Happy Holidays from the Connecticut Hospital Association

General Assembly Ratifies Hospital Settlement Agreement

In a Special Session on Wednesday, December 18, the General Assembly unanimously approved Emergency Certified SB 1221 An Act Concerning Implementation Of The Approved Settlement Agreement In The Connecticut Hospital Association Et Al. And Making Appropriations Therefor, a bill that provides implementing language of the terms of the legal settlement reached with hospitals, the Attorney General, and Governor Ned Lamont's Administration. Governor Lamont signed the bill on Thursday, December 19.

The terms and provisions of the settlement will be reviewed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and, if approved, will be brought before the state judicial branch for acceptance. It is expected that CMS approval and judicial review will be complete in the coming months.

In addition to the passage of SB 1221, the General Assembly also approved SB 1222 An Act Approving The Settlement Agreement Between The State Of Connecticut Et Al., And The Connecticut Hospital Association Et Al.

"Today marks the start of a desperately needed reset between the state and our hospitals, and I am thankful that we were able to come together and negotiate a settlement in good faith that provides stability for both sides while reducing the losses the state would have incurred in the absence of this agreement," Governor Lamont said. "Prolonging litigation in court would benefit nobody, and certainly not the residents of our state. This agreement reduces our state's potential exposure to billions of dollars in liability and removes that uncertainty for years to come. Going forward, it is my hope that this partnership will put us on a new path during which time we can work with our hospitals and partners in a way that benefits the quality of care for our state’s residents while simultaneously addressing the cost of that care. I want to thank the Connecticut Hospital Association for working with my Administration on this agreement, Attorney General William Tong for his leadership, and the overwhelming number of legislators in both chambers of the General Assembly for understanding the importance of what we were able to achieve. In particular, I want to express my gratitude to OPM Secretary Melissa McCaw, my General Counsel Bob Clark, and the rest of our team for their efforts on getting us to this point."

"This is a fair and reasonable settlement that limits and manages the state’s long-term risk and provides both the state and hospitals with predictability when it comes to user fee and Medicaid rates over the next seven years," Attorney General William Tong said. "Together with the Office of Governor Ned Lamont and the Connecticut Hospital Association, we were able to create a path forward for the state and our hospitals. The Office of the Attorney General, led by Assistant Attorney General and Department Head Henry Salton, was at the table for every step of the negotiations. I want to thank our staff for their hard work in negotiating this comprehensive settlement."

"Today marks the start of a new partnership with the state that will strengthen healthcare in Connecticut for the benefit of everyone who lives here," said Jennifer Jackson, CEO, CHA. "We want to thank Governor Lamont, his Administration, and Attorney General William Tong for their leadership and dedication to finding a resolution to this issue, and paving the way for a new collaborative relationship. We also want to thank bipartisan legislative leaders and legislators for their support of hospitals. By voting in favor of the settlement agreement, they have demonstrated compassion for all Connecticut residents served by our hospitals, as well as a commitment to building a healthier Connecticut."

The vote comes on the heels of a legislative hearing before the Appropriations, Finance, Human Services, and Public Health Committees held on Friday, December 13. At the hearing, legislators heard testimony from Ms.
Connecticut Hospital Initiatives Highlighted at Institute for Healthcare Improvement's National Forum

Connecticut hospitals’ efforts to address social determinants of health, ensure a safe workplace, manage radiation dose, and reinforce high reliability were highlighted at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) 31st Annual National Forum on Quality Improvement in Healthcare, held December 8-11 in Orlando, Florida.

Originally scheduled for a single workshop, CHA’s Violence Has No Home in Healthcare quickly expanded to two as the topic attracted an overflow of participants. In addition to the workshops, Ellen Crowe, RN, CHA Director, Clinical Excellence and Care Redesign, and Carl Schiessl, JD, CHA Senior Director, Regulatory Advocacy, also discussed CHA’s Safer Hospitals Initiative during a special storyboard walk-around presentation. Participants learned how to build a comprehensive program to decrease workplace violence, apply strategies to protect their workforce and the community, and develop a safety roadmap to enact best practices and innovations. The CHA initiative identifies strategies to create a culture of safety that highlights the principles of high reliability and represents a multifaceted approach for successfully combating violence at all levels of an organization.

Elisabeth Beaudin, PhD, Senior Director, Population Health, CHA, presented a poster on Connecticut hospitals’ work through CHA to identify and address social determinants of health. In her presentation, Dr. Beaudin noted that CHA launched Unite Connecticut, a statewide initiative that connects health and social services providers through a shared technology platform (Unite Us) to address social needs and deliver integrated care. Griffin Hospital and Waterbury Hospital are the first in Connecticut to launch the network. Other hospitals and health systems will join over the next two years. Unite Connecticut includes a resource database that leverages the work of 211 Connecticut, a program of the United Way of Connecticut, as part of the statewide network.

