



Progress Notes

January 2018

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February 8 Deadline for Federal Government Funding

Lawmakers must reach a deal to avoid another partial shutdown

After a three-day partial shutdown of the federal government, lawmakers returned to the negotiating table and delivered another continuing resolution to keep the government funded until February 8, 2018. While still only a short-term fix, the legislation did extend funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for six years.

The legislation did not address, however, delay of Disproportionate Share (DSH) cuts nor reinstatement of the cost sharing reduction (CSR) payments. Funding for the nation's community health centers, critical to providing healthcare services in poor and underserved areas, remains in limbo, as well. The legislation did address several Affordable Care Act taxes. The medical device tax and tax on generous, high-cost health insurance plans are delayed for two years, and the tax on health insurance providers is delayed for one year.

Funding for CHIP means nearly 300,000 children in the state will not lose their insurance, including 99,119 children in the nine counties located throughout the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State regions. CHIP funding expired September 30, 2017, and New York State was inching ever closer to running out of funds for this program during the current fiscal quarter.

The CSR payments made to insurers selling on the health insurance exchanges were halted by the Trump administration on October 12, 2017. For many months prior, the administration threatened to stop the payments. These payments help low-income Americans afford their co-payments and deductibles. The permanent loss of CSR payments means New York would lose \$900 million in funding for the state's Essential Health Plan. The Essential Plan is available to low-income New Yorkers who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to afford commercial insurance products sold on the exchange. Last year, 136,324 individuals in the nine Suburban Hospital Alliance counties purchased an Essential Plan from New York's marketplace, with about 60 percent of enrollees residing in Nassau and Suffolk counties.

New York's Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and the governor filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration for ending the federal funding for New York's Essential Health Plan. The lawsuit alleges that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) unlawfully withheld legally-required funding to New York to operate its Basic Health Plan, which is the Essential Health Plan. The state argues that the funding cut is arbitrary and capricious and violates the Administrative Procedure Act. The state of Minnesota is party to the lawsuit.

Governor Releases \$168 Billion Spending Plan

Budget takes note of funding uncertainties stemming from DC

Amid an uncertain federal funding background, Governor Cuomo unveiled the state's 2018-2019 \$168 billion proposed budget on Tuesday, January 16, 2018. The administration's proposal calls for no new major provider cuts, but the ultimate fate of hospitals' funding and the final state budget hinges on the outcome of several federal items, including delay of federal Medicaid Disproportionate Share (DSH) cuts and reinstatement of the cost sharing reduction (CSR) payments made to insurers to help low-income Americans afford their co-payments and deductibles.

The governor's budget closes a projected \$4.4 billion state deficit through a variety of revenue producing measures such as funds from not-for-profit to for-profit health insurer conversions, excise tax on health insurers whose profits benefit from the recently enacted federal tax law changes, and a new tax related to the sale of opioids by drug manufacturers. Without congressional action on the CSRs and DSH payments, the impact of federal healthcare cuts on New York State would multiply by the billions, according to the governor's office.

Other highlights of the governor's budget include the establishment of a \$1 billion Healthcare Shortfall Fund to continue the availability of funding for quality health services and to lessen the blow from any loss of federal dollars. The budget also maintains funding for distressed hospitals, the methodology for distributing DSH funds, and funding related to capital improvement projects.

On the other hand, the budget calls for \$425 million of Medicaid dollars to be re-directed to the state's general fund, as a result of changes to the Medicaid global spending cap. Hospitals would endure rate reductions linked to quality pool funding and emergency room and lab services, among other areas targeted for reduction.

The proposed budget retains the federal funding contingency plan put in place last year that would allow the state to make spending reductions if federal funding to the state is reduced by \$850 million or more. The plan would take effect immediately unless the legislature adopts its own plan within 90 days. This proposal leaves hospitals in a very vulnerable situation in terms of Medicaid funding.

The governor's office has the option to issue amendments to the budget at the 21-day mark and the 30-day mark. One-house budget bills are expected early to mid-March. The state will hold a health and Medicaid budget hearing on February 12, 2018 at which our regional and state hospital association leaders will press for favorable action on Medicaid, DSH, capital investment, and insurance access. The next state fiscal year begins April 1, 2018 and an on-time budget is due by this date.

Insurance Marketplace Enrollment Period Ends – But enrollment in the Medicaid program continues year round. New York State’s open enrollment period for the purchase of health insurance ends January 31, 2018. According to the state, enrollment in the marketplace surpassed last year’s totals. Buyers of Qualified Health Plans increased by 0.3 percent and the Essential Plan by 9.2 percent. On Long Island, the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council is one of three state-approved navigator agencies for the region. During this season’s enrollment period the NSHC navigator program assisted 1,080 applicants. The Hudson Valley region is serviced by the Community Service Society of New York, Maternal Infant Services Network of Orange, Sullivan and Ulster counties, and the Westchester and Rockland counties of health. Enrollment in the Medicaid program, the Essential Health Plan, and CHIP continue throughout the year. Those not eligible for these plans but who experience a qualifying event, such as the birth of a child, may enroll in a Qualified Health Plan throughout the year.

