Hospitals Shine During Hurricane Sandy

Hurricane Sandy tested the readiness of hospitals throughout Connecticut, but provided an opportunity for staff to shine at what they do best – making a difference in the lives of patients and their families. Here are some of the many ways hospitals in Connecticut excelled during Hurricane Sandy:

**Western Connecticut Health Network** opened a functional special needs shelter at Danbury Hospital to accommodate frail and at-risk residents from around the region, including a 105-year-old local woman. Dr. Jewel Mullen paid a visit during her swing through the state to recognize the collaborative effort.

At **Bridgeport Hospital**, many staff members came in early or stayed overnight to cover shifts, exhibiting generosity with their time and eagerness to care for patients during the emergency. Among them were several doctors who helped care for a surge of patients in the Emergency Department.

About 80 employees from **St. Vincent's Medical Center** also slept over before their early shift or after their late shift to avoid traveling on roads made impassable or dangerous by the storm. Outpatient areas that had closed in the emergency were quickly converted into dormitory-like facilities. Housekeeping staff provided beds, linens, and shower facilities to the overnight “emergency campers,” and dietary staff served free food all night to medical staff.

Despite an extremely high volume of patients coming to the **St. Vincent’s Emergency Department**, critical care was not interrupted. Through its emergency command structure and effective communications, the emergency team made provisions to bring in additional staffing and reconfigured space where needed to accommodate the increased volume of patients. The emergency preparedness team had already validated that the medical center had adequate supplies, water, food, and critical resources needed to weather the storm. Read more about how St. Vincent's Medical Center coped with the storm [here](#).

**Middlesex Hospital** learned from the lessons of Hurricane Irene in 2011 and successfully planned and prepared for Sandy’s challenges. The hospital was staffed 24/7 by engineering personnel, stocked with extra fuel, and prepared to protect and house patients and staff for an extended period of time.

**Yale-New Haven Hospital** (YNHH) executed the first dual-campus preparedness plan since the integration of YNHH and the Hospital of Saint Raphael on September 12. Over the two-day storm, the hospital housed more than 600 staff members. On Monday morning, YNHH received a request for assistance from Connecticut Hospice in Branford. The hospice had to evacuate all 41 patients in anticipation of record tidal surges along the coast of Long Island Sound. Within hours, 14 ambulances transported all 41 patients to Yale-New Haven’s Saint Raphael Campus. A multidisciplinary team cleaned, stocked, and prepared a patient care unit to receive the evacuated patients in less than four hours.

At the height of the storm, a two-year-old girl from Brooklyn who had undergone open heart valve surgery at NYU was transferred to Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital (YNHCH) because her New York hospital could not do a necessary pacemaker procedure due to high volume from the storm. YNHCH pediatric cardiologist Steven Fishberger, MD, performed the pacemaker surgery on November 1, and the girl was discharged five days later. Read more about Yale-New Haven Hospital’s storm response [here](#).

**The William W. Backus Hospital** used the experience as a chance to reach out to the community and teach about carbon monoxide poisoning and other safety issues. The hospital offered carbon monoxide poisoning tips and posted Connecticut Department of Public Health flyers in various languages on its [website](#). The United Way and other groups helped spread the word to the public. Backus Hospital also created a video about its storm response that you can view [here](#).

With the closure of schools and daycare facilities as a result of Hurricane Sandy, many **Connecticut Children’s Medical Center** staff did not have a child care option on Tuesday. To help staff during this period, Connecticut Children's offered a babysitting service on campus. Employees from the Connecticut Children's Medical Center School volunteered to lend their services, and hosted children for a day of games and entertainment. One Connecticut Children's employee commented, "I was very impressed with the temporary babysitting service provided to employees, given that my local daycare was closed. Without this service, I would have had to take PTO and as a new employee, I have very little reserve. This is a wonderful service and really made me feel like the organization was working to take care of me and my family while we also provide care to others. Thank you again for taking care of your employees. What a truly great place to work!"
AHA President and CEO Meets Hospital Leaders at CHA

On November 5, 2012, Rich Umbdenstock, President and CEO of the American Hospital Association, met with Connecticut hospital leaders at CHA to discuss hospital and healthcare issues facing policy makers in Washington.

