Bipartisan Round Table on Hospitals and Health Care Holds Second Meeting

On November 6, legislative leaders from both parties convened for the second meeting of the Round Table on Hospitals and Health Care. The panel, led by Senator Len Fasano (R-North Haven) and Senator Martin Looney (D-New Haven), was established to monitor the implementation of recent 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 meeting included presentations by Chris O’Connor, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Yale New Haven Health System; Robert Nordgren, MD, Chief Executive Officer, Northeast Medical Group; Amit Rastogi, MD, Chief Medical Officer and Chief Operating Officer, Northeast Medical Group; Rocco Orlando, MD, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, Hartford HealthCare; James Cardon, MD, Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Integration Officer, Hartford HealthCare; and Robert Smanik, President and Chief Executive Officer, Day Kimball Healthcare. Additionally, the panel received comments from the Attorney General’s office, the Connecticut State Medical Society, the Office of the State Health Care Advocate, and other providers.

Discussion and presentations at the time of publication of UPDATE Update revolved around an independent physician’s relationship with hospitals, insurance companies, and the patients they serve; the nationwide trend of provider consolidation; and the issue of facility fees.

Over the coming months, the Round Table will discuss 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.

Election Brings New Members to the Connecticut Legislature

The Connecticut General Assembly will swear in 34 new legislators in January. The Connecticut State Senate will have seven new members as a result of current senators stepping down or seeking another elected office; one senate seat switched party hands due to the election. In total, nine current senators were beaten by challengers and 18 new members were elected as a result of running for an open seat. The new composition of the House of Representatives is 87 Democrats and 64 Republicans, a net gain of nine seats for the GOP from its current caucus. A complete listing of all House of Representative members and their districts will be published once the votes are certified by the Secretary of the State’s Office.

Several House members lost their bid for reelection. In total, nine current House members were beaten by challengers and 18 new members were elected as a result of running for an open seat. The new composition of the House of Representatives is 87 Democrats and 64 Republicans, a net gain of 9 seats for the GOP from its current caucus. A complete listing of all House of Representative members and their districts will be published once the votes are certified by the Secretary of the State’s Office.

On the federal level, the balance of power in the Senate shifted to the Republicans who now hold the majority of the seats in the 100-member legislative body. Connecticut U.S. Senators Richard Blumenthal (D) and Chris Murphy (D) will be up for reelection in 2016 and 2018 respectively. All other members of Connecticut’s congressional delegation were reelected.

In the coming weeks, expect Congress to reconvene in a lame-duck session to address a number of critical funding issues including increased funding for the hospital preparedness and public health emergency preparedness programs, as well as Ebola-related funding proposals.

All results are unofficial and will become official once certified by the Secretary of the State’s Office.

Joint Statement of Partnership on Ebola Management

On November 3, CHA, the Connecticut League for Nursing, the Connecticut Nurses’ Association, and the Organization of Nurse Executives Connecticut (ONE-CT) established a formal partnership to work together on Ebola preparedness. They issued the following statement:

As work continues throughout the state of Connecticut and the nation to address management of the Ebola virus, widespread communication and education is essential. Through communication of current science and knowledge related to Ebola, particularly regarding best practices to keep caregivers, patients, and the community safe, we are able to provide quality care and protection, as well as alleviate fear.

Our organizations agree to partner to:

- Share information related to Ebola among our organizations.
- Disseminate widely to our membership information, updates, and guidance related to Ebola.
- Respond to nurses’ questions and concerns about Ebola and Ebola preparedness, particularly with regard to the safe use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Collaborate in identifying information and resource needs and facilitate action to address them.
Patient safety and the safety of nurses, doctors, and other frontline caregivers is paramount. From the very beginning, Connecticut hospitals have pursued a collaborative approach that includes nurses, doctors, and other caregivers, community emergency response resources, and local, state, and federal government and agencies. Given that nurses comprise such a large portion of the hospital workforce, CHA is pleased to formalize this partnership.

Through CHA, Connecticut hospitals participate in weekly statewide hospital meetings and calls to coordinate approaches on issues ranging from pre-hospital care to screening protocols and PPE. They continue to participate in multiple CDC calls weekly to discuss new developments and best practices in the detection, prevention, and treatment of Ebola. Connecticut hospitals continue to work closely with the Connecticut Department of Public Health to ensure that efforts statewide are coordinated.

**NBC Connecticut Holds Fourth Healthcare Roundtable**

On November 6, NBC Connecticut brought together healthcare decision makers for a collaborative roundtable discussion on the impact of healthcare reform on Connecticut and current issues and concerns. Marie Spivey, EdD, RN, Vice President, Health Equity, CHA, represented the Association.

The discussion, the fourth in a series, is part of NBC Connecticut’s commitment to providing residents with critical information to enable them to make the best healthcare decisions. Issues discussed included the upcoming open enrollment period, the concern people are having with high deductibles and co-pays, and the need for simple explanations about plans and options. The discussion focused on how to reach people through multi-platform channels and effective storytelling.