Also at the IHI conference, Donna Novella, Director of Patient Safety and Quality, CHA, presented a poster update on CHA’s statewide radiation dose data repository. She noted that CHA is now in the second phase of the initiative, which includes benchmarking, best practices, and dose reduction.

Other hospitals and organizations that presented from Connecticut included Hartford HealthCare, The Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Natchaug Hospital, Rushford/Intercommunity Health Care/Beacon Health Options, Trinity Health Of New England, UConn John Dempsey Hospital, Yale New Haven Health, and Yale New Haven Hospital.

Connecticut Healthcare Association Collaborative Meets with Federal Delegation

Last week, the Connecticut Healthcare Association Collaborative traveled to Washington, DC, and visited legislative staff from House Congressional leadership offices including the offices of U.S. Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-3), John Larson (D-1), Joe Courtney (D-2), and Jim Himes (D-4), as well as Senator Chris Murphy's office.

The Collaborative, formed in 2011, comprises healthcare leaders from the Connecticut Hospital Association, the Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home, the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities, the Connecticut State Medical Society, and LeadingAge Connecticut. The Collaborative focuses on improving and coordinating the transitions of care provided by hospitals, home care and hospice, skilled nursing facilities, and the physician community.

During meetings in Washington, Collaborative representatives Jim Iacobellis, CHA Senior Vice President Government Relations; Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut; Matt Barrett, President/Chief Executive Officer, Connecticut Association for Healthcare Facilities; and Tracy Wodatch, President and CEO, Connecticut Association for Healthcare at Home, led discussions on the potential threats to funding, the future of the Affordable Care Act, and Medicare and Medicaid underfunding, with a shared goal that all Connecticut residents have access to high quality and affordable healthcare and long-term services and supports. Mr. Iacobellis also expressed Connecticut hospitals’ concerns with proposals to address surprise billing, as well as proposals that do not distinguish between the level of care provided in hospital outpatient departments versus other settings.

Third Flu-Related Death Reported

Influenza cases continue to increase across the nation and here in Connecticut. The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) recently reported a third death of a state resident last week from influenza-related illness. All deaths have involved people over the age of 65.

As of December 7, 400 people in Connecticut tested positive for the flu, and 120 have been hospitalized with the illness, according to DPH. The predominant influenza viruses identified so far this season are Type A, followed by Type B. DPH reports that flu is now widespread across the state.

The CDC, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee recommend that all healthcare workers get vaccinated annually.

In 2011, the CHA Board of Trustees adopted a statewide policy endorsing mandatory influenza vaccination for hospital personnel as part of CHA hospitals’ commitment to patient safety. The vast majority of CHA acute care member hospitals have implemented a mandatory participation or mandatory vaccination program.

Education Updates

HIPAA Privacy, Security & Breach Rules: Keeping Current to Remain Compliant
Thursday, January 9, 2020
HIPAA privacy, security, and breach rules will be addressed with an emphasis on patient access rights, and emerging issues in cyber security, devices and technology issues, social media considerations, and the enforcement and liability risks for HIPAA covered entities and business associates. Recent case law and enforcement activities by the Office for Civil Rights will also be reviewed. The program includes strategies for maintaining continuous compliance, a discussion of necessary policies and procedures, and practical tips and solutions to address real-time situations.

**MACRMI Simulation Training**  
Wednesday, January 15, 2020  
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
[View Brochure](#) | [Event Registration](#)  

The Massachusetts Alliance for Communication and Resolution following Medical Injury (MACRMI) will conduct its first simulation training for disclosure and apology as part of CHA’s Communication and Resolution Program Collaborative. The program is being presented as part of the Partnership for Patients HIIN educational series.

**2020 Joint Commission Standards and National Patient Safety Goals Update**  
Wednesday, January 22, 2020  
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
[View Brochure](#) | [Event Registration](#)  

Diana Scott, Senior Director of Accreditation, Vizient, will present CHA’s annual full-day program outlining The Joint Commission's (TJC's) new standards and national patient safety goals for 2020 and challenges from 2019 with strategies for compliance. Ms. Scott will also review CMS focus areas, as well as best practices for a successful survey. Lisa DiBlasi Moorehead, TJC's Associate Nurse Executive, will provide an overview of the changes implemented by TJC. Attendees will also receive information on compliance data on challenging accreditation standards in Connecticut hospitals.

**Lean Principles: Process Flow and Value Stream Mapping in Healthcare**  
Monday, February 3, 2020  
Monday, February 10, 2020  
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
[View Brochure](#) | [Event Registration](#)  

As the demands of health reform drive change in all areas of healthcare delivery, hospital leaders are focused on transforming their organizations through strategies that simultaneously increase revenue and sharply reduce costs. Lean principles offer leaders a management system and methodology that improves team engagement, eliminates roadblocks, and allows hospitals to improve the quality of care for patients by reducing errors and waste streams, including wait times. It is a systematic approach to reducing costs and risks, while simultaneously setting the stage for growth and expansion.

Please note: this is a two-session program; participants should attend both sessions.