He thanked hospital leaders for their dedication to protecting the hospital safety net, and encouraged them to work collaboratively with hospitals across the country on national issues.

Mr. Umbdenstock highlighted critical issues including how the results of the elections will affect the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; automatic budget cuts from last year’s Budget Control Act set to kick in on January 3, 2013, which include a two percent Medicare spending cut; Medicare provisions set to expire at the end of the year; the threat of a government shutdown next year; and the debt ceiling that will need to be extended.

“These are demanding times for all of us who work in healthcare,” said Mr. Umbdenstock. “But I ask you this: Is there any field in which you could be where the work is more rewarding? Something you do every single day has a real impact on saving and improving the lives of not only patients but your entire community.”

Mr. Umbdenstock has served as President and CEO of the AHA since 2007 – representing more than 5,000 member hospitals, health systems, and other healthcare organizations, along with 42,000 individual members.

CHA Releases New Diversity Video

When the CHA Diversity Collaborative marked its first anniversary on October 23, CHA held a day-long symposium to celebrate accomplishments and renew the push toward achieving the Collaborative’s goals: increasing diversity in hospital governance and senior management, eliminating healthcare disparities, and increasing supplier diversity.

CHA invites you to watch a new video that features several of the day’s speakers. They include Christopher M. Dadlez, FACHE, Immediate Past Chairman, CHA Board of Trustees and President and CEO of Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center; Kevin Myatt, Member of the CHA Board of Trustees and Senior Vice President of Human Resources at Yale-New Haven Hospital and Yale New Haven Health System; Bernice J. Washington, MBA, President and CEO of BJW Consulting Group and a Board Chair for Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Plano, Vice Chair of Presbyterian Healthcare Resources, and a member of the AHA’s Regional Policy Board; Juana S. Slade, CDM, CCF, Director of Diversity and Language Services at AnMed Health; Alexander R. Green, MD, MPH, Associate Director of the Disparities Solutions Center at Massachusetts General Hospital and Senior Scientist at the Institute for Health Policy, Harvard Medical School; and Brenda H. Oneal and Carlton L. Oneal, Managing Partners at Light Speed, an executive consulting firm specializing in leadership dynamics.

Read the story about the CHA Diversity Collaborative Anniversary Symposium here.

AHA Sues the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

On November 1, the American Hospital Association (AHA) filed suit against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for refusing to meet its financial obligations for hospital services provided to some Medicare patients. At issue is the Administration’s refusal to reimburse hospitals for reasonable and necessary care when the government in hindsight believes that such care could have been provided through outpatient rather than inpatient care.

A hospital’s first step, deciding whether to admit a patient or provide care in the outpatient setting, is often complicated for Medicare patients because of their age and the presence of other ailments. When government-sponsored recovery audit contractors (RACs), who are primarily paid on the basis of how much Medicare funding is taken back from hospitals and physicians, decide that care could have been provided in the outpatient setting, hospitals must return the funding they received. They then get little or no reimbursement for the “outpatient” services they provided, even though there is no dispute that the care provided to patients was reasonable and necessary.

The AHA is asking the court to overrule this nonpayment policy and reimburse hospitals that have been denied payment in the past. To read the complaint, which was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, click here.

Education Updates

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 regulatory compliance education related to diverse patients, including the deaf and hard-of-hearing population and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. 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, operational, legal enforcement issues, 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.

**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.

**Medicare Update: Audit, Reimbursement, and Other Related Issues**  
Monday, November 26, 2012  
12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Representatives from the National Government Services, who serve as a Medicare contractor with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and representatives from the CMS Regional Office in Boston will be at CHA in Wallingford to discuss pertinent issues on Medicare Audits and Reimbursement.

View the save-the-date flyer [here](#). Register [here](#).

**OSHA Compliance: Is Your Organization Ready?**  
Thursday, November 29, 2012  
9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Two compliance assistance specialists from local OSHA offices will share the most common hazards found in a hospital setting in a routine OSHA enforcement inspection, and what corrective measures an employer can take to eliminate safety and health hazards.

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

View the brochure [here](#). Register [here](#).