New Yorkers Relate Stories about Insurance Loss and Gain –

Healthcare Voices is a campaign spearheaded by the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council to highlight the stories about New Yorkers’ experiences with the health insurance marketplace, coverage issues, and healthcare access. The Hospital Council is also a state-certified navigator agency and is in a unique position to interact with New Yorkers who are seeking health insurance coverage. The campaign is bringing attention to these otherwise unheard voices through social media, traditional media channels, and through conversations with legislators.



Bianca Fabian’s employer does not offer insurance. However, she says she knows the importance of having coverage for both routine needs and when life throws you a curve ball. That is why she did not hesitate to purchase insurance from the marketplace. Read more about Bianca’s story and other stories at [Healthcare Voices](#), including that of [Ruth Zaporta](#) who was featured in the state’s print and broadcast ads about enrolling in the marketplace. Click on these links to view the digital spot, featuring Ruth, in both English and Spanish:

<https://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/4millionreasonsgroup2>

<https://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/4millionreasonsspanish1>

<https://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/4millionreasonsspanish2>

Flu Emergency Declared - On January 25, 2018, Governor Cuomo declared a public health emergency for all of New York State due to the severity of the influenza season this year. The Department of Health has begun asking hospitals and nursing homes to complete a survey weekly to assess capacity and drug and medical supply shortages. The governor also issued an order allowing pharmacists to administer flu vaccinations to patients between six months and 18 years of age, through temporary suspension of requirements. Hospital employees that are in contact with patients and the public are required to have the flu vaccine or, if not vaccinated, to wear a protective mask.

Lavern’s Law Moves Forward – The governor signed an amended version of Lavern’s Law – the cancer-only medical malpractice discovery bill – that limits the extent to which trial lawyers can go back and commence previously time-barred malpractice actions. Without such revisions, the original legislation as written would have introduced tremendous financial strain in the healthcare system. Hospital advocates continue to push for comprehensive medical malpractice reform.

Healthcare Trustees of New York State (HTNYS) – Sharon Norton Remmer, board member for Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center and past chairwoman of HTNYS, has been appointed to the American Hospital Association’s Committee on Governance. This committee is comprised of 28 trustees from across the country who help advise the AHA on governance issues facing member hospitals and healthcare systems.

Trustees Announced – Robert Spolzino, trustee for the board of overseers for Northwell Health was appointed vice chair of the Healthcare Trustees of New York State. Sharon Norton Remmer, board member at Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center, was named past chairwoman of HTNYS.

Awards Season – HANYS is seeking nominations for its 2018 [Community Health Improvement Award](#). New for 2018: the nomination process is streamlined and all online! The deadline is February 13. The award recognizes member hospitals' innovative work with their partners to improve the health and well-being of their communities.

The Baxter Allegiance Foundation and the American Hospital Association have put out a call for entries for the [2018 Foster G. McGaw Prize](#), which recognizes hospitals that have distinguished themselves through efforts to improve the health and well-being of everyone in their communities. Applications must be received online before midnight Central Time on April 6, 2018.



News from the
Hudson Valley

[Click here for Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association member listing](#)

Meeting the Triple Aim – Highlighted this month in the HANYS Innovation Spotlight for meeting the Triple Aim were

- *Burke Rehabilitation Hospital*, for the successful implementation of a ReWalk robotic exoskeleton,
- and *St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital*, for the establishment of a Mobile Mental Health (MMH) program which responds to the ED for patients with behavioral health issues, decreasing recidivism and transfers, reducing the overall cost of care.
- Read more about these hospitals and more at www.hanys.org/tripleaim.

Scholarship – The St. Luke's Cornwall Health System Foundation will award four (4) scholarships to local, graduating high-school seniors entering an accredited university or community college, and who demonstrate scholastic excellence and/or volunteerism. Applications for the 2018 scholarship program are now available and can be found at <http://bit.ly/2FfSQKY>. The deadline is Friday, April 13, 2018.

If you have news to share about your hospital's achievements, please send to Janine Logan at jlogan@normet.org.



News from
Long Island

[Click here for Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council member listing](#)

Meeting the Triple Aim – Highlighted this month in the HANYS Innovation Spotlight for meeting the Triple Aim were,

- *St. Joseph Hospital*, for their analysis of clinical alarms for one of their telemetry units, improving responses on patient experience care surveys,
- *St. Charles Hospital*, for their development of a new rehabilitation program that decreased patient-reported falls post-discharge for 11 out of the 12 months since the hospital began the class,
- and *St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center*, for enhancing communication strategies between the EMS and ED to improve care and patient outcomes.
- Read more about these hospitals and more at www.hanys.org/tripleaim.

