

Progress Notes

January 2014



Published monthly by the **Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State LLC** . . . a consortium of 51 not-for-profit and public hospitals advocating for better health care policy for all those living and working in the nine counties north and east of New York City.

Hospital Advocacy Reflects Needs of Suburban Regions

It's a new look and new direction for *Progress Notes*, the membership newsletter for member hospitals of the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State LLC (SHANYS). The Suburban Hospital Alliance casts a wide net in its advocacy efforts on behalf of the hospitals in the two regions it represents – Long Island and the Hudson Valley. Locally, these two regions are serviced by the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (Long Island) and the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association (Hudson Valley). For several years, the Alliance has brought the unique needs of these two suburban communities and their respective hospitals before law makers in Albany and Washington, DC. Issues related to work force, managed care, patient safety, capital financing, medical malpractice, and reimbursement dominate the agenda and differ in subtle as well as more significant ways from these same and other issues facing rural and urban areas. The Alliance offers strength in

numbers and has been influential in securing positive legislative and regulatory reforms for hospitals, especially in the area of managed care. This newsletter, *Progress Notes*, continues the tradition of doing just that – reporting on the progress of health policy and legislative and regulatory reforms, as well as showcasing the successes and work of member hospitals in the two regions serviced by the Suburban Hospital Alliance. State and federal policy and legislative updates that pertain to both regions will be supported by regional news carried in special sections. Please be sure that *Progress Notes* is on your hospital's news release distribution list. If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter please contact Janine Logan, jlogan@nshc.org or at jlogan@normet.org.

STATE UPDATE: Hospitals Prioritize Issues for 2014

Governor Cuomo's State of the State Address delivered January 8, 2014 marginally referenced health care, but the address's emphasis on tax relief could have bearing upon hospitals and Medicaid funding in the final 2014 – 2015 state budget. The Governor did announce

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that New York will establish a program allowing up to 20 hospitals to prescribe medical marijuana. The program will monitor the effectiveness and feasibility of medical marijuana use in New York State. The Governor would issue an executive order to authorize the program. More details about the program will surface in the coming weeks. During the upcoming advocacy season, hospital advocates will focus on a variety of issues including:

Medicaid Global Spending Cap. The industry will work to ensure that the elimination of the two-percent Medicaid cut, at some point late in 2014, becomes a reality as promised by language in last year's approved budget. That provision called for the elimination of the cut contingent upon state Medicaid spending not piercing the Medicaid Global spending cap.

Nurse Staffing Ratio Bills. Legislation aimed at establishing nurse staffing ratios is expected to surface again during the upcoming budget season. The hospital industry remains steadfast in its opposition to mandated ratios. Hospital staffing levels are best determined on a per hospital basis in response to surge capacity, patient acuity, and other local demands.

Certificate of Need Process. Efforts to "level the playing field" between hospital providers (Article 28) and private physician practitioners will intensify. The Public Health and Health Planning Council (PHHPC) has already approved a series of recommendations regarding state oversight of various models of ambulatory services, such as retail/convenience clinics, urgent care, and freestanding emergency departments.

Balanced Billing, Regional Planning, Managed Care and Related Reforms. Suburban Alliance leadership will work to ensure that any out-of-network regulations are limited to reasonable disclosure efforts, that attempts to add another layer

to the CON process through local planning efforts are held in abeyance, and that more improvements in managed care practices are realized.

FEDERAL UPDATE: Congress Passes Spending Plan, Hospital Cuts Remain

The \$1.1 trillion spending plan approved by Congress eases some sequestration cuts to the Pentagon, but provides no similar relief to the nation's hospitals. Although the bill funds every agency of the government,

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the level of automatic Medicare sequestration cuts to hospitals remains. The first round of automatic sequestration cuts went into effect last March and the second round of two-percent Medicare sequestration cuts occurred at the start of this year. In addition, the Budget Conference Committee two-year agreement reached in December 2013, from which the recently approved spending plan appropriates funds to government agencies and departments, also added two more years of sequestration cuts to hospitals (2022 and 2023). These additional hospital cuts partly offset the defense industry's sequestration relief.

