Strategy Session for CHA Diversity Collaborative Teams

On December 11, nearly 40 members of the CHA Diversity Collaborative met to share strategies for achieving the goals of the Collaborative, gather feedback, and inspire activity and progress toward results.

“This is hard work,” said Marie Spivey, EdD, RN, Vice President, Health Equity, CHA. “This is not just an initiative or project – it is a way of life. It is about changing attitudes, and it’s about being more sensitive to our communities and our patients.”

Team members worked in groups to identify ways to maximize opportunities for raising awareness about diversity and cultural competence amidst multiple competing priorities. They discussed ways to leverage available assets to meet current needs, and solicited ideas for solving common challenges. The Collaborative teams expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet, brainstorm, and network with other teams. Ongoing meetings will focus on strategy development and implementation guidance.

Every acute care hospital in Connecticut is participating in the CHA Diversity Collaborative, which was launched in 2011 to increase diversity in hospital governance and senior management, improve cultural competence in the delivery of care, and increase supplier diversity.

Connecticut Quality and Safety Work Highlighted

From December 11-13, quality and safety leaders from CHA and Qualidigm joined others from across the country at the Baltimore conference, “A More Perfect Union: Better Health Care, Better Health, Lower Costs through Improvement.” Connecticut was one of four states highlighted as a model to emulate.
At the conference, Alison Hong, MD, represented CHA in a panel discussion along with Anne Elwell, RN, MPH, CPEHR, Vice President for Community Relations at Qualidigm, CMS administrators, and others. Dr. Hong and Ms. Elwell spoke about Connecticut hospitals’ collaborative quality and safety work.

Nearly 1,000 thought leaders in healthcare quality improvement attended the conference, which focused on developing tangible solutions to major healthcare challenges. Some of the subjects covered included reducing readmissions, eliminating harm, increasing vaccinations and healthcare screenings, increasing patient advocacy for high quality care, integrating healthcare IT innovation, and lowering the cost of care while improving the quality of care.

The conference was a program of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Special Legislative Session Scheduled for Next Week

On December 19, a special legislative session will be held to vote on a final deficit mitigation plan.

This week, Governor Dannel Malloy, the Office of Policy and Management, and all four legislative caucuses have been meeting to reach an agreement on the plan, which will offset the FY 2013 deficit that is estimated to be between $320 and $365 million, but is possibly as high as $415 million.

Last Friday, Gov. Malloy released what he is calling a roadmap to a deficit mitigation plan. His proposal includes potential cuts to numerous state agencies including the Department of Social Services ($121,837,981), the Department of Public Health ($1,594,393), and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services ($1,762,054).

At this time, the details of the deficit reduction plan are not publicly available.

Connecticut U.S. Senators Receive Committee Assignments

This week, U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D) and Senator-elect Chris Murphy (D) received their committee assignments for the next Congress.

Sen. Blumenthal, who will become Connecticut’s senior senator, will remain a member of the Armed Services Committee and the Judiciary Committee. He has given up his seat on the Health Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee and instead received a new assignment as a member of the Commerce Committee. Senator-elect Murphy was appointed to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the HELP Committee. The HELP Committee has jurisdiction over many issues of importance to Connecticut hospitals and encompasses most of the agencies, institutes, and programs of the Department of Health and Human Services. These include the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, the Administration on Aging, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. The Committee also oversees public health and health insurance statutes to address emerging threats and changing patterns in the healthcare industry.

CHA congratulates Sen. Blumenthal and Senator-elect Murphy on their committee assignments and looks forward to working with them during the 113th Congress.

State Health Insurance Exchange Approved

On December 10, Connecticut’s plan to implement a state-based health insurance exchange was approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Connecticut is one of six states to receive such approval; the others are Colorado, Massachusetts, Maryland, Oregon, and Washington.

The announcement recognizes the hard work of Governor Dannel Malloy, Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman, Jeannette De Jesús, and the Exchange Board, as well as hospital and healthcare leaders and consumer advocates who have provided input.

“This approval shows that we are continuing to make rapid, concrete progress in bringing about much needed improvements for consumers in our state’s health insurance market,” said Lt. Governor Wyman, Chair of the Exchange’s Board of Directors. “While the majority of states are still grappling with how to move forward with health reform, all Connecticut residents should be encouraged by the progress we have made on this hugely important issue.”

CHA looks forward to continuing to work with the Connecticut Health Insurance Exchange to ensure that state residents and small businesses are able to purchase health insurance with robust coverage and access to high quality care.

Click here to read the Governor’s press release.

OSHA Discusses Common Compliance Issues

On November 29, 30 Connecticut hospital and medical staff leaders, risk managers, corporate compliance officers, and safety personnel attended the education program, “OSHA Compliance: Is Your Organization Ready?”

OSHA compliance assistance specialists Paul Mangiafico and Leona May discussed common safety and health hazards found in hospitals during routine OSHA enforcement inspections. These included issues related to sharps containers, status of energized electrical circuits, and issues related to workplace violence policies.

Mr. Mangiafico and Ms. May fielded a number of questions from the audience and provided specific examples of corrective measures that can be taken to mitigate and eliminate safety and health hazards.
Education Updates

Changes in CPT/HCPCS for 2013
Tuesday, December 18, 2012
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

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. The workshop will include information on the behavioral health code changes as well as all other CPT/HCPCS code changes.

View the brochure here. Register here.

OPPS Final Rule for 2013
Tuesday, December 18, 2012
1:15 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has published the Outpatient Prospective Payment System (OPPS) Final Rule for 2013, defining what CMS will be implementing for OPPS in 2013. This workshop will cover all OPPS changes that impact billing and clinical activities.

View the brochure here. Register here.