Flu Inoculations – *NYU Winthrop Hospital* is the first Long Island hospital to make the flu vaccine mandatory, citing 99.3% of more than 8,750 employees having been inoculated against influenza.

New Year Pledge – The Friends of Mercy Medical Center pledged \$250,000 to *Mercy Medical Center* and Good Shepherd Hospice, both members of *Catholic Health Services*, for a 12-bed hospice unit at Mercy to open in 2018 that will be named the Friends of Mercy Family Lounge.

Accreditation – The Commission on Cancer (CoC), a quality program of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), has granted Three-Year Accreditation with Commendation to the cancer program at *Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center* for the fifth consecutive survey, 15 years in a row.

Women's Choice – *St. Charles Hospital* has earned the 2018 Women's Choice Award, America's Best Hospitals for Orthopedics, Obstetrics, Bariatrics and Patient Safety, a credential that identifies the nation's best hospitals based on criteria that includes relevant clinical performance, patient satisfaction, and appropriate accreditations.

New Affiliations - *South Nassau Communities Hospital* will become the flagship hospital on Long Island for the Mount Sinai Health System under an affiliation agreement announced by the Boards of Trustees of the two institutions. State approval is expected in the coming months.

Middle Island Resident Wins Prize – Joanne Smith from Middle Island was the winner of the drawing for the Long Island Health Collaborative's walking campaign, Are You Ready Feet?™. The campaign is an initiative sponsored by the Collaborative and its many partners to get people moving and reduce the rate of obesity among Long Islanders, providing a free Fitbit to winners like Smith.



If you have news to share about your hospital's achievements, please send to Janine Logan at jlogan@nshc.org

Committee Updates

Fiscal Policy: At the January 10 meeting, the group received a report on the federal tax reform law's implications for health providers and the state of New York, as well as a preview of the state budget process. Ms. Darwell briefed the group on a federal proposal to promote insurance sales across state lines by loosening regulations on association health plans.

Nurse Executives: The Nurse Executives Committee received an update on New York State Partnership for Patients activity, as well as briefings on federal and state budget issues on January 24. The committee discussed strategies for coping with a surge of flu patients, as well as tools for assessing patients at risk for alcohol or drug abuse.

Revenue Cycle: On January 26, staff provided briefings on federal legislative priorities and the proposed U.S. Department of Labor rule on association health plans. Members of the committee also were updated on proposals in the state budget that would impact health plans, as well as new Medicare audit targets for 2018. The group discussed the impact of several national health plan policy changes.

Long Island Population Health Improvement Program Steering Committee: The LIPHIP Steering Committee met on January 17 to receive an update of ongoing PHIP-led projects, including a "Healthy Library Initiative" with Stony Brook University and the University of Pennsylvania, an LGBTQ module addition to the grant's regional Cultural Competency/Health Literacy training, and the 'cluster' structure of the Long Island Health Collaborative. Members received overviews of upcoming 2018 projects, including a Chronic Disease Self-Management video promotion project, a new quarterly data analysis and report, and plans for community outreach focus groups.

Upcoming Events

March 7th Albany Advocacy Day

Register today

This year's Suburban Hospital Alliance and HANYS Advocacy Day will be held on Wednesday, March 7. We hope that you, members of your executive team and/or trustees also will join us in Albany for a Suburban Hospital Alliance dinner on the evening of Tuesday, March 6.

Please note: A number of CEOs and trustees from our two regions will be participating in HANYS and Healthcare Trustees of New York State (HTNYS) board meetings, which will be held in Albany on March 6. To accommodate these events, we have altered our traditional Advocacy Day schedule of activities. We will be scheduling legislative meetings for **Wednesday, March 7** and hope that your schedule will permit you to stay in Albany for the day. Our goal is to schedule as many of our meetings as possible in the morning and early afternoon to accommodate travel needs.

The Suburban Hospital Alliance will arrange group meetings with Senate and Assembly leadership and key committee chairs. If you wish to also meet with your individual Senate and Assembly members and need assistance scheduling these meetings, please let us know.

Two-Step Registration Process:

1. To register your participation in both the HANYS Advocacy Day and Suburban Hospital Alliance events, follow [this link](#). There will be a "Register Today" button, along with links for other logistical information.
2. Then click [here](#) and select the link for the Suburban Hospital Alliance. You will be prompted to answer two questions – whether you will attend the dinner on March 6 and/or the meetings on March 7.

Accommodations

We will be staying at the Marriott Renaissance Hotel, just a block away from the Legislative Office Building. HANYS has a block of rooms reserved for the night of Tuesday, March 6. **The room block expires on February 16.** Please make your reservation using the following information:

Renaissance Albany Hotel

144 State Street

Albany, New York 12207

Please call (518) 992-2500 or register online [here](#).

\$194-214 per night

Use code: HANYS

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ramona Bielawski (rbielaws@nshc.org or 631-963-4151)