Hospitals were also tapped as a funding source for the temporary "doc fix," which expires March 31, 2014. The temporary "doc fix" was also approved in December 2013, and this measure averted a 24 percent Medicare pay cut that was scheduled to hit the nation's doctors on January 1, 2014. Scheduled cuts to Medicare physician payment are the result of the sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula. Enacted in 1997, this legislation directs physician reimbursement. It is tied to an inflationary

factor that economists agree is no longer feasible. As a result, Congress enacts these temporary patches or “doc

fixes,” while it works toward a permanent solution. Any permanent solution could mean more cuts.

News Briefs . . .

Educational Discount . . . is being offered to employees of Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, LLC, hospital members. Mercy College and the Suburban Hospital Alliance recently entered into a partnership that will allow employees of member hospitals a 15 percent discount on all undergraduate and graduate classes at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, NY. The Suburban Hospital Alliance includes all member hospitals of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council and the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association. For more information contact Mercy College at: 1-877-MERCY-GO.

Observation Status Notice . . . is now required by hospitals. A New York State law that went into effect January 19, 2014 requires hospitals to provide oral and written notice to patients within 24 hours of the patient being placed in observation services. The notice must indicate that the placement in observation services may affect the patient’s health insurance coverage for hospital services and may affect eligibility for subsequent services, including care in a skilled-nursing facility and other post-acute care. Hospitals may instruct patients to contact their insurers for more information.

Call for Nominations . . . for HANYS 2014 Pinnacle Award in Quality and Patient Safety is now underway. All NSHC and NorMet members are encouraged to submit nominations that highlight their institutions’ achievements in quality and patient safety. HANYS will hold an applicant Webconference on February 5, 2014 at 10 a.m. Register at www.hanys.org for the Webconference. Pinnacle Awards submission deadline is March 14, 2014.

HANYS Board Appointments . . . include **Joel Seligman, president/CEO, Northern Westchester Hospital**, as treasurer; **Joseph Quagliata, former president/CEO of South Nassau Communities Hospital**, as past chairman; and **Michael J. Dowling, president/CEO of North Shore LIJ Health System**, as past chairman. Recently elected to the HANYS board is **Ed Dinan, president/CEO of Lawrence Hospital Center**.

Healthcare Trustees of New York State . . . recently elected its 2014 chairs and officers. Named vice chair is **Sharon Norton Remmer, a trustee at Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center**; named immediate past chair is **John T. Lane, a trustee at Winthrop University Hospital**; and elected to serve a three-year term as a board member is **Richard J.J. Sullivan, Jr., chairman of the board of Catholic Health Services of Long Island**.

Nonprofit Revitalization Act of 2013 . . . takes effect July 1, 2014. This Act is the first large-scale modification of the Not-for-profit Corporation law in more than 40 years. Hospitals should familiarize themselves with components of the act that may affect their facilities. Some measures in the Act pertain to auditing, conflicts of interest, whistleblower policies, and related governance best practices. Look for more information in upcoming newsletters.

Patient Safety Organization (PSO) Requirements . . . were clarified recently by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in a proposed plan released by the agency. At this time, CMS is not proposing that hospitals must utilize a patient safety evaluation system (PSES) or contract with a PSO in order to meet Affordable Care Act patient safety and quality improvement requirements in order to contract with qualified health plans found on the health insurance marketplace. Through at least 2017, CMS believes that hospitals can meet the conditions to contract with a qualified health plan by demonstrating that they are Medicare-certified or have a Medicaid-only CMS Certification Number and

that they are subject to select conditions of participation related to quality improvement and discharge planning. CMS will consider whether hospitals must have agreements with PSOs after 2017.

Sepsis Reporting Delay . . . provides some reporting relief. The New York State Department of Health will delay the start of data collection and reporting for sepsis to the second quarter of 2014, specifically for cases beginning April 1, 2014. Previously, hospitals were expected to start reporting data beginning with cases on January 1, 2014.

New Flu Prevention Regulations . . . that went into effect in July 2013 require hospital employees to become vaccinated against the flu and/or to wear a surgical mask during flu season while working in areas where patients, residents, or clients may be present. The surgical mask must be worn during the time when the Commissioner of Health determines influenza is prevalent. **On December 19, 2013, State Health Commissioner Shah declared influenza prevalent in New York State after surveillance reports confirmed influenza to be widespread across the state.** Hospitals, nursing homes, and other facilities must also document the number and percentage of personnel vaccinated against the flu to state and federal authorities. The Suburban Hospital Alliance developed informational materials that explain the sensitive nature of this new policy in a consumer-friendly format. The materials are appropriate for internal/external distribution and media placement. Contact Janine Logan, Communications Director, for more info and materials – jlogan@nshc.org or jlogan@normet.org.