Dr. Spivey highlighted the need for health literacy education to inform the public about the value of having healthcare insurance, how to choose the right insurance, and how to take advantage of the benefits of insurance. She suggested that this include an overall statewide partnership of providers, insurers, and legislators. This stimulated a wider discussion among the group about collaborative ways to capture the interest of individuals of all ages and incomes, as well as those with differing health status.

The roundtable was not taped, but continues to inform coverage by NBC Connecticut.

**Flu Season Begins in Connecticut**

According to the Connecticut Department of Public Health, influenza activity has been increasing in Connecticut since the end of August though it is still, according to the CDC, considered minimal. To date this season, there have been 75 reports of influenza and 42 hospitalizations in Connecticut.

Vaccination is a best practice for patient and healthcare worker safety. During the 2013-2014 flu season, nearly 90 percent of healthcare workers in hospitals received a vaccination, a 6.5 percentage point increase from the 2012-13 season (81.9%). Coverage was highest among healthcare workers working in settings in which vaccination was required (97.8%).

Twenty four acute care hospitals in Connecticut have implemented a mandatory participation or mandatory vaccination program. In November 2011, the CHA Board adopted a statewide policy endorsing mandatory influenza vaccination for hospital personnel as part of CHA hospitals’ commitment to patient safety. In addition to the CDC, leading expert organizations have also endorsed mandatory vaccination to protect patients, including the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC), the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA), the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), and the National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF).

**Education Updates**

**Medication Safety: Your Role on the Team**

Monday, November 10, 2014
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
[View Brochure] [Event Registration]

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. Allen 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.

**HRO Ambulatory Design Day**

Wednesday, November 12, 2014
12:00 PM - 5:00 PM
[Event Registration]

As hospitals, to sustain our implementation of High Reliability, we need participation by our partners who take care of patients. High Reliability needs to be utilized at every point in the care continuum. Join us for this session to help us design the curriculum for ambulatory practices and long-term care. This session is open to High Reliability Level 2 and Level 3 hospitals.

**HRO Fair and Just Accountability**

Wednesday, November 12, 2014
8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
[Event Registration]

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

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

**CHA Nurse Preceptorship Program**

Tuesday, November 18, 2014
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, evaluating competence, and delegating effectively. 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.

Honoring Patients’ Goals for End-of-Life Care: Addressing Life-Prolonging Care, Limited Care, and Comfort Care
Wednesday, November 19, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
[View Brochure] | [Event Registration]

We invite you to join us for the fourth program in our end-of-life care series, designed to expand providers’ existing skill set to engage patients and their families in discussing their goals for end-of-life care. We are extremely pleased to have Angelo Volandes, MD, MPH, of ACP Decisions, as the keynote presenter, discussing strategies and tools for facilitating meaningful dialogue with patients about fulfilling their wishes.

Speakers will also provide an update on Connecticut’s MOLST pilot program, Qualidigm’s Interact tool, and the Palliative Care Screening Tool created by Middlesex Hospital, Hospice, and Home Care. VITAS Healthcare’s Hospice Medical Director Clare Cherney, MD, will present suggestions and examples on when and how to start the difficult end-of-life care conversation.

This program is presented by Connecticut’s Collaborations of Care Partners: the Connecticut Hospital Association, the Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home, the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities, the Connecticut State Medical Society, and LeadingAge Connecticut.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

Coaching Skills to Improve Performance
Friday, December 5, 2014
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
[View Brochure] | [Event Registration]

What does it take for a manager to be an effective coach? Is there a difference between managing and coaching employees for improved performance? Building trust, appreciating differences, encouraging growth, providing constructive criticism, and overcoming roadblocks to goal achievement are all part of the process.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

Transitioning From Staff to Management: What’s Next?
Monday, December 8, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
[View Brochure] | [Event Registration]

Whether recently assigned to the role of manager or a seasoned veteran, it is essential to continually step back to assess your knowledge of management practice and how well your critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making, and communication skills are keeping pace with the rapidly changing and challenging healthcare environment.

For those of you who attended the first program in our leadership development series—“Staff to Management: Starting the Transition” in or March or October, and all managers who want to improve their skills and learn practical techniques for leading change initiatives, building team cohesiveness, coaching employees for better performance, and using time management strategies, this practical and interactive session will help you manage both the people and business components of your job more effectively.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

Basics of Budgeting for Healthcare Managers
Tuesday, December 9, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
[View Brochure] | [Event Registration]

Many healthcare department managers have traditionally risen from the professional ranks as successful clinicians or technicians but with little or no formal business financial training. As a result, many are thrust into a chaotic environment without the necessary tools in financial management. Skills in planning and budgeting are essential if they are to achieve the institution’s mission and contribute to “bottom line” results. In a very real sense, these represent survival skills for both managers and institutions.

This member-requested management development program provides managers with the skills and tools they need to prepare better budgets, identify problems and solutions, achieve the mission, and succeed in today’s chaotic healthcare environment. Participants will gain a working knowledge of operating and capital budgets, as part of developing performance planning skills.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.