medal for achieving a donation rate of 75 percent or more of eligible donors, and sustaining that rate for at least one year. Hospitals with eight or more potential organ donors during the 26-month award period ending in June 2006 were eligible for the award.

According to a press release by HHS’ Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the national average donation rate in all hospitals was 59 percent in 2005, up from 55 percent in 2004. Data from the first half of 2006 indicate a continuation of the upward trend, according to HRSA.

The Medal of Honor program is part of the Organ Donation Breakthrough Collaborative, which HRSA launched in 2003 in partnership with donation professionals and hospital leaders around the country to identify and share best practices to maximize organ donation rates.

For more information on the Collaborative, visit www.organdonationnow.org.

John Hancock, CHAIS Offer Members New LTC Insurance Discounts

CHA Insurance Services (CHAIS - a subsidiary of CHA affiliate Diversified Network Services) has partnered with John Hancock to offer substantial group discounts to member hospitals for long-term care (LTC) insurance.

The new offering follows a member survey of hospital human resources executives conducted by CHAIS and John Hancock earlier this year, which identified an interest in LTC insurance discounts.

CHA member hospitals are encouraged to contact Harry Packman, CHAIS Managing Director, at (203) 294-7250 or packman@chime.org for more information on this and other insurance services offered by CHAIS.

CHA’s First-Ever Physician Leadership Forum Twelve Days Away

There’s still time to register for CHA’s first-ever Physician Leadership Forum on Tuesday, November 14, 2006, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Eric Lister, M.D., Managing Director at KI Associates, will lead off the Forum with a presentation on Improving Physician Hospital Relationships, in which Dr. Lister will describe a community’s healthcare “ecosystem,” including the interdependencies of physicians, hospitals, and community members. Dr. Lister will outline step-by-step strategies for all of these stakeholders to respond collaboratively and effectively to the stresses of an everchanging healthcare environment.

Dr. Lister’s presentation will set the stage for Robert McGowan, Senior Principal at Mitretek Healthcare, who will share the results of a recent Connecticut-based survey on the effectiveness of strategies to strengthen physician/hospital relationships. Mr. Gowan will also show how these results compare to a national study on the same subject.

Afternoon sessions with Richard A. Sheff, M.D., Chairman and Executive Director for the Greeley Company, will cover methods to effectively recruit, cultivate, and retain strong physician leaders; and proven techniques for effectively managing disruptive physicians.

To register, or for more information on this program, visit the education section of the CHA website or contact CHA Education Services at (203) 294-7267 or educationservices@chime.org.