Insurance Enrollment Continues . . . The New York State Department of Health reports that as of January 26, 2014, 618,339 New Yorkers had completed their applications and 351,605 people have enrolled for coverage in the New York State of Health insurance marketplace. New Yorkers have until March 31, 2014 to enroll without penalty. The first round of coverage began January 1, 2014 for those who enrolled by December 23, 2013.

Hepatitis C Testing . . . for patients born between 1945 and 1965 became effective January 1, 2014. The new state law requires hospitals and health service providers to offer hepatitis C testing to the “baby boomer” group.

News from the Long Island Region . . .

A Report on Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council member hospital achievements and notable activities



Groundbreaking Community Health Partnership for LI Launched

Hospitals and both county health departments spearheading this innovative effort

On Friday, January 10, 2014, public health leaders and health care providers from the region gathered at the offices of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council in Hauppauge to witness the launch of an historic community health initiative known as the **Long Island Health Collaborative (LIHC)**. The Long Island

Health Collaborative is a bi-county effort to help Long Islanders improve their health. A key component of LIHC’s work is a comprehensive website that connects Long Islanders to the health and social services they need to stay well or get well.

Dr. Howard Zucker, the First Deputy Commissioner of Health for the State of New York, “flipped the switch” and officially launched the LIHC and its website at Friday’s event. NSHC is the agency that represents Long Islands’ hospitals and is the coordinating entity for LIHC. Dr. Zucker noted that this ground-breaking endeavor is exactly what the state health department is calling for in its effort to promote population health and integrated, coordinated health care services throughout New York’s local communities.

Health commissioners for both Nassau and Suffolk counties - Dr. Lawrence Eisenstein and Dr. James Tomarken respectively – echoed Dr. Zucker’s comments. They agreed that the prevalence of chronic disease is widespread in both counties and a bi-county initiative like LIHC will help raise awareness and connect Long Islanders to the appropriate care and services.

The **Long Island Health Collaborative (LIHC)** is comprised of all Long Island’s hospitals, the Nassau and Suffolk County Health Departments, dozens of community-based organizations, and academic institutions. These partners joined together in early 2013 to combine their expertise in a streamlined and cooperative effort to reach all Long Islanders and help them achieve improved health. The website is a component of their work. The user-friendly site provides Long Islanders with comprehensive health promotion and disease prevention information at their fingertips. It’s a portal connecting Long Islanders to clinical and social service supports that will get them well or keep them well.

The LIHC is one of the few collaborative groups in the state of New York featuring a partnership between two neighboring counties and is the first



Celebrating the launch of the Long Island Health Collaborative (LIHC) from left: Dr. James Tomarken, Suffolk County Health Commissioner; Dr. Lawrence Eisenstein, Nassau County Health Commissioner; Kevin Dahill, President/CEO of the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council; and Dr. Howard Zucker, First Deputy Commissioner of Health for the State of New York.

time that Nassau and Suffolk counties are partnering in such a comprehensive way. Public health and public affairs experts from the region’s hospitals, as well as health department leaders and representatives from social service organizations and public health specialists from colleges, comprise the collaborative.

“Health care is a reactive industry . . . we respond to patients’ needs when they are sick and injured,” said Kevin Dahill, president/CEO of the NSHC. “What is invigorating about this effort is that it is proactive.”

The group initially formed in February 2013 in response to enhanced state and federal government regulations that require all health care providers, local health departments, and community-based service organizations to work together to assure and improve health in communities they serve. It has now moved beyond these mandates and stands as a fully integrated model of health and social service for all of Long Island’s communities. More specifically, the state’s Prevention Agenda 2013 – 2017 mandate asked local

county health departments, hospitals, community-based organizations, schools and other regional partners to join together to address unmet health needs in communities. LIHC performed that task in early 2013 and uncovered unmet needs in the areas of chronic disease prevention and management, especially related to obesity, as well as a great need for more mental health/substance abuse prevention and treatment services. As a result, LIHC's efforts will focus on these priorities.

