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Connecticut Hospitals Honored for Participation in the Partnership for Patients



On December 4, 2014, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) acknowledged Connecticut hospitals for their participation in the national Partnership for Patients initiative. All Connecticut hospitals participate in the initiative, which has the goal of reducing hospital-acquired conditions by 40 percent and readmissions by 20 percent by the end of 2014. CHA received the acknowledgement as part of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' "QualityNet: The CMS Healthcare Quality Conference."

Nationwide, more than 3,700 hospitals are participating in the three-year effort to improve patient safety which, according to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), contributed to a reduction in hospital-acquired conditions that resulted in an estimated 50,000 fewer patients dying in hospitals and approximately \$12 billion in healthcare costs saved in the last three years.

According to the HHS report released on December 2, hospital patients across the country experienced 1.3 million fewer hospital-acquired conditions from 2010 to 2013 – a 17 percent decline in hospital-acquired conditions. Hospital-acquired conditions include adverse drug events, catheter-associated urinary tract infections, central line associated bloodstream infections, pressure ulcers, and surgical site infections, among others.

"Never before have we been able to bring so many hospitals, clinicians, and experts together to share in a common goal – improving patient care," said Rich Umbdenstock, president and CEO of the American Hospital Association. "We have built an 'infrastructure of improvement' that will aid hospitals and the healthcare field for years to come."

House and Senate Democrats Announce Leadership



This week, House and Senate Democrats announced their leadership teams.

On December 5, House Speaker Brendan Sharkey (D-Hamden) announced the appointment of his leadership team, including those who will serve as House chairs of the various legislative committees. Of note to the hospital community, Rep. Matthew Ritter (D-Hartford) was named Chairman of the Public Health Committee, Rep. Jeffrey Berger (D-Waterbury) was named Chairman of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, and Rep. William Tong (D-Stamford) was named Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. A complete list of named leadership can be found [here](#).

The other newly named Democratic House co-chairs include: Matt Lesser (D-Middletown) – Banks Committee; James Albis (D-East Haven) – Environment Committee; Theresa Conroy (D-Seymour) – Internship Committee; Auden Grogins (D-Bridgeport) – Planning and Development Committee; and Brian Becker (D-West Hartford) – Regulations Review Committee.

On December 9, Sen. Martin Looney (D-New Haven) and Sen. Bob Duff (D-Norwalk) announced the appointment of their leadership team, including those who will serve as Senate chairs of the various legislative committees. Senators Looney and Duff will be voted in officially as Senate President Pro Tempore and Senate Majority Leader respectively when the General Assembly convenes in January 2015.

Of interest to hospitals, newly elected Sen. Marilyn Moore (D-Bridgeport) was named as the Senate Chairman of the Human Services Committee. The Human Services Committee has jurisdiction over of all matters related to the Department of Social Services and the Department of Children and Families.

Newly elected Sen. Ted Kennedy Jr. (D-Branford) was appointed to serve as Chairman of the Environment and Internship Committees. Sen. Tim Larson (D-East Hartford) was appointed to serve as Chairman of the Public Safety and Security Committee. Sen. Mae Flexer (D-Danielson) was appointed to serve as Chairman of the Aging and Veterans' Affairs Committees.

Also of interest, Sen. Terry Gerratana (D-New Britain) was reappointed to serve as the Senate Chairman of the Public Health Committee, Sen. Eric Coleman (D-Bloomfield) was reappointed to serve as the Senate Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Sen. Beth Bye (D-West Hartford) was reappointed to serve as the Senate Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and Sen. John Fonfara (D-Hartford) was reappointed to serve as the Senate Chairman of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. A complete list of leadership appointments can be found [here](#).

Republican House and Senate leaders are expected to announce their leadership appointments in the coming days.

U.S. Spending Bill Would Provide Funding for Hospital Ebola Preparedness

As Connecticut hospitals continue to work collaboratively with the Connecticut Department of Public Health on statewide planning for Ebola preparedness and response, Congressional leaders were discussing whether they would pass a \$1.1 trillion spending bill that would, in addition to funding most federal agencies through September 30, 2015, provide \$5.4 billion in emergency funding for U.S. hospitals' Ebola-preparedness efforts and funds to fight Ebola abroad.

The bill would provide \$576 million, through Sept. 30, 2019, for the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response. At the discretion of the HHS secretary, these funds could be used for the renovation and alteration of privately-owned facilities to improve preparedness and response capability at the state and local level. In addition, these funds could be used for the reimbursement of domestic transportation and treatment costs (other than costs paid or reimbursed by the individual's health coverage) for a person treated for Ebola in the U.S., before or after the bill is enacted, among other purposes.

The bill would provide funding to HHS to implement a regional strategy for designating treatment centers. It would allocate \$1.77 billion to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through Sept. 30, 2019 for the transportation, medical care, treatment, and other related costs of persons quarantined or isolated under federal or state quarantine law, among other purposes. The bill would also provide at least \$10 million for worker-based training to prevent and reduce exposure of hospital employees, emergency first responders and other workers who are at risk of exposure to Ebola. Additionally, the bill would provide \$254.5 million in FY 2015 for the Hospital Preparedness Program.

CHA is hopeful that congressional leaders will agree on a spending bill that has funding for hospitals' Ebola preparedness efforts.

Once the House votes on the spending bill, it will be sent to the Senate.

Education Updates

HRO Safety Coach Training

Monday, December 15, 2014
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

[Event Registration](#)

Safety Coaches are peer mentors, trained to recognize and acknowledge good high reliability behavior and to remind people about opportunities to improve behavior that does not stay true to high reliability concepts.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

HRO Fair and Just Accountability

Monday, December 15, 2014
2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.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.

HRO Ambulatory Kickoff

Tuesday, December 16, 2014
9:00 AM - 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 kick off the curriculum for ambulatory practices and long-term care. This session is open to High Reliability Level 2 and Level 3 hospitals and other PSO members.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

Changes in CPT/HCPCS for 2015

Wednesday, December 17, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

[View Brochure](#) | [Event Registration](#)

CPT and HCPCS codes are the primary codes that describe individual hospital services that are billed to all payers. These code sets go through annual revisions with codes that are added, deleted, or revised. This workshop will focus on the 266 new, 129 revised, and 147 deleted codes—including major changes by body system (significant changes to Lower GI coding), sweeping changes in Lab coding (many of which Medicare may not accept), and revisions to coding guidelines.

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

OPPS Final Rule for 2015

Wednesday, December 17, 2014
1:00 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.

[View Brochure](#) | [Event Registration](#)

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will publish the Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) Final Rule for 2015 on or around November 1, 2014. The 2015 OPPS Proposed Rule contained implementation of comprehensive APCs and removal of device edits, a dramatic increase to the number of packaged services, and APC changes and payment rates. This workshop will cover how these changes impact hospital reimbursement and billing compliance.

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

