Connecticut Hospitals Focus on Care for Diverse Patient Populations

On November 12, CHA held an educational program on effective communication and regulatory compliance to eliminate discrimination against diverse populations including the deaf and hard of hearing and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT or LBGTQ) community. Speakers offered insights and practical guidance on understanding educational, operational, and legal enforcement issues.

Martine Charles, MPH, Director of the Office of Health Equity at Inova Health System in northern Virginia, and Denise Giraldez Garcia, ADA Compliance Administrator, discussed Inova’s experience with the Department of Justice during a recent investigation that concluded with the system entering a consent decree to provide effective services to meet the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing patients and their families. Since the consent decree in 2011, Inova established clear goals and implemented a number of changes that include the addition of spoken language services, multiple services for the deaf and hard of hearing, cultural competence training and education, health equity programming, and diversity and inclusion programming. Ms. Charles observed, “Inova has become a healthcare destination for the deaf and hard-of-hearing population.”

Discussion also focused on issues related to Public Act 11-55, An Act Concerning Discrimination, the Connecticut gender identity and expression law that went into effect on October 1, 2011. The law requires healthcare providers to establish policies and systems to provide culturally competent services to the LGBT community. Brette Tschurtz, Associate Project Director in the Joint Commission’s Division of Healthcare Quality Evaluation, encouraged hospitals to utilize the LGBT Field Guide, “Advancing Effective Communication, Cultural Competence, and Patient- and Family-Centered Care for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Community.” The guide is intended to help healthcare workers create a more welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment that contributes to improved healthcare quality for LGBT patients and their families.

Ms. Tschurtz was followed by a panel of speakers that included a hospital leader, a patient, an LGBT advocate, and attorneys for the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. The panel addressed practical, operational issues that arise as hospitals implement policies and practices consistent with the law.

Department of Children and Families Lauds Medical Community for Improving Recognition of Child Abuse

On November 13, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Commissioner Joette Katz thanked hospitals and others in the medical community for their work to improve the recognition and reporting of child abuse when a child presents in a medical setting with a traumatic injury. At a press conference at Hartford Hospital, Commissioner Katz said activities to educate, raise awareness, and provide support to medical personnel will result in a better system for protecting children.

"Keeping children safe is a team activity," Commissioner Katz said. "Parents have primary responsibility. But if they cannot keep their children safe, then the larger community has to come together to protect children. This partnership between DCF and the medical community is a prime example of working together in the common interest of keeping children safe."

Commissioner Katz applauded Lenworth Jacobs, MD, MPH, director of Hartford Hospital's Emergency Medical Services trauma unit and Chairman of the Connecticut Committee on Trauma, other members of the Trauma Committee, and those on the Pediatric Child Abuse Subcommittee, hosted by CHA, that developed guidelines to improve child abuse recognition. The guidelines were unanimously approved by the Trauma Committee.

Jennifer Jackson, President and CEO of CHA, said hospitals are eager to play their part in a larger response to child safety.
“Connecticut hospitals, their emergency departments, the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Public Health have a shared goal of protecting our children through detecting and reporting child abuse,” said Ms. Jackson. “We appreciate this opportunity to work together to help healthcare providers ensure the safety of children, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration on this important issue.”

CHA is a part of DCF’s Education for Multidisciplinary Professionals on Child Abuse Recognition Work Group, which also includes child abuse recognition experts from pediatric centers at Yale-New Haven Hospital and Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, representatives from several Connecticut hospitals, social workers, advocates, nurses, physicians, and DCF staff. The group has begun to identify tools and opportunities to expand medical, community, and school-based provider education of child abuse recognition.

The commissioner noted that the two guidelines pertaining to children under the age of six – that available medical records are evaluated and that disrobing the child and placing him/her in a hospital gown to enable a thorough physical examination – reflect the fact that very young children are the most at risk. Because many children under six do not attend school, community providers have less of an opportunity to detect signs of child abuse.

“The medical community has already demonstrated its commitment to protect children through identifying best practices and educating its members on the best way to find red flags and recognize abuse,” Commissioner Katz said. “Now we are ready to stand together to continue improvements to how we respond to potential child victims.”

St. Vincent’s Medical Center Achieves Magnet Recognition

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) has awarded St. Vincent’s Medical Center Magnet Recognition as a reflection of its nursing professionalism, teamwork, and superiority in patient care. St. Vincent’s Medical Center joins Yale-New Haven Hospital and Middlesex Hospital in holding this honor in Connecticut.

To achieve Magnet recognition, St. Vincent’s underwent a rigorous multi-year application process with widespread participation from leadership and staff. The process included the submission of thousands of pages of documentation demonstrating qualitative and quantitative evidence regarding patient care and outcomes, and a thorough four-day on-site review.

“The Magnet recognition reflects our dedication to delivering high quality, safe care to our patients and their families in our community and beyond. Our nurses have an incredible sense of pride, and their passion is reflected in our mission to deliver the best care to every patient,” said Deborah L. Owens, MSN, RN, NE-BC, Magnet Program Director. “We have an amazing nursing staff who has set the bar high for excellence. Patients and their families can be assured that St. Vincent's nurses are among the best in the United States.”

The ANCC Magnet Recognition Program® recognizes healthcare organizations that demonstrate excellence in nursing services. Magnet recognition is the highest national honor for nursing excellence, serving as the gold standard for nursing practice. The ANCC Magnet Recognition Program focuses on promoting quality of care, identifying excellence in the delivery of nursing services to patients, and disseminating nursing care best practices. Magnet recognition has been shown to provide specific benefits to hospitals and their communities including improved patient care, safety, and satisfaction.

Hurricane Sandy Health Care Employee Relief Fund Established

Employees of hospitals and other healthcare organizations who suffered serious personal losses as a result of Hurricane Sandy may receive assistance from the Hurricane Sandy Health Care Employee Relief Fund. The fund is administered by the United Hospital Fund and is sponsored by the Greater New York Hospital Association, the Healthcare Association of New York State, the New Jersey Hospital Association, the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council, the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association, and the United Hospital Fund, with generous support from the American Hospital Association (AHA).

Funds raised for the employee relief fund will be distributed through hospitals and other healthcare organizations to those in need, to help them recover from their losses and rebuild their lives.

Those interested in learning more or making a contribution are encouraged to visit the United Hospital Fund website. Contributions are tax-deductible, and 100 percent of donations benefit employees in need.

Education Updates

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.

**Update Schedule Change**

Due to Thanksgiving, we will publish Update next Wednesday, rather than Thursday. We will resume the normal schedule on November 29.