<http://nshc.org/long-island-health-collaborative/> - is just the first step in achieving this goal. A bi-county walk effort to promote physical activity and that will reveal broad data about health and habits of Long Islanders is also planned, along with health and built-environment policy changes at the local level.

LIHC's ultimate goal is the management of population health, which is really the steadfast coordination and integration of all clinical and social services that assist each and every Long Islander in becoming well and/or staying well. Health care providers - hospitals, doctors, laboratory service providers, nutritionists and social service providers of all types - work together to provide coordinated health care. The website –



News from the Hudson Valley Region . . .

A Report on the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association member hospital achievements and notable activities



Award of Appreciation . . . was presented to **Orange Regional Medical Center** by the American Cancer Society for the hospital's participation in the 2013 Making Strides for Breast Cancer Walk. Orange Regional was a flagship sponsor.

Excellence in Public Education . . . was bestowed upon **Northern Dutchess Hospital** from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the hospital's efforts to promote awareness about donation and state registries. The hospital conducted awareness and registry campaigns to educate staff, patients, visitors, and community members about the critical need for organ, eye, and tissue donors and, by doing so, increased the number of potential donors on the state's donor registry.

Vassar Brothers Medical Center Names New President . . . Robert Friedberg. Friedberg has more than 30 years of health care management experience, most recently serving as president and executive vice president of operations at Delnor Hospital in Geneva, IL. He holds a master's degree in health administration from Cornell University.

Upcoming Events/Meetings . . .

State Budget Briefing for NSHC Members

February 4, 2014 at 9 a.m.

NSHC Office, Hauppauge

State Budget Briefing for NorMet Members

February 7, 2014 at 10 a.m.

NY Presby/White Plains

HANYS Advocacy Day in Albany

March 5, 2014

Metropolitan Chapter of HFMA

55th Annual Joseph Levi Institute

March 13 – 14, 2014

LaGuardia Marriott

<http://www.hfmametry.org>

NSHC Events/Meetings in February

Feb. 4 Budget Briefing, 9 a.m.

Feb. 6 Board meeting, 8 a.m.

Feb. 6 LIHC Meeting, 10:30 a.m.

Feb. 11 Nurse Managers meeting, 12:30 p.m.

Feb. 12 Finance Committee meeting, 8 a.m.

Feb. 14 Revenue Cycle Committee, 12:30 p.m.

Feb. 18 Suffolk Emergency Preparedness meeting, 10 a.m.

Feb. 19 Quality Committee meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Feb. 25 Corporate Compliance meeting, 9:30 a.m.

All meetings take place at NHSC offices in Hauppauge. Call 631-963-4153.

NSHC Member Hospitals

NorMet Member Hospitals

Blythedale Children's Hospital
Bon Secours Community Hospital
Burke Rehabilitation Hospital
Catskill Regional Medical Center
Ellenville Regional Hospital
Good Samaritan Hospital
HealthAlliance Hospital
Helen Hayes Hospital
Hudson Valley Hospital Center
Keller Army Community Hospital
Lawrence Hospital Center
The Mount Vernon Hospital
The New York Presbyterian Hospital, Westchester Division
Northern Dutchess Hospital
Northern Westchester Hospital
Orange Regional Medical Center
Phelps Memorial Hospital Center
Putnam Hospital Center
St. Anthony Community Hospital
Saint Francis Hospital
St. Joseph's Medical Center
St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital
St. Vincent's Westchester (Division of St. Joseph's Medical Center)
Sound Shore Medical Center of Westchester
Vassar Brothers Medical Center
VA Hudson Valley Health Care System
White Plains Hospital

Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center
Catholic Health Services of Long Island

- Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center
- Mercy Medical Center
- St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center
- St. Charles Hospital
- St. Francis Hospital
- St. Joseph Hospital

Eastern Long Island Hospital
Long Beach Medical Center
John T. Mather Memorial Hospital
Nassau University Medical Center

North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System

- Franklin Hospital
- Glen Cove Hospital
- Huntington Hospital
- North Shore University Hospital
- Plainview Hospital
- Southside Hospital
- Syosset Hospital

Peconic Bay Medical Center
Southampton Hospital
Stony Brook University Hospital
Veterans Affairs Medical Center – Northport
South Nassau Communities Hospital
Winthrop-University Hospital