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Connecticut Hospitals Seek to Improve Employee Wellness

On December 9, 2013, more than 60 representatives from hospitals across Connecticut participated in an anniversary symposium in support of CHA's initiative to create a culture of health and wellness in Connecticut hospitals.

Jeanette R. Ickovics, PhD, Professor of Epidemiology and Psychology at Yale University, delivered the keynote address. She reviewed health trends and disparities in Connecticut and nationally, including those related to chronic disease, resulting in preventable hospitalizations and rising costs. Dr. Ickovics named obesity as one of the top health issues in Connecticut, citing the fact that six out of ten residents are overweight or obese.

Dr. Ickovics urged hospitals to take small, consistent steps toward improving health, including eliminating sweetened drinks from vending machines. She encouraged hospital leadership to commit to creating a culture of health in their hospitals, develop a comprehensive set of programs, promote them with incentives, and measure participation and results.

"We have to be willing to take risks, talk, pull out all the stops, make the health argument and the business argument," said Dr. Ickovics. "This is about collective engagement, linking arms, and moving forward together."

The program included sessions on research, strategies, and practices that hospitals can develop and implement to improve employee wellness, and to address population health management in their communities. A hospital panel discussed their successful strategies and initiatives implemented to improve wellness. The panel included Deborah Gogliettino, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Eastern Connecticut Health Network; Stephen Mordecai, Director, Human Resources, Griffin Hospital; and Jan Kreitler, System Health Management and Wellness Specialist, Yale New Haven Health System.

The program supports *Living Our Mission: Building Healthier Choices*, a statewide initiative focused on improving employee health. The program will establish hospitals as models of good health for their communities.





Hospital Leaders Trained in High Reliability



On December 11, 60 hospital leaders from across the state received training in high reliability science and creating a culture of safety. The leadership training session focused on staff safety behaviors, error prevention tools, and leadership methods to help identify and fix problems and reinforce accountability.

CHA and Healthcare Performance Improvement (HPI) Consultant Steve Kreiser, CDR, USN Ret., MBA, MS, described leadership methods to address issues, which include investigating a safety event, identifying approximate causes, developing an apparent cause statement, validating the significance of the event, and identifying actions to address it.

Mr. Kreiser discussed how hospital leadership is key to developing cultures of safety and becoming high reliability organizations – ultra-safe organizations that operate under high-risk conditions. High reliability organizations institute systems that significantly decrease the probability of an accident, and have cultures in which every staff member is comfortable discussing safety concerns.

To date, more than 3,000 hospital staff, leaders, and physicians have been trained in high reliability science and behaviors.

Connecticut's Efforts to Reduce Infection Noted Nationally



The Public Health Foundation, a national not-for-profit organization, has noted Connecticut's efforts to prevent *Clostridium difficile* (CDI) infection in long-term care facilities using quality improvement methods and tools. The organization prepared a case study report on Connecticut's Future of Public Health Award project, in which Connecticut hospitals participated.

The case study illustrates how the Connecticut Department of Public Health addressed the problem using a collaborative approach at regional long-term care (LTC) facilities by creating an interdisciplinary CDI Prevention Collaborative in LTC facilities to reduce healthcare-associated infections among nursing home residents.

"We are particularly proud that this work has been noted nationally," said Richard Melchreit, MD, Healthcare Associated Program Coordinator for the Department of Public Health. "Improving patient safety is at the core of this effort, and Connecticut healthcare workers are leaders in preventing CDI infection in all healthcare settings."

Preventing healthcare-associated infections including CDI is one of the goals of Partnership for Patients, a national program in which all Connecticut hospitals participate. Partnership for Patients seeks to decrease preventable hospital-acquired conditions by 40 percent and reduce preventable hospital readmissions by 20 percent.

Click [here](#) to view the case study.

Senate Committee Leadership Changes

On December 5, Senate Democratic leaders announced a series of committee leadership changes, necessitated by the [announcement](#) that Senator Beth Bye (D-West Hartford) will lead the powerful Appropriations Committee at the start of the legislative session in February 2014. Sen. Bye was named chair in anticipation of longtime chair Toni Harp (D-New Haven) stepping down in January to become the new mayor of New Haven.



State Senator Steven Cassano (D-Manchester) will co-chair the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, succeeding Sen. Bye. Sen. Cassano is a former sociology professor at Manchester Community College and will co-chair the Committee with State Representative Roberta Willis (D-Lakeville). State Senator Cathy Osten (D-Sprague) will succeed Sen. Cassano as co-chair of the Planning & Development Committee. Sen. Osten is the recently re-elected First Selectman of Sprague and will serve as co-chair with State Representative Jason Rojas (D-East Hartford).

The most recent shuffling of committee chairs has left vacant the seat of Senate Co-chair of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, which had previously been headed by Sen. Osten. The seat is expected to be filled after a special election is held in New Haven to fill the senate seat being vacated by Sen. Harp.

Education Updates

Presumptive Eligibility Training

Friday, December 13, 2013

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, starting January 1, 2014, hospitals will have a new opportunity to better connect eligible patients to Medicaid. Each hospital will need to designate individuals they would like to be trained to work with the Department of Social Services (DSS) as part of the Presumptive Eligibility Program. The designated individual will need to attend training at CHA on either December 4 or December 13; training will be held from 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., with registration beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Starting in 2014, once staff is trained, hospitals will be able to enroll patients who are likely eligible in Medicaid immediately using presumptive eligibility, without the need to wait for an eligibility determination from the state. When a patient provides basic information about income and household size that falls within the Medicaid eligibility criteria, a hospital can determine that individual to be "presumptively eligible" for Medicaid, resulting in the hospital getting paid for the services provided as though the patient were already enrolled in Medicaid when entering the hospital.

Hospitals that want to participate in the new presumptive eligibility opportunity are required to work with Medicaid (DSS), who will provide guidelines, policies, and procedures on how the presumptive eligibility process will work. In addition to the training hospital staff will need, hospitals are required to sign an agreement with DSS to participate.

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